

# **International standing, international reputation and Australian foreign policy**

by

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***I certify that the thesis entitled:***

**International standing, international reputation and Australian foreign policy**

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is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis that has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any university or institution is identified in the text.

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## **Abbreviations used**

ALP	Australian Labor Party
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EU	European Union
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PICC	Paris International Conference on Cambodia
P-5	Permanent Five members of the United Nations
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
US	United States
WEOG	Western European and Other States Group, electoral group in the UN

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the importance of the concepts of *international standing* and *international reputation* for understanding Australian foreign policy in the second half of the 20th Century. It examines the two concepts both as objects of policy and as instruments of policy: as dependent and independent variables. The study is not a comprehensive account of the interface between foreign policy and international standing and reputation over the whole period. Rather, it is built around four case studies which examine the issues in some depth from a multi-country perspective. These case studies are: Australia and the Colombo Plan; the Australian peace initiative in Cambodia; Australia and foundation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum; and Australia's failed bid to win a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council in 1996. Analysing Australian foreign policy during these episodes through the prism of international standing and reputation using a multi-country perspectives approach sheds light on hitherto unexplored aspects of Australia's role on the world and regional stages, and on its relations with other countries.

The thesis finds that international standing and international reputation were crucial, but largely overlooked, factors in the articulation and implementation of Australian foreign policy goals. Australia's international standing is directly related to the influence it could exert on the world and regional stages, and Australia's international reputation is an important factor for the achievement of these goals. Both concepts are of continuing importance for Australia to be heard and taken seriously in international affairs, for establishing and maintaining Australian esteem and respect in the world, and for Australian national identity and self-respect.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the importance of the concepts of 'international standing' and 'international reputation' for understanding Australian foreign policy in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It examines the two concepts as objects of policy and as instruments of policy: as dependent and independent variables. Its thesis is that international standing and international reputation were important, but largely overlooked, factors in the articulation and implementation of Australian foreign policy goals at pivotal times during this period. They were particularly important for the success of Australia's leadership and participation in regional, multilateral and international institution-building and problem-solving activities designed to protect and promote Australia's national interests. The central research questions are:

- What do the concepts of international standing and international reputation mean in the Australian foreign policy context; and
- Do they matter?

International standing, international reputation and the associated concepts of respect, esteem, image and recognition have become part of our political vocabulary, with equivalents in other languages<sup>1</sup>. One function of the concepts is to impart in us a sense of ourselves, our relations with others and what Australia's relations with other countries should or could be. As the terms tend to be used loosely in international political discourse and in the

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<sup>1</sup> To illustrate this point, in the one week during which this section was drafted, The *Canberra Times*, published 27 articles mentioning reputation, eight of which were about international reputation. For example, US Secretary of State Rice, stated 'Russia's reputation as a potential partner in international institutions, diplomatic, political, security, economic is, frankly, in tatters,' (M. Mainville, 'Russia keeps grip on Georgia', C.T., 19 August 2008); the former career diplomat Greg Urwin was described in the national capital's newspaper as 'Australia's top Pacific specialist with a reputation for being a genuine sympathiser for a region he seldom left' ('Pacific loses passionate diplomat who 'had the region at heart'', C.T., 12 August 2008); and Qantas chief executive Dixon admitted that the airline's reputation had been tainted by a recent series of air safety incidents and said Qantas had to work hard to secure its good name (J. Marszalek, 'Qantas named world's third best', C.T., 13 August 2008).



media, one of the first tasks of the thesis has been to tease out the concepts and develop a vocabulary of their use in diplomatic and scholarly discourse.

The linking of the terms international standing and international reputation in the thesis title is deliberate. The thesis takes the view that they exist in a symbiotic relationship. More often than not, the term international standing refers to a country's 'intrinsic' rather than its 'extrinsic' properties. Intrinsic properties can be said to include such 'givens' as the size of a country's population, geographic size and location, the strength of its economy, the size and composition of its military forces and their state of preparedness, foreign policy decision-making ability, diplomatic representation, and history, culture, traditions and lifestyle, which a country like Australia possesses, whether or not it seeks to engage in international affairs. International reputation in foreign policy, on the other hand, is an 'extrinsic' factor residing in the beliefs, perceptions and representations other countries have of Australia in terms of its ability, credibility and reliability, based on observing Australian foreign policy in action. However, in terms of exerting influence on the world stage, both elements are important, and go hand in hand.

The thesis breaks new ground by bringing a *multi-country perspectives approach* to the task of assessing Australia's role on the world and regional stages. Through the prism of international standing and international reputation, it examines the views and perceptions of the other actors on specific Australian initiatives in foreign policy and the judgements they make about Australia's influence in international affairs. The thesis is mindful that the facts that underpin views about international standing or support a reputation may be incomplete, and that any one actor's perceptions of their role may diverge from the perceptions of others.<sup>2</sup> The thesis seeks to limit any particular bias in perspectives by examining a range of views and taking particular notice of the perspectives of countries that matter to Australia on a particular issue.

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<sup>2</sup> R Jervis, 'Deterrence and perception', *International Security*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 3-30, p.3.

In addition to examining existing documentary primary sources from a new angle, the thesis examines new material. In order to wrestle with and tie down the slippery concepts of international standing and international reputation, the author conducted in-depth, face-to-face or telephone interviews with thirty key informants. These informants were chosen because of their ability to provide an informed and independent view on Australia's international standing and reputation, both in general and in relation to the episodes examined in the four case studies that comprise the main body of the thesis. Since the thesis seeks to examine Australia's international standing and reputation in the regard of others, the vast majority of the key informants were from other countries. They included former foreign ministers, ambassadors, heads and senior officials of departments of foreign affairs, trade and defence, and peacekeeping force commanders. The other group of key informants included past and current senior Australian foreign policy practitioners, who provided confidential background information from an Australian perspective. The transcripts of these interviews, which in total exceed 50,000 words, provide new material for the thesis. Unless they agreed to speak on the record, the key informants are de-identified in the study.

The focus of the study and its constituent case studies is on Australian diplomacy. Its primary concern is with successive Australian governments' aspirations and behaviour in their dealings with the rest of the world. To that extent, this project is a study in the history of Australian diplomacy, rather than the history of Australian foreign policy as such.<sup>3</sup> It is not a study in Australian military history or in Australian peace-keeping, even though the notions of international standing and international reputation are relevant to these fields. Rather than attempt to cover the whole period of Australia's diplomatic history in the second half of the Twentieth Century, the thesis is

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<sup>3</sup> WJ Hudson makes this distinction between the history of Australian diplomacy and the history of Australian foreign policy in the preface to his *Australian diplomacy*, Macmillan of Australia, Melbourne, 1970, p. 1.

built around four prominent episodes in Australia's engagement in the world during this period. In each of these examples, Australia took the initiative, captured the international spotlight for a time and put its international reputation on the line. The case studies are:

- Australia and the foundation of the Colombo Plan, 1949-51
- The Australian peace initiatives in Cambodia, 1983-91
- Australia and foundation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and APEC leaders' meetings, 1989-94
- Australia's failed bid to win a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, 1994-96.

The selection of case studies resulted from a five-step process. First, historical surveys of Australia and the world in the second half of the Twentieth Century, such as David Lee's *Australia and the world in the Twentieth Century*<sup>4</sup> and the Australia Institute of International Affairs *Australia in world affairs* series<sup>5</sup>, academic studies in Australian foreign policy, such as Coral Bell's *Dependent ally* (1984)<sup>6</sup> and diplomatic memoirs, such as Richard Woolcott's *The Hot Seat*<sup>7</sup> were examined for views on significant episodes in Australia's engagement in the world over this period. This resulted in a list of 24 possible candidates.

The second step was to look at claims from Australian political leaders about the significance of past events. This investigation proved to be of limited value, since the identification of significant events in Australia's history tended to be, in Alasdair MacIntyre's phrase, 'tradition-constituted' - for

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<sup>4</sup> D Lee, *Australia and the world in the Twentieth Century: international relations since federation*, circa, Melbourne, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> G Greenwood & N Harper (eds), *Australia in world Affairs, 1950-55*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1957, and subsequent volumes in the series by Greenwood & Harper and other editors.

<sup>6</sup> C Bell, *Dependent ally: a study of Australia's relations with the United States and the United Kingdom since the fall of Singapore*, Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 1984.

<sup>7</sup> R Woolcott, *The hot seat: reflections on diplomacy from Stalin's death to the Bali bombings*, HarperCollinsPublishers, Sydney, 2003.

example, the prominence assigned to Evatt in the Labor tradition and the role of Casey and Spender in the Liberal-Country Party Coalition's foreign policy tradition.

The third step was a major culling exercise. As this is a study of Australia's international standing and international reputation, the episode had to have global salience; and Australia had to be seen as the protagonist, or at least one of the main protagonists on the world stage, taking independent action, sustaining a focus on an issue, devoting considerable of its own resources to the task over a period of time, and taking a risk by putting its reputation on the line, where possible with bipartisan support. The decision to focus on Australian diplomacy in a global, multilateral or regional, rather than a bilateral context, resulted in the exclusion of important (but for Australia, predominantly bilateral) developments, such as the establishment of the ANZUS Treaty, the establishment of diplomatic relations with China and the 1976 Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia. The decision to focus on diplomatic history, rather than military history, excluded military episodes, such as Australia's involvement in the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War, even though Australian diplomacy played a significant role in each of these episodes. In some of the remaining cases, the choice between possible candidates was not easy, for example, the decision to include APEC instead of Australian leadership in the establishment of the Cairns Group of agricultural free-traders; and to include a study of Australia and the UN Security Council instead of Australian leadership with regard to the establishment of a Chemical Weapons Convention. Some episodes were also excluded by the simple fact that they occurred or overlapped the admittedly arbitrary time frame, such as Evatt's involvement in the UN in the immediate post-war years, and the Australian intervention in East Timor, beginning in September 1999.

The fourth step was to include only those candidates for which available data sources (whether they be archival documentary sources, memoirs, private

papers, oral history narratives or transcripts of personal interviews) were sufficient to sustain an argument about Australia's international reputation and international standing with regard to the views of others.

The fifth step was to identify similarities between pairs, e.g. the Colombo Plan and APEC and the Cambodian initiative and Australia's role in the United Nations, for comparative and argument building purposes.

The Colombo Plan provided the framework for Australia's aid program to countries in the South and South-East Asian region until the 1970s. Although conceived in a Cold War context, it had progressive elements and prepared the ground for a much closer relationship between Australia and the region.<sup>8</sup> The Cambodian peace initiative sought to restore peace in Cambodia and to bring an end to years of suffering. It involved Australia in a good international citizenship role, including peace keeping. The Australian APEC initiative provides an example of an Australian contribution to regional institutional building; while the UNSC bid in 1996 sought to continue the practice of Australia seeking and securing election on the Council at roughly twelve-year intervals. Although, arguably, they should not be so, elections to the Security Council are generally regarded as a litmus test of a country's standing in the world at a particular time.<sup>9</sup>

All four case studies address an aim in Australian foreign policy, expressed in the 1994 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) corporate plan, 'to win a future for Australia in the world' in a radically changing international environment; and to overcome the disadvantages of being regarded as a peripheral country.<sup>10</sup> The first and third examples can be regarded as successes of Australian diplomacy, the second a moderate success, and the last a failure. Analysis of Australian foreign policy during these episodes in

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<sup>8</sup> D Oakman, 'The seed of freedom: regional security and the Colombo Plan', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 46, no.1, 2000, pp. 67-85.

<sup>9</sup> Key informant interview # 23, 6 November 2007.

<sup>10</sup> D Goldsworthy, 'Perspectives on Australian foreign policy, 1995', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 50, no. 2, 1996, pp. 199-207, pp. 199-200.

this way sheds light on unexplored aspects of Australia's position in the world, its use of multilateralism, and on its relations with other countries.

Australian Foreign Ministers Spender and Evans were the respective driving forces in relation to the Colombo Plan and on the Australian peace initiative on Cambodia. Prime Ministers Hawke and Keating pursued APEC regional institution-building as prime-ministerial initiatives, in which foreign ministers and their departments played supportive roles. Spender, Evans and Keating were, in Keating's often-used description, 'policy makers' rather than 'policy takers'. They were also makers of history in a dual sense - successful politicians on the international or regional stage, and chroniclers of their own life and times.<sup>11</sup> When examining their own claims to fame, it has been necessary, therefore, to consider the roles, contributions and counter-claims of other countries, and to ascertain their views on Australia's role.

The historical time gap between the first and second chosen studies requires an explanatory note. Evans and Grant claim that the Cold War period put a 'dampener' on the evolution of Australian foreign policy in the 1950s and the 1960s such that 'the political atmosphere of the time was so fraught with global consequences, so caught up with the desire to be loyal to wider interests than the national interest of Australia, that not much was done except in the margin',<sup>12</sup> and that, in particular, the Vietnam War (1965-75) dominated Australian politics and foreign policy for a decade.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it was not a time for major Australian initiatives. On the other hand, contemporary scholars see this period as a busy period for Australian diplomacy,<sup>14</sup> in which Australia was required to adopt a more self-reliant stance, accept more responsibility for its own defence and devise a new

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<sup>11</sup> P Williamson, 'Baldwin's reputation: politics and history, 1937 - 1967', *Historical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2004, pp. 127-168, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> G Evans & B Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world of the 1990s*, 2nd edn, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> For example, G Greenwood & N Harper (eds), *Australia in World Affairs, 1960-1965*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, preface v.

foundation for its foreign policies in response to important changes in major power relationships, such as the decline in British strength and influence in the region, an increase in US involvement in the region, the emergence of Japan as a major economic power and in response to local conflicts, such as the Indonesian policy of confrontation against Malaysia. During this period Asia became more important diplomatically for Australia. Australian representation in Asian countries greatly increased. Colombo Plan activities continued to be an asset in developing bilateral relations in the region. Australia's diplomatic service reached maturity, aided by a 'distinguished group of senior diplomats who have shown sensitivity, perceptiveness, an overall grasp of the problem, and both adaptability and firmness in the pursuit of their policy objectives'.<sup>15</sup> The consolidation of Australian relations with Asian countries during this period, despite Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia and the Vietnam War, provided the foundation on which later major Australian regional initiatives, such as the search for a resolution of the Cambodian conflict and Asia-Pacific regionalism, could be built.

Multilateralism, or the way Australia achieves its national interests jointly or in concert with other countries, is a common theme in all case studies. The APEC leaders' meetings and international conferences, in one form or another, figure prominently in the studies. Reynolds's recent book on *Summits* provides the schema for examining the dynamics of these meetings and the ways in which reputations are made or broken at the meetings. Such meetings, as Reynolds points out, have their own dynamics, promoted by the epic nature of such meetings. After surmounting 'the foothills' of domestic affairs, the elected politician is faced with 'new vistas', a moment when he or she 'risks all before the gaze of multitudes', with a 'chance to make or break his reputation' and a journey 'from which, once started, is painfully hard to turn back'. Further, such meetings can also have unintended personal outcomes - in the words of Reynolds, quoting Karl Marx: 'human beings

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<sup>15</sup> G Greenwood, 'Australian foreign policy in action' in G Greenwood & N Harper (eds), *Australia in World Affairs, 1960-1965*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 1-133, p. 24.

make their history but they do not make it ... under circumstances of their own choosing'.<sup>16</sup>

The thesis draws on theoretical literature to develop its argument. Key sources included Mercer's *Reputation and international politics* (1996) McNamara's *Reputation and defamation* (2007) and Tomz's *Reputation and international cooperation: sovereign debt across three centuries* (2007). Tomz's study, in particular, made an important contribution to reputational theory of cooperation, explaining the different ways governments acquire reputations and the different types of reputation that are established. His study concludes by highlighting the implications of his reputational logic for other areas of international transactions beyond sovereign debt.<sup>17</sup> There are obvious parallels between international standing and international reputation in foreign policy and international credit-worthiness and confidence, which are pursued further in this study.

In its consideration of international standing and international reputation, the thesis explores Nye's notion of 'soft power', without being beholden to the concept. Nye defines soft power in the following way:

What is soft power? It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.<sup>18</sup>

While Nye's definition of soft power embraces the whole gamut of soft power sources, such as culture, domestic values and foreign policy, this thesis focuses on the foreign policy domain (while not, of course, overlooking the importance of culture and domestic values in the making of foreign policy). For Nye, soft power is wielded by a country in its foreign policy in the way it

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<sup>16</sup> D Reynolds, *Summits: six meetings that shaped the Twentieth Century*, Allen Lane, London, 2007, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> M Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation: sovereign debt across three centuries*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2007, pp. 236-7.

<sup>18</sup> JS Nye Jr., *Soft Power: the means to success in world politics*, Public Affairs, New York, 2002, Preface, p. x.



handles its relations with others (p.8); the way it defines its national interest to include attractive causes, such as economic aid or peacemaking (p. 8); has foreign policies which are seen as legitimate and having moral authority (p.11); and has policies that are based on broadly inclusive and far-sighted definitions of the national interest (p. 60) or contribute to common goods (p. 81). However, Nye claims that in a diverse world 'all three sources of power - military, economic, and soft - remain relevant, although in different degrees in different relationships';<sup>19</sup> and that 'smart power means learning better how to combine our hard and soft power'.<sup>20</sup>

Key informants for this thesis, however, do not see any dichotomy between Nye's notion of 'soft' power and the traditional notion of 'hard' power, which is based on the possession of military power, economic power and resources that could be used for military purposes. For example:

Nye articulated something that we've long known ... it's certainly true that countries can exercise influence in the world in ways beyond simple military force and weight of economy and so on by being sort of active...<sup>21</sup>

Nye ... was right to lay that all out, but ... I think the best hand is one where you can speak softly but there can be some iron in the glove if that's needed. And I don't think that's really changed. ... Reputations are built and maintained on the ability to be seen to be active across the entire spectrum of what is regarded as being relevant international activit ...and not just only playing on one part of the keyboard.<sup>22</sup>

The thesis takes the view that in the real world of international relations, soft power is dependent upon, and often works in tandem with, elements of hard power and behaviour that is normally associated with hard power to achieve outcomes. For example, two of the 'attractive' causes mentioned by Nye - economic aid and peace-keeping - depend on a country having, respectively, the hard power attributes of a strong economy and national armed forces capability. In wielding soft power, proponents do not rely solely on attractiveness and moral persuasion. As shown in this study, foreign

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 31,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> Key informant interview # 29, 10 September 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

ministers and senior foreign policy officials are not shy of using the whole gamut of 'inducements or threats', such as lecturing, blaming, shaming, ostracising, wedge politics, and the particular Australian trait of 'sledging', to achieve their goals.

The thesis makes a contribution to the study of 'soft power' by examining its influence, amongst other influences, in particular foreign policy episodes. One of the main criticisms of the notion of soft power is that it is intangible, making measurement problematic.<sup>23</sup> Nye uses public opinion in other countries as a proxy indicator of a country's soft power influence. He also provides some examples of the use of soft power, for example, Norway's role in peace-seeking in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. However, soft power's influence can only be gauged in particular contexts, as Ochiwara states, (thereby supporting the case study approach that is used in this thesis):

What policy outcome the soft power actually effected, and whether any soft power influenced the policy outcome indeed, can be understood by investigating each individual case and by conducting content analysis. Because the context in which actors operate determines the kind of power they utilize, it may not be clear whether soft power has substantial influence on a particular outcome without taking into account the nature of the context itself. Also, because various actors wield their own soft powers, it is hard to tell which one of these actors' soft power affects the policy outcome without investigating each individual case in detail.<sup>24</sup>

Broinowski has written extensively on the related topic of Australia's image in Asia, which proved extremely helpful, particularly in relation to the case study on APEC. In her *About face: Asian accounts of Australia* (2003),<sup>25</sup> for example, Broinowski sets out to trace the sources of Australia's reputation in ten Asian societies. Her investigations led her to the conclusion that Australia has an image problem in Asia, which must be overcome if Australia wishes to be accepted in Asian circles. In her view, this image problem can, to a large part, be addressed at the Federal Government level by means of increasing

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<sup>23</sup> M Ichihara, 'Making the case for soft power', *SAIS Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2006, pp. 147-150, p. 147, retrieved 23 November 2007, Proquest database.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>25</sup> A Broinowski, *About face: Asian accounts of Australia*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2003.

funds for the Department of Foreign Affairs to promote public diplomacy and understanding of Australia in the region.

The vast literature in the late 1980s and the early 1990s on the concept of middle powers<sup>26</sup> is of direct interest to the study, particularly with respect to the need of countries like Australia to rethink their international roles in the 1990s and to take advantage of opportunities to exercise technical and entrepreneurial leadership. However, the thesis is principally not a study about the international standing and reputation of Australia as a middle power - partly because the concept lacks definitional clarity<sup>27</sup> - but mainly because Australian political leaders and leaders of other countries did not always think of Australia in these terms over the period of the study.

Apart from being a piece of innovative research which will add to the body of knowledge about Australia's standing and reputation in international affairs and assist foreign policy practitioners to develop more holistic strategies, the research will be of general interest. Australian politicians place considerable emphasis on the Government's foreign and economic policy and defence achievements in earning unprecedented esteem and respect around the world.<sup>28</sup> Projecting a favourable image of Australia is considered helpful for pursuing Australia's national security and commercial interests, and international standing is considered an important foreign policy and domestic outcome.<sup>29</sup> There is, of course, an element of self-congratulation and boosting of national ego and party morale, often combined with reference to Australia 'punching above its weight' in all this, which academics and foreign

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<sup>26</sup> For example, AF Cooper, RA Higgott & KR Nossal, *Relocating middle powers: Australia and Canada in a changing world order*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> For example, The Hon John Howard MP, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister's closing address to Sydney Institute, Intercontinental Hotel, Sydney, 1 July 2003', retrieved 4 February 2007, <<http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2002>>.

<sup>29</sup> For example, A Calvert, 'The evolving international environment and Australia's national interest' in W Tow (ed.), *Changing utterly? Australia's international policy in an uncertain age*, Lowy Institute, Sydney, 2004.

policy practitioners find irritating.<sup>30</sup> But politicians may be more in tune with the national psyche on these matters than the academics and foreign policy practitioners. Most importantly, what others think of Australia does seem to matter to ordinary Australians.<sup>31</sup> The study will also be of interest to other countries, and to academics wrestling with the concepts of international standing and international reputation in foreign policy.

### **Historical context**

The second half of the Twentieth Century was characterised by a range of profound shifts in Australia's geo-strategic and economic international environment, which impacted on its international status, influenced Australia's outlook on international affairs, and conditioned the influence Australia could bring to bear in international affairs. The Cold War dominated Australia's international strategic environment in the 1950s and the 1960's and, to some extent in the 1970s, although by then there were signs that the world was moving from a bipolar to a multi-polar power world with the emergence of Japan as a world economic power, the development of the European Communities and the Sino-Soviet split. Four main themes dominated Australia's political outlook on international affairs during these earlier decades: maintaining and strengthening the British association; collaboration with the United States; developing an accord and a policy of good neighbourliness with its Asian and Pacific neighbours; and continued support for the United Nations and for a multilateral economic world order based on free trade and convertible currencies. The period, however, also witnessed a number of shocks and new opportunities for Australia's standing and influence in the world: the end of the British Empire; Britain's decision to join the European Common Market; Britain's decision to withdraw its forces

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<sup>30</sup> P Hartcher, 'Feelgood words used to boost our national ego', *SMH*, 23 April 2008 (<http://www.smh.com.au/cgi-bin/common/popuDPrintArticle.r!?path=/articles/2008/04/22>), retrieved 23 April 2008.

<sup>31</sup> J Fitzgerald, 'Who cares what they think? John Winston Howard, William Morris Hughes and the pragmatic vision of Australia's national sovereignty', in A Broinowski (ed.), *Double vision: Asian accounts of Australia*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2004, pp. 15-39.

east of Suez; the US articulation of the US Guam doctrine of self reliance for alliance partners in defence matters; and the opening up of Asian markets, particularly Japan and other North-East Asian countries. The late 1980s and the 1990s saw the end of the Cold War, major changes in the structure of the international economy brought about by globalisation and trade liberalisation, and growing interconnectedness between governments, business and societies across nation-state boundaries, assisted by rapid growth in information technology and information dissemination.

These dramatic changes in Australia's operating environment were accompanied by changing registers of international standing and international reputation. Notions of being a committed and responsible member of the British Commonwealth (and subsequently the Commonwealth of Nations), accompanied by occasional displays of world statesmanship, were important for Australia's reputation with Britain and the Commonwealth in the earlier years of the study. However, with the reduction in Britain's military presence in the area east of Suez in the 1970s and dramatic shifts in the composition and direction of Australia's trade, these considerations declined in importance in the later decades. As Australia's links with countries in its region and Australian support for regionalism and regional institution in the Asia and Pacific region grew, notions of concern, relevance, commitment, responsibility and initiative in Australia's international standing and reputation became part of Australia's regional garb through which it sought to identify itself with the region. Australia's strategic alliance with the US and the strengthening of the bilateral relationship illustrated the dilemma of strategic and diplomatic dependency in the alliance.<sup>32</sup> The dilemma was illustrated by seeking an alliance reputation for being a trusted and loyal ally

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<sup>32</sup> C Bell, *Dependent ally: a study of Australia's relations with the United States and the United Kingdom since the fall of Singapore*, Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 1984.

and, at the same time, wanting a reputation for taking a self-confident and independent stance in international affairs. The major changes taking place in the global economy, particularly in the later years of the study, highlighted the importance of international competitiveness and comparative advantage as markers of a country's standing and reputation. Finally, globalisation and the realisation of an increasing connectedness between countries and societies re-emphasised the importance of duties beyond boundaries and being seen as a good international citizen. In the earlier years of this study, Australia regarded itself as a 'small' power in terms of the influence it could exert on world affairs; but in the later years it had graduated to being a 'middle' power. The development of the Australian Department of External Affairs (subsequently the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and the development of Australia's overseas representation, particularly in Asia, over the period provided agency for the extension of Australia's influence in international affairs and was important for establishing and maintaining Australia's international reputation in foreign policy.

### **The structure of the thesis**

Following the Introduction, *Chapter One* on keywords, approaches and methods explores the notions of international standing and international reputation, and identifies suitable methods and analytical tools for the thesis. *Chapters Two to Five* present the results, respectively, of the case studies on the Colombo Plan, the Australian peace initiative on Cambodia, APEC and the Australian 1996 UNSC bid. The results of the case studies research are summarised at the end of each case study. The *final section* presents conclusions.

## CHAPTER 1. KEY WORDS, APPROACHES AND METHODS

This Chapter aims to arrive at an understanding of the use of the terms ‘international standing’ and ‘international reputation’, as they are used by scholars and practitioners in the broad field of international affairs. By examining the concepts in a range of disciplines and in specialised fields within these disciplines, the Chapter also seeks to identify suitable analytical tools that researchers in international relations could include in their tool-boxes.

### Key words

International standing and international reputation are rubbery words with multiple meanings. In this Chapter the key concepts and their properties are teased out and explored. The adopted approach builds on Raymond Williams’s *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*.<sup>1</sup> The essential elements of the approach are:

- an examination of dictionary meanings;
- an exploration of the vocabulary use of the concepts in an historical, cultural and societal context;
- the exploration of linkages, including between the use of the terms in specialised vocabulary of a specialised discipline and general and variable use; and
- a consciousness of social and political values impacting on usage.

In the case of social and political value-laden words (like ‘international standing’ and ‘international reputation’), Williams argues:

What can really be contributed is not resolution but, perhaps, at times, just that extra edge of consciousness. In a social history in which many crucial meanings have been shaped by a dominant class, and by particular

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<sup>1</sup> R Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*, Fontana Paperbacks, Flamingo edn, London, 1983.

professions operating to a large extent within its terms, the sense of edge is accurate.<sup>2</sup>

### Dictionary definitions

English dictionary definitions of 'standing' refer to four principal meanings of the term: (a) *position or rank*, (b) the *estimation or repute* in which one is held, (c) duration (e.g., 'a dispute of long standing'), and (d) motion (e.g., 'standing still'). The first two meanings are interrelated, whereas the latter two are not directly relevant to this study.

*The Macquarie Australian National Dictionary* refers to 'reputation' as follows:

**reputation** n. **1.** The estimation in which a person or thing is held, especially by the community or the public generally; repute: *a man of good reputation*. **2.** favourable repute; good name: *to ruin one's reputation by misconduct*. **3.** a favourable and publicly recognised name or standing for merit, achievement, etc.: *to build up a reputation*. **4.** The estimation or name of being, having, having done, etc., something specified.

In *Roget's Thesaurus*, 'standing' with respect to the first principal meaning mentioned above is associated with the keyword 'state' (of abstract relations), for example, 'position', 'status', or 'rank' and with the word 'prestige'; while 'reputation' is associated with the words and phrases: (good) 'report', 'title to fame', 'name', 'character', 'respectability', 'credit', 'regard', 'approval', 'esteem', 'influence' and 'authority'. However, as Williams points out, while the dictionary approach is a necessary starting point, the approach has the limitation that it is primarily philological and etymological, and is much better for describing a range and variations than establishing connections and interaction.<sup>3</sup>

### Use

In his *Philosophical investigations*, German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein advises his readers to pay attention to the use of a word or phrase in order to

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 19.



understand its meaning. He expresses this in the aphorism 'meaning is use',<sup>4</sup> for which he became famous. 'Meaning is use' should not be taken to conclude that any kind of use justifies any meaning. For Wittgenstein, 'meaning is use' has its application in community; there are no private language games. For this study, the relevant discourse communities are the diplomatic, academic, media and the public, as expressed through public opinion polls. While the terms international standing and international reputation and their connections, such as prestige, status, resolve, good citizenship and image, are often used interchangeably, the literature suggests the following inter-related clusters of meaning, which will be followed in this thesis.

<b>International Standing</b>	<b>International Reputation</b>
Status	Resolve
Prestige	Trust and reliability
Esteem	Legal and moral obligation
	Good international citizenship
	Image

Wajnryb suggests exploring 'rubbery' words (such as international standing and international reputation) with the aid of Pragmatics, which she describes as an area of Linguistics that is dedicated to the notion of inferable meaning, or how we arrive at the between-the-line meanings that are so essential to the lubrication of social interaction.<sup>5</sup> These between-the-line meanings reside in the 'implicature', which she describes as a 'fancy word for a kind of pragmatic grey space where inferences go to be unravelled – like a holding bay'.<sup>6</sup> She suggests that meanings are attributed to such utterances, within

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<sup>4</sup> L Wittgenstein, *Philosophical investigations*, translated by GEM Ascombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1953, part 1, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> R Wajnryb, *Away with words: a frolic through the landscape of language*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2005, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

certain contexts, by members of specific discourse communities, who by virtue of their membership in such communities, have agreed that these meanings are part of their shared understandings.<sup>7</sup>

### **International standing**

In the academic literature and in politicians' speeches, international standing is usually assessed objectively in both nominal and cardinal terms. For example, in 2006, Australian Foreign Minister Downer stated that Australia was the 6<sup>th</sup> largest country by land mass, the 13<sup>th</sup> largest economy, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest industrialised country, the 8<sup>th</sup> richest nation in per capita terms and possessed 10 per cent of the world's biodiversity.<sup>8</sup> Even in relation to population size, Australia ranked in the top 25 per cent of the world's countries. Its military expenditure was the 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the world, and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in Asia. Australia was also the 6<sup>th</sup> oldest still functioning democracy in the world. However, international rankings such as these do not necessarily convert into reputation or influence. Downer's other claims in his speech with respect to Australia's regional and international standing, include claims that Australia's alliance with the United States 'gives us more weight in the region'; that Australia has shown leadership in the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development; and that, as a result of building a competitive economy. Australia's international economic weight had grown to the point that 'we can argue for global deregulation from a position of some moral conviction'.<sup>9</sup> These are representative of claims for international recognition, esteem and reputation, which rely for their verification on the judgment and perceptions of others.

Reynolds cautions against categorising countries as 'minor' or 'great' or 'superpowers', because such language can lure a country into understanding

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> A Downer, 'Should Australia think big or small in foreign policy', Speech to the Centre for International Studies, Sydney, 10 July 2006, retrieved 20 July 2007, ([www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2006/060710.bigorsmall.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2006/060710.bigorsmall.html)).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

power as a permanent possession, whereas power is relative and its influence may vary from situation to situation:

Power, then, is relative not absolute; its sources are intangible as well as tangible. What matters is not abstract rankings of great powers but the complex balance of forces in each particular power relationship.<sup>10</sup>

Former DFAT Deputy-Secretary Sadlier arrives at a similar conclusion when he states:

A country's power and influence really depends on the level of its interest in particular situations or issues and its capacity to influence the outcome of those situations or issues.<sup>11</sup>

Both views lend further support to the case study approach adopted in this study.

Japan scholar Dore highlights the importance of status and prestige for international standing. Writing in 1975, the midpoint in the 50 year time span of this study, Dore states that he was struck by the general tendency of scholars of international affairs to play down the importance of international standing, status and prestige factors in international relations, more than seemed plausible. He comments:

Most of my life has been spent in the study of Japanese society. One thing that has frequently impressed me is the importance, for explaining a variety of internal developments in Japanese society as well as the direction of Japanese foreign policy over the last hundred years, of a shared national concern with Japan's standing in the international community.<sup>12</sup>

For example:

It is possible to interpret the trends of Japan's foreign policy from 1870 to the 1940s as motivated by a dominant concern with Japan's international status. The drive to remove the unequal treaties, goes this argument, really was about inequality and pride and not about tariff autonomy; it was as much for

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<sup>10</sup> D Reynolds, *Britannia overruled: British policy and world power in the Twentieth Century*, Longman, London, 1991, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> D Sadlier, 'Aspects of Australia's place in and outlook on the world'. Address by DFAT Deputy-Secretary to the Senior Officers Strategic Studies Course, HMAS Penguin, 29 June 1987, *AFAR*, vol. 56, no. 8, August 1987, p. 428.

<sup>12</sup> RP Dore, 'The prestige factor in international affairs', *International Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 2, April 1975, pp. 190-207, p. 190, retrieved 15 September 2008, JSTOR database.

glory as for territory, indemnities and colonies that the wars were fought against China and Russia; it was the refusal of the Western powers to accord Japan full great power status - the humiliating rejection of its racial equality clause from the League of Nations' Convention, or the exclusion acts in California, for example - which in the 1920s finally tipped the balance away from the policies of sweet reasonableness and international correctness, and in the 1930s allowed the army to impose its own recipe for achieving the national goal; if, they seemed to be saying, we cannot gain the esteem of the West by our conformity to *their* rules and norms, then we shall do so by the only means they seem to understand; the use of military force.<sup>13</sup>

He asks:

And what really, is meant by 'standing in' or 'a position of equality in' the international community? Why is it that most Japanese still feel that despite their great economic power they somehow have not achieved a 'standing' commensurate with it? And why should they appear to be so much more concerned than, say, the Swedes or Yugoslavs, about whether they have it or not?<sup>14</sup>

Dore goes on to suggest that Japanese concern with international standing 'involves a presumption that there exists a prestige hierarchy of nations' and a 'certain consensus, shared by those at all levels of the hierarchy of what the order is', which in turn implies the existence of a community.

China appears to be another country whose internal and international policies reflect its status aspirations and concerns for international standing and equality, as Harris and Klintworth point out in their concluding remarks in *China as a great power*.

International relationships are not just concerned with the distribution of economic, political or military power. Status and prestige are also important, often critically so, as is likely to be the case for China given its history. China's status and prestige as the most important great power in continental Asia has been recognised implicitly if belatedly by most of all its regional neighbours, but considerably less so by the West despite its UN Security Council membership.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 190-91.

<sup>15</sup> S Harris & G Klintworth, 'Conclusion: China and the region after Deng' in S Harris & G Klintworth (eds), *China as a great power: myths, realities and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region*, Longman, New York, 1995, pp. 357-366, p. 365.

India's recent quest to become a great power and a key player in international peace and security reflects the efforts of Indian leaders to elevate India's regional and international standing and to increase its power and to reclaim its standing in the near abroad - parts of Africa, the Persian Gulf, Central and Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region.<sup>16</sup> India's expansive relations with all the major powers at the same time - a unique situation for India - is considered to be a result, not only of India's increasing weight in the global economy and its growing power potential, but also of New Delhi's savvy and persistent diplomacy.<sup>17</sup>

Dore posits the following model for understanding international standing in the world community:

Let me summarise the model of the world community implicit in all I have been saying. It is of a normatively ranked hierarchy of nations in which a major preoccupation of its members is to raise, or to maintain, their existing position. It deserves the term 'community' precisely because one can use the term 'normative' - because there is a rough consensus, which even peripheral members such as the Chinese half-share, concerning which are top-rank nations and which are lower-rank nations. There is also - it is logically implicit in such an analysis - a rough consensus on the criteria which determine rank, and those criteria include not only power - the ability to coerce and deter, by the implicit or explicit threat of material damage - and conspicuous wealth, but also such things as 'being ahead' in matters of equality and justice; not torturing one's citizens, and having that sort of national cohesion which comes from a Scandinavian confidence in the quality of one's social, artistic and intellectual life, rather than from anxious preoccupation with external power and prestige - in short, having some claims to exercise moral leadership.<sup>18</sup>

A range of meanings of international standing, from neutral to moral, is evident in Dore's model of the world community. While the terms international reputation and international standing are mostly separated when used in the literature, they are sometimes used conjointly. For example, Reynolds reports that a senior British Foreign Office official had expressed his concerns over the direction of Chamberlain's discussions with Hitler in

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<sup>16</sup> CR Mohan, 'India and the balance of power', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 4, 2006, pp. 17-32, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid* p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Dore, 'The prestige factor in international affairs', p. 202.

1938 on the Sudeten problem, not so much out of consideration for the Czechs, but more over the way Britain's standing in the world depended to a considerable extent on reputation.<sup>19</sup> Templeton's *Standing upright here*, which recounts the history of the development of New Zealand's nuclear policies over the best part of the latter half of the Twentieth Century, makes the link in its title between New Zealand's international standing and its reputation for standing on its own feet as an independent nation on a matter of government policy, principle and popular will.<sup>20</sup>

A former Commonwealth Secretary-General said in interview that, in practice, international standing rather than international reputation was the preferred term in diplomatic discourse:

I would say that, usually, the two phrases are used to describe how a country is regarded outside its borders, particularly in international organisations and international groupings. But, in practice, international standing is more often used in international discourse because it is less prejudicial in terms of an expression. International standing is much more neutral than international reputation.<sup>21</sup>

Another key informant said that both terms were 'slightly pejorative' in their use.<sup>22</sup> Yet another, speaking from a realist perspective, said on the relationship between the two phrases:

I think that I relate them back to how power ... because that's mostly how I think about the world. I'm a realist tempered by a bit of liberal internationalism in the sense that I think that power shapes the world but norms can affect the way power is utilised. So with reputation I think of a capacity to get things done as one dimension. I suppose another dimension is the ordinary one, in which we would use the term when talking about other people - when diplomats from states get down and talk about countries. Singapore has a reputation for being efficient and good at promoting its own interests. The Philippines has a reputation for being slightly chaotic and unable to deliver on things. So that's the sort of common sense and I think that it is used in the way the decision-making strata across the world - the international decision-making strata - think about countries.

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<sup>19</sup> Reynolds, *Summits*, p. 73.

<sup>20</sup> M Templeton, *Standing upright here: New Zealand in the nuclear age 1945-1990*, Victoria University Press in association with the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Telephone interview with the author, 3 November 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Key informant # 23, 6 November 2007.

Many informants, however, spoke of international standing in an holistic sense, encompassing such factors as the state of Australia's military preparedness; the strength of its economy; its trade, especially with the region; its strengths in agriculture, industry, education, science and technology; and relevant history and cultural factors such as Australia's development of a democracy, the emergence of a tolerant society on the one hand and the legacy of its 'White Australia' policy and Australia's treatment of its Indigenous people on the other. International reputation, on the other hand, is a more behavioural and action-orientated concept, related for example, to its reputation as an immigrant and refugee receiving country.

Membership of regional institutions or clubs and inclusion in regional deliberations can also have an impact on international standing. However, as Dalrymple points out, few people have had so much difficulty in defining themselves in regional terms or in reconciling themselves to their location as have the Australians.<sup>23</sup> The cultivation of good relations with Asian countries, Australian understanding of Asia, and policies of engagement with Asia are essential, in his view, for Australia to be accepted by members of the East Asian region and to have a sustainable place in its regional context or, conversely, to avoid alienation in its own part of the world. However, an obsession with Australia's standing in the world could reflect, as one key informant pointed out, 'a sort of mild form of neurosis, and the neurosis is Australia constantly examining whether it's the way it positions itself on the international stage is okay'.<sup>24</sup>

### **International reputation**

Arriving at a workable concept of international reputation for the study of the history of international relations of a particular country is more problematic.

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<sup>23</sup> R Dalrymple, *Continental drift: Australia's search for a regional identity*, Ashgate, Sydney, 2003, p.

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<sup>24</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

Jervis outlines the general problem with the use of the notion of reputation when he states in the early 1980s (in relation to deterrence theory):

Some states have reputations for being bolder, more resolute, and more reckless than others. That is, states are seen to differ in the price they are willing to pay to achieve a given goal. But it is not clear how these reputations are established and maintained or how important they are compared to the other influences on credibility. We cannot predict with great assurance how a given behavior (e.g., refusing to change one's position on an issue) will influence others' expectations of how the state will act in the future.

To start with, does reputation attach to the decision-maker, the regime, or the country? If one president acts boldly, will other states' leaders draw inferences only about him or will they expect his successors to display similar resolve? After a revolution, do others think the slate has been wiped clean or does the reputation of the earlier regime retain some life? If one kind of regime (e.g., a capitalist democracy) displays willingness to run high risks, do others draw any inferences about the resolve of similar regimes? How fast do reputations decay?

On these points we have neither theoretically grounded expectations nor solid evidence. In another area, we at least can be guided by a good theory.<sup>25</sup>

Writing in 2007, Tomz reports:

Jervis's assessment of the field still holds. How do people form beliefs about the reliability of prospective partners? What causes reputations to change, and when do they remain the same? In what contexts will concerns about reputation exert the greatest effect on international behavior, and when are they less likely to matter? Existing literature does not offer clear, convincing answers to these questions.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Types of reputation in international relations***

Wajnryb's metaphor of 'a house with many rooms' offers a convenient analytical tool to begin unravelling the notion of reputation in international affairs. With respect to the equally 'rubbery' notion of truth, Wajnryb asks:

What would truth look like if it were a house? There'd be a number of rooms – one for faithfulness, another for accuracy, a third for authenticity. The house wouldn't have been entirely built in the same era: the 'faithful' room

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<sup>25</sup> R Jervis, 'Deterrence and perception', *International Security*, vol. 7, no. 3, Winter, 1982-1983, pp. 3-30, retrieved 28 September 2010, JSTOR database.

<sup>26</sup> M Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, p. 237.



would have been part of the original design while accuracy was added later, perhaps with new owners.<sup>27</sup>

This metaphor is useful for identifying the three main themes of 'international reputation' found in the academic literature and in diplomatic discourse:

- Prestige, honour and concerns about *reputation for resolve*, which reside in the power politics room.
- *Respect for international law and moral obligations and international cooperation*, including notions of being a good international citizen, which reside in the international law, moral obligations, international and corporate social responsibility room.
- Reputation sought and implied in *having a positive 'brand' image*, which resides in the public information and public diplomacy room.

In terms of their development in international relations, according to the Wajnryb metaphor, prestige, resolve and international obligations would have been part of the original design, while 'brand image' and 'public diplomacy' were later modern additions or makeovers. A proposed typology of use is set out in the following table.

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<sup>27</sup> Wajnryb, *Away with words*, p. 108.

**Table 1: Typology of the use of the word ‘reputation’ in international relations**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Manifestations</b>	<b>Sample references</b>
International security, power politics, economic power	International prestige, esteem and status	Reputation for resolve  Honour	HJ Morgenthau, <i>Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace</i> (1978) J Mercer, <i>Reputation and international politics</i> (1996) JH Elliott, <i>Richelieu and Olivares</i> (1984)
International law and moral obligations  Multilateralism	International moral and legal responsibilities; international and regional cooperation	Respect for international treaties and international law obligations.  Reputation for legitimate governance  Recognition of duties beyond borders  Being a good international citizen  Keeping one’s word	A Cassese, <i>International law</i> (2002) P Keal (ed.) <i>Ethics and foreign policy</i> (1992) S Hoffman, <i>Duties beyond borders: (1981)</i> G Evans & B Grant, <i>Australia’s foreign relations in the world in the 1990s</i> (1995) M Tomz, <i>Reputation and international cooperation: sovereign debt across three centuries</i> (2007)
Public diplomacy	Representations of Australia in other countries	Projecting a positive image internationally  Brand imaging  Corporate social responsibility	JS Nye Jr, <i>Soft power</i> (2004) M Leonard, <i>Public diplomacy</i> (2002) Parliament of Australia, <i>Australia’s public diplomacy: building our image</i> (2007) JV Mitchell, <i>Reputation and responsibility: the new corporate overhead</i> (2000) A Broinowski, <i>About face: Asian accounts of Australia</i> (2003).

### ***Reputation as prestige and honour and reputation for resolve***

In his review of historical studies of Spanish foreign policy in the Seventeenth Century, early modern historian Elliott<sup>28</sup> remarks on 'the persistent recurrence of the word *reputacion* in the Spanish Council of State', where Count-Duke Olivares, for one, had no doubt about the importance of *reputacion* as both an object, and as an instrument of policy. 'Reputation', he writes, 'can many times triumph without arms and resources'. Elliott comments on the need to understand the idea of reputation as perceived and used by statesmen at the time:

Someone will perhaps one day attempt a close analysis of the idea of reputation as perceived and used by the statesmen of early modern Europe in the formulation and conduct of policy. Until then, we shall have to be content with registering its importance to contemporaries as the guiding principle for actions which may seem puzzlingly irrational to twentieth-century minds with their tendency to define 'rationality' in terms of the pursuit of economic or strategic interests.<sup>29</sup>

Elliott's own comparative study of the policies and influences of Cardinal Richelieu and Count-Duke Olivares provides a detailed case study of the inter-relationship between reputation, prestige, power politics and domestic reform. While his subject matter is the conflict between power politics, reputation and domestic reform in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, the lessons that can be drawn from the study have enduring relevance for the study of reputation for resolve and reputation as prestige:

The rhetoric of reputation, which constituted the guiding principle of these two statesmen in foreign and domestic policy alike, imposed a logic of its own on their programmes for reform. Prestige brought power; power brought prestige; and prestige, if skillfully exploited, could sometimes make it unnecessary to resort to arms. But reputation, with all its overtones of honour derived from the military and aristocratic ethos of Early Modern Europe, had at all times to be defended, whatever the price; and the price to

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<sup>28</sup> JH Elliott, 'Review: A question of reputation? Spanish foreign policy in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 55, no. 3, 1983, pp. 475-483, p. 477.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

France and Spain in the later 1620s was to be the definitive sacrifice of reform to war.<sup>30</sup>

Both Ministers also make it plain to their royal masters that there is no shortcut to success; that hard work and sacrifice are required if they are to play the exalted parts expected of them in the theatre of the world.<sup>31</sup>

In his account of the motivations of leaders involved in the First World War, Offer<sup>32</sup> revisits the theme that kings, political leaders and generals felt obliged to defend a country's honour, whatever the costs. On the motivational source of honour in a military or civilian code of honour, he writes:

Honor confers a *reputation*. In challenging for a duel, a man proclaims his willingness to sacrifice the ultimate asset, life itself, in order to avert the loss of social reputation.<sup>33</sup>

In arguing his case, Offer states that military honour was alive in Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany on the eve of the War; that the Kaiser regarded the Sarajevo assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand as an insult to Austria who looked to Germany for support; that the Belgian position in the conflict was dictated by considerations of national honour; that Britain felt a sense of honour to support France and Belgium and that a series of insults, through submarine warfare, provoked the US into war. Thus: 'A chain reaction of honorable intentions erupted into a slow-motion holocaust that destroyed scores of millions of lives in the horrors of the Western, Eastern and other fronts'.<sup>34</sup> While Offer declares that honour is 'a script inherited from forgotten cultures, founded on a flawed logic of belligerence and a misleading

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<sup>30</sup> JH Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> A Offer, 'Going to war in 1914: a matter of honor?', *Politics & Society*, vol. 23, no.213, 1995, pp.213-241, retrieved 13 April 2011, Sagepublications database.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

cognitive bias', he also states notes that 'scripts of honour continue to hold us in their grip'.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Reputation: politics of prestige***

In his *Politics among nations*, Morgenthau, introduces the 'politics of prestige' as the third basic manifestation of the struggle for power on the international scene (along with the maintenance and acquisition of power, as expressed in policies that maintain the status quo and imperialism). The primary function of the policy of prestige (which he notes has rarely been recognised in modern political literature for what it is) is to influence the evaluations of power relations as they exist among different nations at a certain moment of history and as they are likely to develop in the immediate and distant future. For example:

A policy of prestige attains its very triumph when it gives the nation pursuing it such a reputation for power as to enable it to forego the actual employment of power.<sup>36</sup>

and:

To demonstrate to the rest of the world the power one's own nation possesses, revealing neither too much nor too little, is the task of a wisely conceived policy of prestige.<sup>37</sup>

However, in Morgenthau's view of the world, prestige counts only as an instrument of foreign policy, not as an object of policy. Prestige is not an end in itself, but a means to reduce the transactional costs of power politics.

### ***Reputation for resolve***

Mercer's *Reputation and international politics*<sup>38</sup> provides a comprehensive account of what defines a reputation, its properties and how reputations form in international politics. Drawing on social psychological research and a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>36</sup> HJ Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (revised), Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1978, p. 77.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>38</sup> J Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996.

number of historical case studies of crises before World War I, he seeks to explain how decision-makers interpret the behaviours of both adversaries and alliance partners. His book focuses on reputation for resolve in international power politics.

This book focuses on resolve. Resolve is the extent to which a state will risk war to keep its promises and uphold its threats. I also examine the flip side of a reputation for resolve: a reputation for loyalty among allies.<sup>39</sup>

On the question as to whether reputations matter in international relations, Mercer claimed:

Reputation has played an important role among American decision-makers both in the design of nuclear strategy and as a reason for intervening - or not intervening - in foreign conflicts. There are many cases where the United States apparently acted primarily out of concern for its reputation. For example, concern for reputation led the United States to create a government in Korea below the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, then to deploy U.S. forces in Korea in 1950, and finally to move from containment of communism to liberation of Korea. Reputational concerns appear to have been equally important in the Taiwan Straits Crises, the 1958 Lebanon intervention, and Vietnam. President Bush used reputation as an important reason to fight Iraq in the Gulf War and President Clinton invoked reputation to support intervention in Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti. American decision-makers apparently decided not to intervene in China in the late 1940s primarily because of the potential reputational costs of failure. Reputation was advanced as a reason not to intervene in defense of Quemoy and Matsu and as a reason for not deploying more ground troops in Vietnam. Concern for America's reputation have been a reason why President Bush decided against marching to Baghdad in the Gulf War and it might be a check on U.S. intervention against Serbia in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>40</sup>

Milligen argues that, while prestige and reputation have been sensible and natural objects of concern for American policy makers since at least the early 1950s, they were of central concern during the Vietnam War.<sup>41</sup> She notes that a network of other terms accompanies the use of prestige and reputation. These other terms include credibility, standing, humiliation, saving face, and image. By the close of the Vietnam War, the term dominating policy

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> JL Milliken, 'Metaphors of prestige and reputation in American foreign policy and American realism' in F Beer & R Harriman (eds), *Post-realism: the rhetorical turn in international relations*, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, 1996, pp. 217-238.

discussion was 'credibility', and it is this term that scholars have tended to use to characterise American policy. In an important contribution to the debate, Milligen points out that prestige and reputation are social constructs, dependent for their naturalness on an extensive and mostly unconscious system of metaphors - such as personal honour, position, pillars of peace, and (financial) transaction costs and gains. She recommends that the use of 'prestige' and 'reputation' to define state practice deserve critical scrutiny.

Tang notices an ever-widening gap between the politician's persistent obsession with reputation and the scholar's increasing doubts about its importance, and describes this obsession as a cult.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, from a practitioner's point of view, Kissinger states: 'No serious policy maker could allow himself to succumb to the fashionable debunking of prestige or honour or credibility', and that: 'The principles of America's honor and America's responsibility were not empty phrases to me'.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Tang makes a useful contribution to the debate over the notion of 'credibility' and to the possibility of a wider application of the notion in diplomacy by defining it in the following way: 'Credibility consists of a reputation for or perception of capability, the perception of interest, and a reputation for resolve. In any given situation, an actor's credibility is other actors' combined assessment of these three factors'.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Reputation as good standing by nation states with respect to moral and legal obligations***

Many strands of this notion are indicated in the literature. Liberal internationalists indicate their belief in the importance of reputation. Writing in the period between the two world wars, liberal internationalists propose that the world after the Treaty of Versailles could be made more stable, more just

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<sup>42</sup> S Tang, 'Reputation, cult of reputation, and international conflict', *Security Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, January–March 2005, pp. 34-62, retrieved 25 January 2010, Informa database.

<sup>43</sup> H Kissinger, *White House Years*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1979, p. 228. The author is grateful to Tang for pointing out this passage in Kissinger's memoir.

<sup>44</sup> Tang, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

and more peaceful than any previous era in human history; and that the world should be governed by principles of justice, equality, reciprocal obligations, cooperation and mutual assistance, rather than status and power. McElroy states that the liberal internationalists believed that nations cared about their reputations as well as their standings within the community of nations. They believed that, as a result, international condemnation did carry enormous political weight apart from any other sanctions that might be imposed.<sup>45</sup> In his *Morality and American foreign policy: the role of ethics in international affairs*, McElroy examines the propositions from liberal internationalists that widely held international moral norms do exist and do influence foreign policy through:

- the consciences of individual leaders,
- domestic political support, and
- the desire of state decision-makers to maintain a positive reputation of their nation in the international system.

McElroy examines these propositions with respect to American foreign policy since the Second World War, drawing on a number of key episodes. For example, in his case study of the transfer of the Canal and the Canal Zone to Panama in 1978, he points out:

The case of the Panama Canal treaties demonstrates three different pathways from international moral norms to foreign-policy decision making: President Carter's conscience-driven dedication to a more moral American foreign policy; domestic political pressure upon the Senate, generated by the adherence of key interest groups to the norm of anti-colonialism; and the ability of General Torrijos to use the anticolonial norm to form a coalition of nations that brought serious reputational pressure on the United States to alter its policies on Panama.<sup>46</sup>

In this case, the United States concluded that it was better to transfer the Canal than to continue to jeopardise future cooperation with neighbouring countries and the Third World by retaining the waterway in perpetuity, and so

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<sup>45</sup> RW McElroy, *Morality and American foreign policy: the role of ethics in international affairs*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1992, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.



reduce the transaction costs involved in building and maintaining relations with these neighbouring countries.

International lawyers believe that there are reputational benefits associated with adherence to the fundamental principles that govern state action and by which all member states of the United Nations should abide. These principles include the equality and self-determination of nations, and the obligation of member countries to obey the Charter, to cooperate with the UN Security Council and to use peaceful means to resolve conflicts. The principles represent the fundamental set of standards on which states agree and allow relatively smooth international relations. They constitute *overriding legal standards* that may be regarded as the *constitutional principles* of the international community.<sup>47</sup> Member country obligations also include adherence to the conventions they have signed, such as the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, and the *Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. Failure to comply with the overriding legal standards and convention obligations are deemed to have consequences for a country's international reputation.<sup>48</sup>

In the absence of an enforceable international legal system, reputation can be a useful means of ensuring state compliance with international treaties, agreements and understandings. Writing in relation to international economic treaties (but with relevance to all international treaties), Waelde highlights the importance of reputation both for enhancement of the prospects of compliance, and for the reduction of transactional costs by lowering potential risks:

Accession (i.e. signature and formal ratification) to treaties has a formal legal meaning but also a less direct signaling and symbolic effect. By accepting a bilateral or multilateral investment treaty, the government of a country signals its acceptance of rules and procedures which are normally accepted by the community of Western market economies. In essence, it means the

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<sup>47</sup> A Cassese, *International law*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 88.

<sup>48</sup> W Maley, 'Asylum-seekers in Australia's international relations', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2003, pp. 187-202, p. 191.

re-emergence of the classical concept of 'civilised nations' with the acceptance of a treaty as equivalent to membership in that select club. A government signifies that its domestic political process has accepted the formal legal implications, and that it wishes to be held accountable to such treaty obligations. Not only does such acceptance bestow a number of legal privileges to foreign investors, at the cost of government sovereignty, but it also expresses a formal decision to accept a rules and value system characteristic of developed market economies. The host state signals to investors – and to the global markets – that it is at least its intention to behave as developed market economies do or are expected to do. For the markets, this means the prospect of a lowering of the political risk rating as the treaty obligations are formally, and subsequently, materially accepted and implemented. For the state, it means an enhancement of its reputation as a reasonable host state for foreign investment and trade.<sup>49</sup>

However, according to Waelde, reputation works best in equilibrium situations. It works less well with aggressive newcomers who may be seeking to establish a position in defiance of established rules of the game. Accordingly, contracts relying on reputation as a guarantee of compliance need to appreciate its relativity.<sup>50</sup>

In a similar vein, Tomz examines the emergence of cooperation between governments and foreign investors with respect to sovereign debt across three centuries and concludes that reputations had formed and influenced behaviour in a remarkably consistent way.<sup>51</sup> He finds that the evolving beliefs of investors constitute the borrower's reputation in foreign eyes and are fundamental to both lending and repayment.<sup>52</sup> Further, the beliefs of investors are not immutable but evolve as investors interpret behaviour in context:

The Great Depression offered investors an opportunity to study behavior in a different context, and thereby distinguish stalwarts from mere fair-weatherers. Many presumed fair-weatherers around the world defaulted in the 1930s, but a handful met their obligations in full. Argentina, Australia, and Finland, in particular, stunned the world by repaying in dire circumstances. These

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<sup>49</sup> TW Waelde, 'Law, contract & reputation in international business: what works', the journal, vol.3-16, retrieved 15 September 2008, CEPMLP website,

<<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cepmlp/journal/html/vol3/article3-16.html>>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, p. 229.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

surprising payers gained esteem in the eyes of foreign investors and refinanced their debts at low rates...

Borrowers, too, behaved according to reputational theory. Most countries repaid their debts most of the time. Defaults did occur, however, as expected in a model with incomplete information, political change, and economic shocks. In any given year, some 10 percent of countries in the world failed to satisfy private foreign lenders, and the figure soared to nearly 50 percent during exogenous shocks such as the Great Depression...

Finally, governments articulated a reputational rationale for repaying their loans...<sup>53</sup>

Downs and Jones provide a critique of the centrality of reputation in the 'dominant institutionalist theory of decentralized cooperation' by arguing that states do not possess a single reputation for upholding international commitments.<sup>54</sup> They maintain multiple reputations for compliance, depending on their assessment of the compliance costs of a particular agreement, the size of the treaty and on the relative importance states assign to it. Nevertheless, they state that reputational concerns are an important force for compliance in relation to particular agreements.

Since the Second World War, there has been an evolution of the notion of state sovereignty where state reputation no longer rests solely on ability to exercise authority over territory and the population that reside in it, but also embraces the idea of 'sovereignty as responsibility'. The term is used where a state has a duty to provide for the basic human rights in its own land mass and to be concerned about the abuse of rights overseas.<sup>55</sup> Foot argues that prior to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC, there has been a widespread understanding (as opposed to agreement)

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>54</sup> GW Downs & MA Jones, 'Reputation, compliance and international law', *The Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 95-114, retrieved 2 November 2010, JSTOR database.

<sup>55</sup> This idea finds expression in the 2001 report of an international independent commission, *The responsibility to protect: report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (2001, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa), co-chaired by the former Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans. The Commission was given the mandate of reconciling the international community's responsibility to act in the face of massive violations of humanitarian norms while respecting the sovereign rights of states, and report back to the United Nations Secretary-General.

that governments are expected to protect individual human rights and that failures to protect are of legitimate concern to other state, non-state, and international institutional actors in global society.<sup>56</sup>

Since 11 September 2001, the assumption that modern, legitimate statehood increasingly entails the protection of human rights is seriously challenged, and a reputation for effectiveness in the counterterrorism campaign becomes more significant than a reputation for defending human rights, particularly in the Asian region. Foot argues:

Many of the political actors affected by these trends seemingly have picked up the signal that building a reputation for resolve and developing an ability to participate effectively in the antiterrorist struggle has become increasingly important, overshadowing human rights matters in the appreciation of their standing as modern states and institutions. As a result, the level of contribution these state and interstate bodies make to the counterterrorist campaign has shown signs of reshaping hierarchies in world politics.<sup>57</sup>

Writing in the 1990's, Evans and Grant elevate good international citizenship to a third broad category of Australia's national interests, alongside geopolitical and strategic interests and economic and trade interests:

The third group of national interests involves being, and being seen to be, a good international citizen. Global environment problems like the ozone layer require global solutions: so do international health problems like AIDS, or the international narcotics trade, or unregulated population flows, or a number of other phenomena sometimes referred to as 'non-military threats to security'. Australia has a role to play in all these areas, just as in other fields of international action such as decolonisation, peace-keeping and the whole arms control agenda.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> R Foot, 'Human rights and counterterrorism in global governance: reputation and resistance', *Global Governance*, vol. 11, 2005, pp. 291-310, p. 291. Foot goes on to say that: 'Academic writers influenced either by power or sociological explanations of world politics argued that states accepted this normative understanding because they were coerced or offered positive incentives, because they deemed the norms to be valid, or because they recognized that this idea of legitimate sovereignty was part of the script of modern statehood'.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>58</sup> G Evans & B Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world of the 1990s*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 34.

They assert:

In the longer term, the evolution of just and tolerant societies brings its own international returns - in higher standards of international behaviour, and in the contribution that internal stability makes to international stability and peace.

In the second place, there are some more direct returns that flow to a country that takes seriously its international citizenship obligations. Although there may be occasions when taking a principled stand carries costs for us, an international reputation as a good citizen tends to enhance any country's overall standing in the world, and will at times prove helpful in pursuing other international interests, including commercial ones. Idealism and realism need not be competing objectives in foreign policy, but getting the blend right is never simple.<sup>59</sup>

In pursuing international good citizenship as a reputational goal, the asset that matters most, according to Evans and Grant, is credibility:

Our ability to secure advances in the areas of human rights, refugees or development assistance rests on our being, and continuing to be seen to be, a liberal democracy with a solid record at home; a country which articulates and applies human rights and similar principles with absolute consistent and impartiality; a country which not only talks about aid but delivers it. We will not achieve much if in our national policies on Aboriginal affairs, immigration or the like we are seen to be indulging in double standards. Hypocrites are not merely disliked, in international relations as elsewhere. If they are our size, they are ignored.<sup>60</sup>

However, in his overview for the Australian Institute of International Affairs' publication on *The national interest in a global era: Australia in world affairs 1996-2000*, Goldsworthy noted that by the end of the decade, the notion of international reputation and its relationship to good international citizenship became contestable in Australia:

The key question here - on what does a good international reputation depend? - admits of no simple answer. Some might stress measures of achievement such as a country's economic success or military effectiveness; others will point to measures of reliability such as punctiliousness in meeting obligations under treaties and other international agreements; others might focus on measures of political openness and the rule of law; others again will identify some composite of variables such as these. What might be added here is that, to some extent, reputation seems also to rest upon countries' performances in the arena of duties beyond borders. Contributions to

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-38.

multilateral peace-keeping efforts provide a case in point. Indeed, it was Australia's leading role in INTERFET in 1999 that led Kofi Annan to describe Australia as a 'model citizen'.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Reputation as brand image in public diplomacy***

Public diplomacy is a relatively new field of study. As yet, there are no agreed definitions. For discussion purposes, this study adopts the broader definition of the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California, which states that unlike standard diplomacy (which might be described as the ways in which government leaders communicate with each other at the highest levels) public diplomacy focuses on the ways in which a country communicates with citizens in other societies. Like standard diplomacy, it starts from the premise that dialogue, rather than a sales pitch, is often central to achieving the goals of foreign policy. To be effective, public diplomacy must be seen as a two-way street. It involves not only shaping the messages that a country wishes to present abroad, but also analyses and understands the ways that messages are interpreted by diverse societies, developing tools of listening and conversation as well as tools of persuasion.<sup>62</sup> This definition also encompasses aspects of international relations that Nye has labeled 'soft power'.

Public diplomacy is considered important in an era marked by the end of the Cold War, the spread of democracy, the rise of global communications, and the growth of global non-government organisations and multilateral corporations, in which countries compete for a share of voice. In this new era, nation states, both large and small, are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of their image and reputation as an essential part of a state's strategic equity in global affairs.<sup>63</sup> Foreign policy reputation, in the narrower

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<sup>61</sup> D Goldsworthy, 'An Overview: Setting the Scene' in J Cotton and J Ravenhill (eds), *The national interest in a global era, Australia in world affairs 1996-2000*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> USC Centre on Public Diplomacy, 'What is public diplomacy?', retrieved 11 September 2008, <<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/about/whatis.pd> >

<sup>63</sup> P Van Ham, 'The rise of the brand state: the postmodern politics of image and reputation', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 5, 2001, pp. 2-10.

sense of national state action, has also become part of the mix, as Leonard points out:

Public diplomacy is based on the premise that the image and reputation of a country are public goods which can create either an enabling or a disabling environment for individual transactions. Work on particular issues will feed off the general image of the country and reflect back on to it – in both positive and negative directions. For example, Britain's reputation for tradition will help heritage brands, such as Asprey's, sell their products, and their advertising campaigns will also reinforce Britain's reputation as a heritage nation. Equally Norway's reputation for work in international mediation will help persuade the different factions in Sri Lanka that they are an honest broker, which will in turn add to their reputation for peace.<sup>64</sup>

In this conception of reputation, reputation is linked with image and, in the first example given, commodified. Williams contends that earlier senses of image as conception of characteristic type have been overtaken by a use of image in terms of publicity, but which in practice means 'perceived reputation', as in the commercial brand image or a politician's concern with his own image. This is in effect a jargon term of commercial advertising and public relations. Its relevance has been increased by the growing importance of visual media such as television.<sup>65</sup> Reputation is thought to both influence and be influenced by other factors associated with the promotion of a country overseas. This psychological process is known in marketing as the 'halo effect', where the overall perception of person or a product brand influences the perceptions of the individual characteristic or traits of that person or product.<sup>66</sup>

In Australia, a whole subsection of the Howard Government's 1997 White Paper, *In the national interest*, is devoted to the need to enhance Australia's reputation abroad by promoting a positive image of Australia through public diplomacy, a task that would involve not only government agencies, but business and the community as well. Noting that Australia generally had a

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<sup>64</sup> M Leonard, *Public diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. 130.

<sup>66</sup> See R Nisbett, and TD Wilson, 'The halo effect: evidence for unconscious alteration of judgments', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1977, pp. 250–256.

positive international image (albeit an indistinct and dated one) the White Paper states that presenting a contemporary and positive image of Australia is important for developing Australian national interests: 'Unless others know us better, and we others, our relationships will remain limited and the capacity to pursue Australia's national interests diminished'.<sup>67</sup> Further, the White Paper reports that in its multilateral strategies, as in its regional and bilateral efforts, Australia's international reputation is itself a factor in our capacity to advance Australian interests and that an international reputation as a responsible, constructive and practical country is an important foreign policy asset.<sup>68</sup> In particular:

On questions of race, as on other issues which go to the values of the Australian community, Australia's international reputation matters. Australia has a direct national interest in an international reputation as a responsible member of the international community, committed to the rule of law, ready to assist in cases of humanitarian need, and a constructive contributor to the economic development of its neighbourhood. An international reputation as a thoughtful and creative country, genuinely committed to the peace and prosperity of its region, and a source of practical ideas enhances Australia's capacity to influence the regional and global agenda in ways which promote the interests of Australia.<sup>69</sup>

The Australian Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's report on *Australian public diplomacy: building our image*<sup>70</sup> finds that a significant number of Australian government departments and agencies are engaged in work overseas that directly or indirectly conveys to the world a positive image of Australia. It commends these organisations, agencies and the work of educational institutions and many private organisations who work behind the scenes, through word and deed, helping to secure a presence for Australia on the international stage and for helping to build a reputation that will hold the country in good stead.

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<sup>67</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *In the national interest: Australia's foreign and trade policy White Paper*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, p. 78.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iii.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> Australian Parliament, Senate Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's public diplomacy: building our image*, Parliament of Australia, Canberra, 2007.



Since much of the literature on reputation in relation to image and public diplomacy is produced by academic centres, official sources and parliamentary inquiries, it is instructive to examine the issue from a business perspective to gain a broader understanding of what reputation means, particularly its properties, its benefits, its relationship to national image and the lessons for public diplomacy generally. For example, many CEO's of large oil companies believe that a positive connection can be made between concern for the environment, and profits and shareholder value - to the extent that reputation and responsibility have become a new corporate overhead for their companies.<sup>71</sup> Businesses have learnt over time that operational reputation with respect to relations with their various stakeholders (e.g., customers, employers, suppliers, investors, governments) all serve the simple economic purpose of reducing the risk or cost of transaction. Mitchell writes:

Companies that act in accordance with principles of good corporate citizenship may reap a reputational dividend. Ensuring that a company has a good reputation in markets where consumers are increasingly socially aware, has been proven by experience to be of considerable economic importance. Also, a growing number of investors now set social responsibility criteria for the use of their funds. And the same selectivity can also be a feature of the employment market: a high profile on social responsibility will help to attract valuable competence.<sup>72</sup>

Mitchell claims that in an increasingly globalised world with an accompanying communications revolution, a new phenomenon has emerged where companies have to cultivate their reputations directly through involuntary transactions with a broad range of people or organisations that may be, variously, consumers of pollution, the supporters of social values, non-government organisations (NGOs) or fund managers.<sup>73</sup> Thanks to the Internet and international NGOs, the world is now always looking over the

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<sup>71</sup> JV Mitchell, 'Reputation and responsibility: the new corporate overhead?' Presentation to the 2000 Oil & Money Conference, 15 Nov 2000, Hyde Park Hotel, London, *the journal*, vol. 7, no. 18, CEPMLP Website, retrieved 15 September 2008, <<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cepmlp/journal/html/vol7/article7-1 S.html>>.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

shoulders of multilateral companies, and multinationals' behaviour in foreign countries becomes leveraged in their reputations in their home countries. In such circumstances, companies may incur overhead expenditure whose effect, like advertising or brand on the retail business, is difficult to measure:

The substance of identification, mitigation, and measurement may be more important than promoting slogans and symbols of greenness, but in reality the two go together. Reducing the costs and risk of a business to its involuntary social partners can be the basis of a companies' reputation - just as product quality can be the basis of a reputation in the retail market. A company whose reputation earns it the benefit of the doubt, or at least the benefit of a hearing in difficult situations, will be rewarded for its 'overhead' expenditure. If it is rewarded it will be more inclined to repeat the experience. Reputation is the currency for a win-win game.<sup>74</sup>

One of the key informants for the thesis, a head of a department of defence, expressed a similar view about the importance of reputation for gaining access and conducting business:

I tend to think of it in terms of credit at the bank. It's always easier to do business if you've got good credit lines, and your reputation, internationally, is a big component of that. If you have good credit lines then you can go into a foreign capital and you can talk to a foreign government, and if you've got a particularly difficult issue it's easier to transact it. I think you can strike an analogy ... without overdoing it, between the way a company goes about its business and the way the government goes about its business. Now, in a sense you could say the smaller the country the more important the credit line because ... the higher you have to jump to get attention and to get business done. But in fact, I think it applies across the board. I'd say shifts between the first term of the Bush administration and the second was that recognition that you would start to pile up very big transaction costs if you didn't keep your credit with your allies and other countries refreshed. And you might say, the US of all countries doesn't need to, but in fact they discovered things started to get very hard, and so there has been much more willingness in this second term to engage in that sort of investment. So although the way it operates is obviously different for the United States than for Guinea Bissau, the principle, I think, is the same.<sup>75</sup>

Foreign policy-making plays a key role in weaving these various strands of international standing and reputation together by identifying challenges and opportunities, proposing a whole-of-government response and by outlining a program of action consistent with a country's national interests, as defined by

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Key informant interview # 13, 25 July 2008.

the government of the day. The former head of the British Diplomatic Service, Coles, believes that sound policies are critical for national state reputations to be formed and maintained:

If, as I believe, reputations are, in the end, made or unmade by policy - and it is the soundness of policy which primarily determines how successful Britain is in pursuing its overseas interests - then time and space for policy thinking have to be found and preserved by whatever bureaucratic device is most effective.<sup>76</sup>

On Australia's reputation for policy-making in the 1990s, he stated:

I think these three years in Australia, 1988 to 1991, were pretty interesting on the foreign policy scene. That was a time when the Hawke government was making a big drive to enmesh Australia in Asia. I thought that was one of the big things, but I also think that it was a period when a lot of thought was going into Australian foreign policy in general and this was partly because of the character of Gareth Evans ...the series of White Papers and studies that I referred to in my book was a very impressive output, but not the sort of thing you find in many countries. I talked (in my book) about the intellectual underpinnings of Australian foreign policy, I think they were very strong. As to Australia's standing in the world at that time... I think there's always been in my view a genuine respect for the intellectual quality of Australia's foreign policy in general and the Australian diplomatic service in particular, which guaranteed they'd be listened to - although at times one heard a lot of hype about Australia's influence on the world, but you get that in any country. I think that at the levels where it mattered, there was realism.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Reputation's definitions and its properties***

Within the literature, definitions of reputation are thin on the ground.

McNamara's proposed definition that 'an individual's reputation is a social judgment of the person based upon facts which are considered relevant by a community', was developed for the purposes of clarifying defamation law and focuses on the individual, rather than a corporation or national state actor.<sup>78</sup>

The definition also suggests useful ways of thinking about the concept's general properties and provides a means of incorporating the views of other authors.

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<sup>76</sup> J Coles, *Making foreign policy: a certain idea of Britain*, John Murray, London, 2000, p. 133.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with author, 2 September 2008.

<sup>78</sup> L McNamara, *Reputation and defamation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 21.

McNamara considers reputation to be a judgement or an evaluation of a person. In his seminal anthropological study of reputation in small European communities, Bailey remarks: 'A man's reputation is not a quality that he possesses, but rather the opinions which other people have about him'.<sup>79</sup> Mercer adds: 'States may be given reputations, but they do not own them: a reputation is not the same as a self-image. Nor is a state's reputation a piece of property that it owns'.<sup>80</sup> Tomz suggests that, in relation to the repayment of sovereign debt, it is the 'evolving beliefs of investors, which constitute the borrower's reputation in foreign eyes'.<sup>81</sup> In international relations, judgements about reputation may include judgements by other states on a country's reputation for resolve, adherence to international norms, and reliability in terms of contributing to international peace-keeping efforts and in repaying sovereign debt. Further, reputation is based on facts. These facts, according to McNamara, may be something a person has done (such as accepted a bribe) or an observable characteristic of a person.<sup>82</sup> However, in a situation of incomplete information, as often prevails in international affairs, the facts that support a reputation may be incomplete facts, and an actor's perceptions often diverge from objective reality and from the perceptions of others.<sup>83</sup>

In relation to deterrence theory (but having wider application) Mercer explains:

Two conditions are necessary for a reputation to form. First, we need to know when decision-makers are most likely to explain an ally's or an adversary's behavior in dispositional (or character) terms. Second, we need to know when they will use these explanations to predict or explain similar behavior in the future. The heart of the problem with the deterrence argument concerns when these two conditions obtain.<sup>84</sup>

McNamara asserts that, as a *social* judgment, reputation is a product of association. Mercer also emphasises this relational aspect of reputation

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<sup>79</sup> FG Bailey, *Gifts and poisons: the politics of reputation*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1971, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> J Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*, p. 27.

<sup>81</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> McNamara, *Reputation and defamation*, p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Jervis, 'Deterrence and perception', p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> J Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*, p. 6.

when he states that reputation is not a property concept but a relational concept, noting: 'A property concept can be defined and measured without reference to another actor. A relational concept refers to 'an actual or potential relationship between two or more actors'.<sup>85</sup> Associations of nation states include regional associations such as APEC, the Commonwealth and the South Pacific Forum, and special purpose associations such as the Cairns Group of Free Traders. Membership of each association carries with it rights and obligations.

Reputation, as McNamara states; 'Flows from a particular form of association: it is about what is considered relevant by a *community*'. He proceeds:

The essence of reputation lies within this last point and, as such, requires some close consideration. An examination of the concept of community will show it to be a moral construct and, because of that, moral judgment is central and essential to both the social construct of 'real' reputation...and the legal construct of reputation underlying defamation law'.<sup>86</sup>

Relevant communities in international affairs range from the international community of all sovereign states, regional communities, such as the European Community, and like-minded groups in the United Nations context. According to Bailey, 'The importance of one's reputation diminishes as the intensity of interaction also diminishes'.<sup>87</sup>

McNamara limits his discussion of reputation by referring only to reputation in its ordinary sense for a natural person.<sup>88</sup> He has doubts that his definition applies to the corporate world and does not discuss its application to international relations. This questions whether states can be regarded as having personal attributes and whether it is appropriate to attribute to them properties we associate with human beings - rationality, identities, beliefs, and so on, rather than considering state personhood as a useful fiction,

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<sup>85</sup> Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*, p. 27

<sup>86</sup> McNamara, *Reputation and defamation*, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

analogy, metaphor, or shorthand for something else.<sup>89</sup> Wendt, nevertheless, regards states as ‘purposive actors with a sense of self’<sup>90</sup> and points out that the idea of state personhood pervades the social sciences and international relations (IR), and permeates everyday life.

## **Approaches**

### **Key Questions**

The analytical approach used in this thesis is based on four key questions suggested by the above examination of the existing literature on the concepts of international standing and international reputation and from discussions with foreign policy practitioners. These questions are:

1. Reputation for (and international standing with respect to) what?
2. Reputation and international standing with whom?
3. Do international standing and reputation matter?
4. How are the results assessed?

The following simple example shows how the questions are related, and how they apply in a particular circumstance.

In their *Making Australian foreign policy*, Gyngell and Wesley write about Australia’s independent national assessment agency, the Office of National Assessments (ONA). The Office is tasked to assemble, correlate and prepare reports and longer-term assessments that are of political, strategic or economic importance to Australia as follows:

Like the other agencies, ONA’s value to Australian foreign policy at any given time depends on the quality, timeliness and relevance of its work to the policy making community...

Within government, ONA has a reputation for writing directly and colourfully, rather than in flat bureaucratic prose. This style occasionally irritates (and

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<sup>89</sup> A Wendt, ‘The state as person in international theory’, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 30, 2004, pp. 289-316, p. 289.

<sup>90</sup> A Wendt, *Social theory of international politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 194.

sometimes distorts), but it has the advantage of sharpening and dramatising choices for decision-makers.<sup>91</sup>

The answer to the first question listed above is that ONA has earned a reputation for direct and colourful writing. The response to the second question is that ONA has this reputation with decision-makers within government. The third question is answered by the fact that ONA's reports are picked up and read from a plethora of reports that land on a decision-maker's desk on a daily basis (because they sharpen and dramatise choices for decision-makers). Finally, the results are assessed by the quality, timeliness and relevance of ONA's work to the policy-making community.

### **Model**

For its analysis of how reputations are formed, maintained or lapsed, this study adopts the model outlined in Chapter Two of Tomz's *Reputation and international cooperation: sovereign debt across three centuries*,<sup>92</sup> suitably modified for the purposes of the study. Tomz's model has three main components. First, it recognises that foreign investors operate and make decisions under a condition of incomplete information, but they nevertheless find ways of learning about risks and potential returns for each particular case. Their methods include both an economic or situational assessment of the borrower's ability to pay and the borrower's willingness to pay. Second, the model recognises that borrowers respond to negative shocks in different ways and, accordingly, lenders have developed beliefs as to whether they are dealing with *stalwarts*, *fair-weatherers* or *lemons*. Lenders form these beliefs about different types of borrowers from observing behaviour in context, from the borrower's record of repayments and the prevailing economic circumstances. Since these representations about borrowers' reputations are central to Tomz's argument, and since they have been

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<sup>91</sup> A Gyngell & M Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 126.

<sup>92</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, Chapter 2: 'A theory of co-operation through reputation', pp. 14-33.

grafted onto this study of Australia's standing and reputation in foreign policy, it is worth quoting Tomz on this point in some detail:

My theory of reputation involves three types of debtors, which I call stalwarts, fair-weatherers, and lemons. Each type has distinct preferences that contribute to different patterns of behavior. Stalwarts have the strongest preference for debt repayment. For stalwarts, the value of foreign capital is high, time horizons are long, and the antipayment coalition is weak, so the reputational benefits of debt service almost always outweigh the costs. Countries with stalwart preferences tend to pay during good times and bad. Fair-weatherers, in contrast, have intermediate preferences. The value they attach to future loans is sufficient to motivate repayment in good times, but not during bad ones. Finally, lemons receive the least utility from paying their debts. Governments with lemonlike preferences regularly default in bad times and sometimes break faith in good times, as well.<sup>93</sup>

Third, reputations are not immutable. Governments can and sometimes do act contrary to their perceived type, which may cause a particular country's reputation to rise or sink. Similarly, a country with a bad reputation can signal willingness to change, and after a probationary period may be able to slowly climb the reputational ladder. Fourth, there are incentives and reputational returns for borrowers, in terms of access and cheaper loans, for having a reputation as a stalwart.

Tomz acknowledges that current calculus theory,<sup>94</sup> which asserts that past behaviour has no impact on the present beliefs and considerations of decision-makers, provides an alternative to his theory of reputation. According to calculus theory, 'people use historical analogies for mundane decisions but abandon them in favor of "systematic reasoning" when the stakes are high. Systematic thinkers, it is argued, judge the credibility of foreign governments by analysing fresh intelligence about capabilities and interests, not past records of commitments honored or broken'.<sup>95</sup> However, he concludes:

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, DG Press, *Calculating credibility: how leaders assess military threats*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2005.

<sup>95</sup> Tomz, p. 230.



The theory of reputation presented in this book stresses that current calculations and historical analyses can, in fact, be complementary. Actors in international relations engage in both activities to gain a better understanding of the scope for cooperation. In the area of debt, investors use data about economic conditions - when available - to put current and past behavior in context. When money is on the line, investors and their advisors use both sources of information to draw inferences, rather than relying on one while ignoring the other.<sup>96</sup>

This assumption of complementarity between decision-makers' current calculations and assessments based on past behaviour will be followed in this study.

## **Methods**

The overall approach to the study is exploratory, given that the field of inquiry is largely uncharted - as became evident in an initial search of the academic literature. Consequently, the thesis has made use of the three principal methods relevant to exploratory studies in the social sciences and humanities - review of literature, discussions with experts, and analysis of case studies<sup>97</sup> to generate ideas, develop hypotheses and to help to operationalise the concepts of international standing and international reputation. These methods are considered to be appropriate research methods when understanding of motivations and perceptions is a priority. In this exploratory approach, triangulation (the use of more than one research method) is used to cross-check findings.

## **Review of the available literature**

To gain a workable understanding of the terms 'international standing' and 'international reputation' in the literature, the social science and humanities databases accessible through the Deakin University were interrogated using key word searches. Notes and biographical references in the initial trawl were followed up, yielding a much wider catch. Other documentary sources of a general nature, such as the memoirs and biographies of Ministers and

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>97</sup> S Sarantakos, *Social research*, MacMillan Education Australia, Melbourne, 1993, p. 115.

former Heads of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and foreign policy speeches in Australia and in other countries were examined. Other 'grey' literature sources such as unpublished speeches and comments at conferences were also examined. The National Library's Oral History recordings of interviews in their Australian Diplomats 1950-2000 collection proved to be particularly useful, as did similar holdings in other countries, such as the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme interviews held at the Churchill Archive Centre, Cambridge, UK. The results of the initial literature search are included in this Chapter.

### **Interviews with key informants**

The methodology for the interviews (n=30) followed National Health and Medical Research (NHMRC) guidelines, and was approved by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee. The interviewees comprised two main groups. The main group (n=23) comprised other country former foreign ministers, former high commissioners and ambassadors to Australia, heads of departments and senior foreign affairs and trade officials and peacekeeping commanders. These informants were recruited for their ability to provide an informed view on the research topic and / or on the subject matter of one or more of the case studies. The interview sample was opportunistic rather than representative, and relied heavily on who was available to be interviewed during the author's brief overseas visits in 2007 and 2008 to examine archival holdings in the UK, US, the UN, Canada and New Zealand. A 'snowballing' technique, whereby one informant suggested others whom it would be worth interviewing, was used to extend coverage. The second group of interviewees (n=7) comprised senior Australian foreign affairs and trade senior officials, former ministerial staff and former diplomats who had decision-making responsibility for Australian foreign policy in relation to the issues involved in the case studies and could, therefore, provide insight into the formulation and execution of government policies.

Members of this group were recruited for their particular expertise in relation to specific case studies.

A letter of invitation introduced the researcher. Respondents were given a plain language statement explaining the aim of the study, the purpose of the interview, the proposed interview arrangements and confidentiality provisions. The respondents were also given a consent form and a list of proposed interview questions. These questions, tailored to each individual interview, included general questions about the terms international standing and international reputation and specific questions about Australia's international standing and reputation in respect of particular foreign policy episodes. Twenty interviews were conducted face to face and were recorded digitally, mainly during the researcher's overseas visits in 2008. The remainder were contacted by phone and, on two occasions, by email correspondence. Records of conversation were made of these telephone discussions and points were clarified, where necessary, in subsequent correspondence. In cases where it was proposed to quote a respondent in the final report by name or under a pseudonym, the respondents were contacted beforehand by mail or email to seek their agreement.

The information was used to inform the study and to help tease out the concepts of international standing and international reputation. The overseas segment of the interviews played a very important role in providing a multi-country perspective to the study, particularly in relation to the case studies. The domestic component of the interviews was most useful in providing a reality check on published accounts of the development of Australian foreign policy in relation to the specific episodes examined in this study. Potential bias in the interviews was countered in the study by interviewing more than one respondent on a particular issue and by adopting the research method of triangulation to assess the value of the information gained in the interviews against information provided in official records and from other sources.

### **Archival and other documentary sources**

Mercer's *Reputation and international politics*<sup>98</sup> indicates that discourses on international reputation are primarily to be found in the genuine beliefs of decision-makers rather than in public statements, which he claims are unreliable because they are usually meant to signal a particular disposition to friend and foe or to bolster an argument. Archival records, on the other hand, allow an examination of what decision-makers say in confidence to one another. Mercer tests his thesis by using case studies of the First World War, where 'the enormous amount of source material' makes it possible to determine how key actors explain one another's behaviour. He concludes:

The empirical chapters make clear that turn-of-the-century beliefs about the importance of reputation often governed policy decisions. Though the evidence is harder to gather, the same appears to be true today.<sup>99</sup>

Dispatches from ambassadors, high commissioners and permanent representatives and reports of officials to international conferences and meetings provide a good source of information about how a country's reputation is perceived at any particular time. As Dore notes:

They are affected because their own personal standing in the real concrete community of international individuals is affected by the status ranking of their nation in the metaphorical community of nations. Their self-respect hinges in part on the respect accorded their nation.<sup>100</sup>

Many of the main primary sources used in this study are already available publicly: in official documents, including the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian departments of foreign affairs and trade publications on foreign policy; in official speeches; parliamentary records and in the reflections of former foreign affairs practitioners in their memoirs, biographies, articles, and conference presentations. The study, however, examines these sources from a new angle. As mentioned above, interviews with over 30 'key informants' provided substantial new primary source material for the thesis. Other

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<sup>98</sup> Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*, p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> Dore, 'The prestige factor in international affairs', p. 197.

country newspaper sources, including French language sources, account for much of the 'other country' contemporary reporting on Australian foreign policy initiatives.

### **The case studies**

The four case studies used in the following analysis comprise the major arm of the study. They are particularly relevant to exploratory studies such as this study as they provide in-depth, 'insight stimulating examples' for further study.<sup>101</sup> While case studies have been criticised by research theorists on the grounds that one cannot generalise from a single case, Flyvberg addresses and counters this (and the four other most common misunderstandings about case study research) in a 2006 article in *Qualitative Inquiry* in which he concludes that 'a scientific discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one. Social science may be strengthened by the execution of a greater number of good case studies'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Sellitz et al., *Research methods in social relations*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1976, cited in Sarantakos, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>102</sup> B Flyvberg, 'Five misunderstandings about case-study research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 2, April 2006, pp. 219-245, p. 219.

## CHAPTER 2. CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLOMBO PLAN

### Introduction

The Colombo Plan<sup>1</sup> occupies a special place in Australia's diplomatic and cultural history since the Second World War. The Plan for mutual aid in the form of economic and technical assistance commenced in 1951, providing the umbrella for Australia's aid program to countries in the South and South-East Asian region until the 1970s, when it was overtaken by alternative means of Australian development assistance. It provided the avenue for thousands of Asian students to study in universities and technical institutes in Australia, and will be remembered by the Australian public and in the region largely for the people-to-people contacts it established.

The establishment of the Colombo Plan is a defining moment in Australia's adjustment to, and engagement with its own region. The Australian historian and author Donald Horne lists the Colombo Plan as one of the signposts to Australia's growth as a nation.<sup>2</sup> Sir Percy Spender, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, 1949-1951, in his *Exercises in diplomacy*,<sup>3</sup> describes the Colombo Plan and the ANZUS Treaty as the two central pillars in Australian foreign policy in the 1950s and 1960s, and as evidence of Australia's maturity in foreign affairs and of the role that Australia - which regarded itself then as a 'small nation' - could exercise in Asia and the Pacific. He, of course, played a major role in each. He told a reviewer of his book that:

I content myself with believing that Anzus created the 'special relationship' which exists between the U.S.A and ourselves, while the Colombo Plan marked the commencement of the 'special relationship' between Australia

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<sup>1</sup> The Plan's full title was 'The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia'.

<sup>2</sup> D Horne, 'Signposts to our nation's growth', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 December 2000, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> P Spender. *Exercises in diplomacy: the Anzus Treaty and the Colombo Plan*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969, Preface, p. 9.

and Asia, of which so much has been heard since. Both evidenced fundamental departures from and gave, I think, new directions to Australia's (sic) foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

While the case study is concerned with the strategic, political, humanitarian and cultural objectives that underlie Australian foreign policy towards the Colombo Plan, the primary focus is on aspects of Australia's international standing and reputation as sources of influence or impediments relevant to the achievement of those policy objectives. Issues examined include:

- Australian concerns about positioning itself in the world and the region at a time when the centre of political gravity in world politics shifted, at least temporarily, from Europe to Asia;
- Spender as world statesman;
- Australian authorship of the Colombo Plan;
- Australia's changing reputation as a member nation of the 'new' Commonwealth; and
- Australia's standing with the newly independent states of South and South-East Asia.

In order to bring these issues and their inter-relationships into a clear focus, the study concentrates on a limited time frame, from January 1950 to February 1951, even though this means that some of the positions and attributes identified remain in embryonic form. It traces Australia's role in the formation of the Colombo Plan through a series of three international conferences at ministerial level: the Colombo Meeting of Foreign Ministers in January 1950, the British Commonwealth Consultative Committee chaired by Australia in Sydney in May 1950, and the London Consultative Committee in September-October 1950. Spender was the Australian Minister for External Affairs for the whole period. Spender describes the 1950 Colombo Foreign Ministers' meeting (often referred to as the Colombo Conference) as the time

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<sup>4</sup> 'Holograph letter from Sir Percy Spender about his role as architect of the Colombo Plan and the ANZUS Treaty, written from the Hague to JG Starke, 16 October 1969', *Spender Papers*, box 17, MS4875, NLA.

at which the idea of the Colombo Plan was born, the subsequent Sydney meeting as giving effect to the recommendations of the Colombo Conference and setting the stage, and the London meeting as the prologue.<sup>5</sup>

### **Pre-Colombo Meeting: expectations and positionings**

From a British Commonwealth of Nations perspective, the purpose of the 1950 Colombo Foreign Ministers' meeting was to enable foreign ministers to discuss their mutual approach to world problems and to the emergence of new independent states and to exchange views on how they could mutually help each other.<sup>6</sup> In his invitation to Commonwealth leaders, Ceylonese Prime Minister Senanayake suggested that, in addition to standard general topics at Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings (such as a review of the international political and economic situation), the agenda for the meeting should include the Japanese Peace Treaty, the situation in China and South and South-East Asia following the Communist victory in 1949, and any special problems of South East Asia which might be raised.<sup>7</sup> The developmental needs of South and South-East Asia were one of the many items for possible discussion. The meeting had an added significance in that it was the first of its kind and Britain and its Commonwealth partners had a strong interest in its success as a Commonwealth initiative.

As the meeting was held in Asia, Britain saw the meeting as a means of demonstrating the extent of consensus and cooperation that could be developed between East and West through the agency of the Commonwealth and as a bulwark against Communism.<sup>8</sup> Britain attached considerable importance to, and prepared well for, the meeting. Britain's

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<sup>5</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, pp. 200, 244, & 265, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Broadcast speech by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the Commonwealth Conference, Colombo, 16 January 1950, *Bevin Papers*, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge, UK.

<sup>7</sup> Cablegram to Prime Minister from the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Colombo, 8 November 1949, A1838, 532/7, part 1, NAA.

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'The Colombo Conference', 22 February 1950, C.P. (50) 18, CAB/129/38, NAUK.



preparations were centred on the notion of regionalism as a means to support and sustain the newly-independent states in the region.<sup>9</sup> A July 1949 Foreign Office assessment for Cabinet on the United Kingdom in South-East Asia and the Far East assessed that while the United States had the greatest volume of trade with the Far East and South-East Asia, it did not enjoy the same degree of prestige as the United Kingdom, partly because it lacked the historical connections that the UK had with the region.<sup>10</sup> This was due partly to the failure of its policy in China, partly because of its reluctance to play a leading role in South-East Asia, and partly because of its *laissez faire* economic philosophy which had little appeal in South and South-East Asia.

The assessment concluded that continuing British influence in the area in relation to existing peace-time military commitments, trade with South-East Asia and the Far East, and continuing prestige and ties with countries in the region could be best directed to the building up of some sort of regional association in South-East Asia in partnership with the association of the Atlantic powers - which would include participation of the United States, the 'Asiatic Dominions', and Australia and New Zealand. The immediate object of such an association would be to prevent the spread of Communism and to resist Russian expansion. Longer term objectives would be to create a system of friendly partnerships between East and West, and to improve economic and social conditions in South-East Asia and the Far East, thereby anticipating the themes which would come to dominate discussions at the Colombo Conference.

A subsequent Foreign Office assessment, PUSC (53), on *Regional cooperation in South-East Asia and the Far East*, dated 24 August 1949, examined the difficulties in pursuing these aims, including, in particular,

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<sup>9</sup> T Remme, *Britain and regional cooperation in South-East Asia, 1945-49*, LSE/Routledge, London, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> P.U.S.C. (32), 'The United Kingdom in South-East Asia and the Far East', 28 July 1949, F 17397, FO 371, 76030, NAUK.

Britain's problems with its sterling balances. The paper made a direct link between Britain's international standing and influence and the achievement of Britain's aims. It identified that Britain's standing (and by association, that of the West) had been greatly improved by its policies of granting independence and seeking amicable settlement with its former colonies (particularly with respect to India) whereas French and the Dutch policies still had the danger of discrediting the West with all Asian nationalist elements in the area. While Asian suspicions of the West's reputation in respect to imperialism and neo-colonialism died hard, something could nevertheless be done in the political and diplomatic fields to dissolve suspicions in attitudes in Asian countries against Britain's colonial policy, and to wean them away from the attraction of 'non-alignment'. In particular, concrete help of a technical, financial and economic nature was identified as likely to be of the greatest influence in achieving these two points of policy.

PUSC (53) concluded that Commonwealth members provided the nucleus in the short term upon which to build any system of regional cooperation in order to counter the threat of communism, and in the longer term to improve economic and social conditions in South-East Asia. Britain remained the dominant power inside the Commonwealth, notwithstanding India's growing influence, and London was optimistic that it could play a leading role at the Colombo Conference. Britain's relations with the Commonwealth provided a means of influencing and co-coordinating the policies, not only of the Asiatic Dominions, but of Australia and New Zealand, whose strategic interest in the area was, it considered, equal to its own.<sup>11</sup> With respect to Australia's standing in the region, the paper stated:

Despite Australia's professions of sympathy for the struggling Nationalists in Asia there has been evidence recently that the execution of the "White Australia" policy has begun to cause resentment in Asian countries and there

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<sup>11</sup> 'The United Kingdom in South-East Asia and the Far East', op. cit.; 'Conference of Foreign Ministers in Ceylon in 1950', op. cit.; Remme, *Britain and regional cooperation in South-East Asia*, pp. 183-199.

is a danger that this policy may ultimately embitter relations between Australia and Asia.<sup>12</sup>

A Dominion Office minute, written in November 1949, supported the Foreign Office idea of regional cooperation. It concurred with the Foreign Office view in relation to Australia's participation in regional cooperation, noting that there was no doubt that the 'White Australia policy' had not increased Australia's popularity among Asian peoples and might be construed by them to be evidence of the Australian desire to keep themselves to themselves. However, the correspondence also noted that Australia had recently held a conference of its own in Canberra, which included some recognition that Australia had a part to play in the affairs of South East Asia and the Far East.<sup>13</sup> In the private views of British officials, therefore, Australia's ability to play a constructive role in the region was restrained by its reputation for isolationism, its White Australia reputation and its hitherto unwillingness to take on its fair share of responsibilities as a member of the new Commonwealth of Nations (since 1949) in relation to the affairs of South East Asia and the Far East.

### **Australian preparations**

The Liberal-Country Party Coalition in Australia swept into power on an anti-Socialism political platform in December 1949. One of Spender's first acts as External Affairs Minister was to announce, on 20 December (the day after being sworn in as Minister) that he would be attending the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers meeting in Colombo scheduled for January 1950.<sup>14</sup> Within two weeks of becoming Minister, Spender was on his way to Colombo (via Indonesia where he was to attend their independence celebrations). The Colombo Conference was Spender's first foray in international affairs and the coming event was of critical importance in helping him to crystalise his views

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<sup>12</sup> P.U.S.C. (53), 'Regional Cooperation in South-East Asia and the Far East', 20 August 1949, F 17397, FO 371, 76030, NAUK.

<sup>13</sup> Minute to Mr. Metcalf, processed 30.11.49, DO 35 / 2770, F 2320/26, NAUK.

<sup>14</sup> 'Australian representation at Colombo Conference', DEA Press Release, 20 December 1950, A1838, 532/7 part 1, NAA.

on the prevailing themes in international affairs of world Communism, the problems of decolonisation and economic development and on Australia's role in its region.

In this, his first 'exercise in diplomacy', Spender was determined to make his mark on the Conference and at the same time give meaning to the Commonwealth. Tange recalled being contacted in December 1949 by his head of department while he was on holidays, and being told that Spender had decided to attend the forthcoming meeting in Colombo and expressed a wish to take with him someone who was knowledgeable about economic matters.<sup>15</sup> Tange was to present himself at the Minister's office in Sydney the following day, 'properly clad' and in his 'right mind'. In what is described as a 'very lucid, rapid-fire speech, much of which was delivered as he paced up and down the carpet', Spender said he wanted Tange to be in no doubt about the changes that were going to occur in Australian foreign policy, particularly in relation to the United States, the region, Britain and the Commonwealth. More immediately, Spender said that:

He believed in Commonwealth relations but it was important that relations of this kind be given real meaning, that he was not minded to attend an international conference which engaged in talk and rhetoric, he wanted to see something come out of it. He believed there was scope for economic co-operation in the Commonwealth and he wanted some ideas developed around this theme so that he could make a positive contribution.<sup>16</sup>

Spender's intent in moving Australia closer to American influence, while at the same time retaining ties with, and testing the boundaries of, the British Commonwealth,<sup>17</sup> is evident in this very early exchange with one of his departmental senior officials.

In his published account of the origins of the Colombo Plan in his *Exercises in diplomacy*, Spender claims that for some time before becoming Minister

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<sup>15</sup> Recorded interview with Sir Arthur Tange by Professor JDB. Miller, 1-23 April 1981, National Library of Australia Oral History Section, (TRC-1023: Tape 5), Transcript, pp. 72-78, NLA.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> D Lowe, *Australian between empires: the life of Percy Spender*, Pickering & Chatto, London, 2010.

for External Affairs, he had been aware of, and had some understanding of, the economic and political problems of Asia. This knowledge had been gained through previous visits to various countries in the region and the subject had been talked about in the United Nations, Europe, the US and Asia. However, in his view, the time for talking and discussing the need for economic aid to the region had passed. What was needed now was (a) an examination of the problem presented by this need, (b) the presentation, set out in a concise working paper, of a scheme to resolve the problem and (c) a clear plan for its execution, including, in particular, its acceptance.<sup>18</sup> Tange's own view, as someone who subsequently was credited with some part at least in shaping the nature of the Australian proposals to the Colombo Plan Conference, was that as with all initiatives, it was very hard to find the origin of the idea of assistance to regional countries in Asia as many ideas were 'in the air' at the time. Fundamentally, this was not a new idea but the idea of promoting it as a broad-based plan with backing from Britain (the most powerful industrial country in the Commonwealth) and Canada certainly was new and the first venture by the new Minister.<sup>19</sup>

On the eve of his departure for the Colombo Conference, Spender stated that Australia must orientate its foreign policy towards Asia, and that it was in Asia and the Pacific that Australia should make its primary effort in the field of foreign relations.<sup>20</sup> Spender regarded Communism as an immediate threat, but he also recognised the need to develop a dynamic policy towards Asia which would last 'for all times'. He envisaged Australia's future role in Asia in terms of leadership:

The rising and menacing tide of Communism in the East presents us with a definite threat - and not a remote threat either - to our national existence. But the threat is also a challenge. Australia, who with New Zealand has the greatest direct interest in Asia of all Western peoples, must develop a dynamic policy towards neighbouring Asian countries, whose people we

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<sup>18</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 194.

<sup>19</sup> Recorded interview with Sir Arthur Tange, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> Spender claimed in his memoir: 'This was, then I would think, quite a new concept in Australian foreign policy, one since increasingly recognized'. Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 195.

must live with, not only to-day and to-morrow, but for all times. We should give leadership to developments in that area.<sup>21</sup>

However, Spender also recognised an Australian obligation - in conjunction with the United States - to contribute towards the stability and democratic development of the countries of South-East Asia:

By concerted action, we, the countries which have had greater opportunities in the past, can help the countries of South-East Asia to develop their own democratic institutions and their own viable economies and thus protect them against those opportunist disruptive and subversive elements which take advantage of changing political situation and low living standards.<sup>22</sup>

In his preparations for the Colombo meeting, Spender was able to draw on working papers prepared by his department as a result of a series of meetings held in November 1949 attended by departmental representatives, senior UK and New Zealand officials, and Australian representatives in the region. The Department of External Affairs (DEA) Brief to Cabinet on South-East Asia for the Colombo Conference assessed that the influence of communism represented the main threat to the stability of South-East Asia.<sup>23</sup> However, it concluded:

For Australia the problem is at present political and economic; it calls for sustained and co-ordinated action to encourage and strengthen established governments throughout the area, to cultivate and maintain the goodwill of the peoples, and to help them to raise their standards of living and thereby increase their resistance to Communism.<sup>24</sup>

The DEA Cabinet Brief noted that political and economic aspects were linked in the sense that the amount of political influence Australia could exert in Asia was determined largely by the extent to which it could foster economic development in the region. However, DEA consideration of this matter only served as a reminder that the resources in goods, money and services that Australia (despite being a wealthy country) could spare for the pursuit of

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<sup>21</sup> Cablegram from Department of External Affairs to posts, 'Australian relations with Asia', Canberra, 3 January 1950, A1838, 381/3/1/1, part 1, NAA.

<sup>22</sup> 'Australian relations with Asia', op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> 'Australian policy in South-East Asia', Brief for Cabinet for Commonwealth Conference, Colombo, Canberra, December 1949, in *Australia and the Colombo Plan*, doc. 14, pp. 22-33.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

political and economic objectives outside Australia were limited. Increased trade provided obvious opportunities, but there were difficulties with respect to exporters' and manufacturers' views on trade with Asia, existing contractual commitments with the UK, and with respect to low Asian demand for Australian capital and consumption goods.

The Brief found that there was little that Australia could do by way of direct economic aid for Indo-China, Malaya, Burma, and the Philippines. Britain considered these countries as French, British and United States responsibilities within their respective fields of influence. This left Indonesia, where Australia had established a good reputation and much good will, *inter-alia*, by bringing the Netherlands-Indonesian dispute before the United Nations, as the focus of Australian leadership in the region. This then led to discussion of the possibility of Australian assistance in terms of technical assistance, medical and other relief supplies, and the extension of credit.

Educational assistance, on the other hand, was the one medium where Australia, through scholarships and providing places in Australian educational institutions, could offer assistance not only in Indonesia, but also throughout the region. Educational assistance also had the advantage of being a broad field in which Australia could earn valuable good will and at the same time foster a favourable image of Australia in the region through a better understanding of Australian conditions and way of life, provided that anticipated problems relating to security (both personal and institutional), accommodation for overseas trainees and students, and the appropriateness of the courses offered, could be resolved.

### **The Colombo Conference and Spender's reputation as world statesman**

Though technically not a summit meeting (as explored by Reynolds in his *Summits: six meetings that shaped the twentieth century*), the Colombo Conference was an important post-Second World War Commonwealth

meeting that helped shape the future of South and South-East Asia in the wake of Indian, Pakistani, Ceylonese, Burmese and Indonesian independence. The Commonwealth Meeting on Foreign Affairs (January 1950) was chaired by Ceylonese Prime Minister Senanayake. It was a distinguished gathering of ministers, which Tange recalled included some very significant ones in the western world and in what was going to become the leadership of the non-aligned world, including Pandit Nehru of India (whose portfolios also included external affairs), British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, and the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester Pearson.<sup>25</sup> The ministers were seated around a table in the Cabinet room in the Senate Building, according to a protocol or 'pecking order', which had the British and Indian delegations seated opposite the Chair, Australia at one end of the table and Canada and New Zealand at the other end.

Ministers agreed on an agenda of five main items for discussion at their first meeting: the general international situation (both its political and economic aspects); China; Japan; South-East Asia; and Europe. In other words, the situation in South-East Asia was but one of the five items for discussion. Spender made specific interventions on the agenda items on China and Japan, but his main interest was the situation in South-East Asia, which was listed for discussion on the fourth day.

The Australian press had great expectations of the Colombo meeting, hoping that it would result in cooperation in defence against aggression<sup>26</sup> or at least a strengthening of member countries' political and economic defences against communism, not only in their own territories but in South-East Asia as a whole.<sup>27</sup> If Spender shared these views (or if he indeed had been responsible for giving background briefings to the press in these terms - which might well have been the case), or had any ambitions of establishing a

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<sup>25</sup> Two delegates, Pearson (Canada) and Noel-Baker (UK) were later to become Nobel Peace Prize recipients.

<sup>26</sup> 'Disappointing trend at Colombo Conference', *SMH*, 13 January 1950, editorial, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> 'Colombo Conference and the communist menace', *SMH*, 29 December 1949, editorial, p. 2.



reputation for himself as a cold war warrior at the meeting, he changed tack on the first day. He told the meeting that while he agreed that a means needed to be found to check the growth of Communism in Asia, he did not favour a military or defence pact 'certainly not at this stage', particularly having regard to Nehru's opposition and the absence of an assurance of United States participation.<sup>28</sup> In his *Exercises in diplomacy*, Spender mentioned that any talk of military defensive machinery aimed at assisting the achievement of political stability was 'strictly taboo' at the meeting; and that any attempt to initiate a discussion would have been futile and could even have imperiled the proposals he intended to present to the meeting.<sup>29</sup> In his own account of his informal meeting with Spender, Bevin reported that, as a military pact in Asia did not seem possible, he suggested to Spender that economic power be pulled together for common purpose.<sup>30</sup>

The Colombo Conference provided an intensive course in the realities of present Commonwealth relations for the new Australian and New Zealand Ministers of External Affairs.<sup>31</sup> In the Conference's opening session, Spender expressed Australia's strong sentimental ties with the United Kingdom (rather than to the new Commonwealth of Nations as a whole). He went on to express the wish that the meeting result in strong recommendations to governments and that the delegates would pursue a common policy in Asia (something which Commonwealth meetings were not designed to do). He was immediately followed by the new New Zealand Minister for External Affairs who used the occasion to express his country's intense loyalty to the United Kingdom and said that New Zealand was proud to think of herself as 'a daughter in her mother's house, though mistress in her own', though he

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<sup>28</sup> F.M.M. (50): 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, 9 January 1950, DO 35/2773, NAUK.

<sup>29</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Lucius D. Battle, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, 6 September 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, vol. V1, p. 146.

<sup>31</sup> Telegram from the Canadian delegation, Colombo, 17 January 1950, relayed in telegram no. 133 from the High Commissioner in the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, doc. 654, in G Donaghy (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. 17, 1951, doc. 654, p. 1197.

did also say that he hoped the Commonwealth association would become stronger. This had the unfortunate effect of the two antipodean new representatives being lumped together in the estimation of the other delegates. The Canadian senior official Escott Reid observed in his notes on the meeting:

The speeches of Spender, of Australia, and Doidge, of New Zealand were echoes of a pretty remote past. Spender spoke of the necessity of a common foreign policy and a common voice for the Commonwealth. He wanted the Commonwealth to agree on specific recommendations to governments on what should be done.<sup>32</sup>

And again, with reference to the discussion on recognition of the new Chinese Communist Government:

The Australian and New Zealand representative both directed their criticisms at the U.K. as if the United Kingdom was the only member of the Commonwealth which had recognised the new Chinese government and as if the UK were the only member of the Commonwealth which was under an obligation to wait until the Colombo Conference before recognising it. This seems to be an indication of the fact that the representatives of the two new governments approach these meetings as if their purpose is to discuss UK foreign policy, not the foreign policies of all of us.<sup>33</sup>

Further evidence of Spender's (initial) inability to identify with the new Commonwealth is suggested in his handling of the British proposal that member governments agree to make a loan to Burma of £Stg.7.5 million as a 'ways and means' loan to be used for additional backing for the Burmese currency. To the horror of British officials, Spender is reported to have demanded a *quid pro quo* from London whereby Australia would agree to participate in the loan in exchange for British agreement that they refrain from criticising the Menzies government for its decision to abolish petrol rationing (as a means of conserving dollars).<sup>34</sup> In the end, Spender relented and recommended that Australia agree to support the loan in order to show its intention of supporting the principles that the Australian Government

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<sup>32</sup> E Reid, Colombo Conference Notes, 9 January 1950, MG 31 E46, vol. 7, NAC.

<sup>33</sup> E Reid, Colombo Conference Notes, 10 January 1950, MG 31 E46, vol. 7, NAC.

<sup>34</sup> D Lowe, 'Percy Spender and the Colombo Plan 1950', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1994, pp. 162-76, p. 169.

advocated in relation to the Commonwealth and, more importantly, not to undermine his planned initiative in relation to the Colombo Plan.<sup>35</sup>

Spender's interventions in the general debates on the region appear to bear out Parsons' observations that his attitudes to Asia were laden more with apprehension than sympathy.<sup>36</sup> Both Spender's and Australia's reputation for racial intolerance were on display at the meeting. In an otherwise measured statement on the Japanese peace settlement, Spender aired his (racial) prejudices against the Japanese by expressing the bitterness he said the Australian people felt towards the Japanese, and spoke of Australian fear of a resurgence of Japanese militarism. According to Escott Reid's notes, Spender told the meeting: 'The Japanese might be hissing with Japanese courtesy today but this did not mean that they would not bear their fangs tomorrow'.<sup>37</sup> In the debate on China, Spender provided an early indication of the reputation he would develop in the 1950's of trying to slow the process of decolonisation<sup>38</sup> when he drew swords with Nehru over the latter's assertion that the principal political objective for Commonwealth countries should be the complete removal of foreign domination in all of the countries in the region. Spender replied that Nehru's comments would not presumably apply to the trust territories. Australia, he indicated, had trust territories in New Guinea, some of which were being administered under UN trusteeship arrangements, which Australia desired to educate towards self-government. And then, rather unconvincingly, he said that he hoped that this was an area where East and West could work together in the East. In the meanwhile, Spender had held private discussions out of session with UK Secretary for Commonwealth Relations Noel-Baker, proposing that Australia take over

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<sup>35</sup> Cablegram from High Commissioner in Colombo to Department of External Affairs, Colombo, 14 January 1950, A1838, 532/7 part 1, NAA.

<sup>36</sup> A Parsons, *South East Asian days*, *Australians in Asia Series*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, Griffith University, Queensland, 1998, p. 5. Parsons was a member of the Australian delegation to the Colombo Conference.

<sup>37</sup> E Reid, *Colombo Conference Notes*, 11 January 1950, MG 31 E46, vol. 7, NAC. These comments do not appear in the official (summary) record of the meeting.

<sup>38</sup> Lowe, *Australian between empires*, p. 165.

Britain's co-dominion responsibilities with France in the New Hebrides, thereby augmenting its territories in the region. All this was out of step with the nationalism that British foreign office policy assessments had concluded was rampant in Asia.

### **Spender and the making of the Colombo Plan**

During the same week that Commonwealth foreign ministers met in Colombo, Commonwealth senior economic officials held their own conference in Colombo. They met separately in the same building as the Commonwealth foreign ministers to take stock of the general balance of payments situation in the sterling area. There were frequent contacts between delegates at the two meetings. Britain's main aim at the senior economic officials meeting was to prevent a renewed drain on gold and dollar reserves, and thus avoid a further blow to sterling's international position.<sup>39</sup> This position both informed and constrained the foreign ministers' deliberations on the Colombo Plan. Le Pan, a senior Canadian economic official and adviser at the officials meeting, commented:

It is impossible fully to understand the origins of the Colombo Plan without having some awareness of the anxiety felt by the British over the sterling balances and their eagerness that some other source of financial assistance should be found for the balances' principal holders. That may not be apparent from the minutes. But it was crystal clear to those of us who were at Colombo. The British made no secret of it.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, it is not possible to understand fully the launch of the Colombo Plan and Spender's role in its establishment without some appreciation of its novelty. The Colombo Plan meetings in 1950 were the first time that the economic problems of a very large segment of the underdeveloped world were faced directly and as a whole and the first time that more advanced

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<sup>39</sup> D Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory: a set of four memoirs*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto, 1979, p. 166.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

countries explicitly recognised their obligation to offer assistance.<sup>41</sup> Further, according to Le Pan:

The Colombo Plan, as it was shaped at the meetings held in 1950, broke new ground because it called for a combination of capital and technical assistance; because it surveyed the needs of a very large segment of the underdeveloped world, taken together; because it encouraged mutual aid among the under-developed countries themselves; and because it numbered among its prospective donors countries which were unburdened by any long colonial past or any imperial ambitions, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. ... The seed for all that activity was sown at the meeting held in Colombo in January of 1950.<sup>42</sup>

Spender, for his part, while acknowledging the importance of capital assistance, laid emphasis on the novelty of the technical assistance aspects of the Plan:

One could quote figures and facts by the page to show how the ideas put forward at Colombo and Sydney have borne fruit in the field of technical assistance. Indeed, had nothing else come from our deliberations, I am convinced that this form of mutual assistance, which was altogether novel in the area, has alone more than justified the efforts of Australia.<sup>43</sup>

With regard to his claim to have been the author of the Colombo Plan, Spender told a reviewer of his *Exercises in diplomacy*:

Particularly with respect to the Colombo Plan more than one person has claimed to have fathered it, and claimed credit for its creation. The documents cited by me – quite apart from the narrative – will establish that the Plan itself was due to and flowed directly from the Australian initiative at Colombo in January 1950, while the narrative will, I think, establish that there would have been no Technical Assistance Programme (that operated from July 1950) had it not been for the events described by me that took place in Sydney in May 1950.<sup>44</sup>

While Spender's account in his memoirs was based on his own experience, aided by his access to official and contemporary documents, his emphasis on the narrative is important. In addition to the documents cited by him (on the whole accurately, if at times selectively) the narratives of other participants are also necessary to establish the reality, since, as Reynolds

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>43</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 277.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Spender to Starke, 16 October 1969, op. cit.

points out, no participant could have known the historical reality at the time, because he could not see the other participants' cards.<sup>45</sup>

While the issues of Communism and under-development in South and South-East Asia were flagged on the first day of the meeting, the idea of a specific plan for development aid with recommendations and prescriptions for action emerged gradually. In his keynote address, Senanayake set the scene for the consensus that would eventually emerge.<sup>46</sup> He drew attention to worldwide Communist expansion, and stated that it was in Asia that some of the most pressing international problems were presenting themselves in their most acute form. While there was no present risk of Communism taking control in any of the three Commonwealth South Asian countries where (he claimed) Communism was on the decline, the real problem lay with the countries of South-East Asia, particularly those countries still under alien rule. The fundamental problems in Asia, however, were economic, rather than political. Asia provided a fertile field for Communist propaganda because its vast undernourished population was fighting a battle for life and could be persuaded that any change was a change for the better. He went on to suggest that Asia also lacked the capital equipment and technical skills required to combat problems of under-development, but the West could provide these. The peace of the world required that these problems of want and poverty be properly understood and he hoped that by the end of the Conference all Commonwealth governments would have a better idea of the problems facing them and some suggestions about how they could be resolved.<sup>47</sup> In his welcome to all leaders of delegations, he said that Australia and New Zealand could perhaps be considered as belonging to the Asian side of the land mass of the world, and it was a matter of great satisfaction

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<sup>45</sup> Reynolds, *Summits*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Senanayake's comments were, of course, his own, but it would have been surprising if the Chair and the U.K. Commonwealth Relations Office had not discussed and agreed beforehand the purpose of the meeting, the conduct of the meeting, the gist of the Chair's opening remarks, and the order of speakers.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

that these two countries could be represented by their foreign ministers so soon after elections in those countries.<sup>48</sup>

In response, India and Pakistan supported Senanayake's appreciation of the problem. Nehru agreed that the peoples of underdeveloped countries were chiefly interested in securing the primary necessities of life and were receptive to any program that offered economic relief; and Pakistan's Ghulam Mohammed stated that the best remedy for combating Communism was to improve the economic conditions in the countries under threat.

The focus on economic assistance to South and South-East Asia on the opening day of the Conference provided a way for both developed and developing Commonwealth countries to find an area of agreement acceptable to politicians of different political persuasions, such as Spender, Bevin and Nehru. Economic assistance served a dual purpose: to assist the economies of the region and to create an economic and social climate in which it would be difficult for Communists to find recruits.<sup>49</sup> For the Asian Commonwealth members, the first of these purposes was uppermost. Economic aid did not need to be justified in political terms.

Spender did not play a major role on the first day of the meeting in defining the problem that needed to be addressed. By the time it was his turn to speak, the main parameters for the debate had already been set. In his main intervention on the first day, Spender stated that he was prepared to agree that the problem was essentially one of raising economic standards in certain areas, and while he did not disagree with the diagnoses that had been given - he was more interested in finding a cure.<sup>50</sup> He asked whether Commonwealth countries could collaborate in raising economic standards in areas which were of special concern to them; and whether they might agree to contribute a part of their national income and resources for the economic

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> JE Williams, 'The Colombo Conference and communist insurgency in South and South-East Asia', *International Relations*, vol. 94, no. 4, 1972, pp. 94-107, p. 102.

<sup>50</sup> F.M.M. (50): 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, 9 January 1950, DO 35/2773, NAUK.

development of those areas.<sup>51</sup> In relation to South-East Asia he stated: 'A plan was required, either within the framework of the United Nations or outside it, to assist countries in South-East Asia in practical ways such as the provision of food, capital equipment and technical assistance'.<sup>52</sup> Spender hoped that all countries in the area would be able to formulate and pursue a common policy, though no lasting solution would be possible without the involvement of the United States. Ceylon and Pakistan supported Spender's request for Commonwealth action. At this point the Chair adjourned the discussion to give an opportunity for the formulation of specific proposals.<sup>53</sup>

### **British shaping of the Australian memorandum prepared for the meeting**

While Spender and his advisers had prepared a rough draft of an Australian memorandum on the flight to Colombo, the Australian delegation was still working on the memorandum when the conference opened on 9 January. According to Spender, the Australian proposal was not finalised until the evening of the second day. It was subsequently lodged with the conference secretariat for circulation to other delegations on the morning of the third day (11 January), for debate on the afternoon of the following day.<sup>54</sup>

As it stood on the first day, the Australian draft agenda paper called on Commonwealth foreign ministers to be particularly mindful of the problems of economic stagnation and instability in the countries in South-East Asia, and for their governments to consider individual and concerted action with the wider aim of attracting the assistance of the United States. Asia's priority needs were considered to be for consumption goods, technical advice and for capital equipment. In addition to technical assistance, the paper considered a range of other measures including financial assistance, relief supplies, commercial supplies and credits. United States assistance was

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'The Colombo Conference', p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 211.



essential, particularly in the provision of capital and consumption goods. However, before approaching the United States, Commonwealth countries would need to indicate the extent to which they themselves were prepared to make a contribution. The Australian draft paper highlighted the needs of the new state of Indonesia, but not exclusively.

However, on the evening of the first day, two senior British officials, Sir Percival Liesching and Sir Roger Makins,<sup>55</sup> on Bevin's instructions, called on him to discuss the situation that had arisen at the afternoon session. Bevin's report to Cabinet<sup>56</sup> stated that as the Australian delegation appeared to have 'certain concrete ideas' on the matter, Sir Percival Liesching and Sir Roger Makins were instructed to find out whether Spender would be prepared to take the initiative in tabling proposals before the meeting. Bevin reported that Spender readily agreed to do this. Bevin later told US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, that when he was in Colombo he had asked Spender to propose the program that would eventually become the Colombo Plan, as he thought it was best for the proposal to come from a country other than the UK.<sup>57</sup> According to Makins' record of the meeting, Spender stated that he was 'prepared to carry the ball' for the initiative at the meeting, and the British officers assured him that the British delegation would give the initiative their general support.

The record of the meeting also revealed that the two British officials made a number of important suggestions about the initiative to which Spender agreed.<sup>58</sup> For example, Spender agreed that the nucleus of the organisation should be the Commonwealth countries directly interested in the area, and that the participation of Canada and the Union of South Africa should be optional. He also thought that the other countries in the area should be

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<sup>55</sup> Liesching was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and Makins was Deputy Under-Secretary, Economic Affairs, in the Foreign Office.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'The Colombo Conference', *op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Lucius D. Battle, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, 6 September 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, vol. VI, p. 146.

<sup>58</sup> Record of Conversation by R Makins, 10 January 1950, FO371/84539, FZ 1102/4, NAUK.

associated with the proposal from the outset and other metropolitan powers (France and the Netherlands) could be approached later, if at all. While some of Spender's advisers seemed to think that it would be sufficient to leave Commonwealth governments to support assistance through the various multilateral organisations of which they were members, the British officials argued that this would have the effect of dissipating the initiative and it would be preferable to have some regional coordinating body based on a Commonwealth nucleus. This was a suggestion to which Spender, according to Makins, did not dissent. At the conclusion of the meeting with the two British officials, Spender gave them a copy of a paper which he had prepared and suggested that they discuss it with his officials, stating that he would welcome any observations or suggestions. The British delegation's cable to the Foreign Office reporting on the draft paper stated that the British delegation had made a few comments on the paper, which the Australians would take into account. The cable went on to say: 'We have not, however, tried to rewrite it or make a joint proposal as it is desired to encourage the Australians to remain in the lead and accept their responsibilities. There will be ample scope for discussing and amending their draft. We have promised general support'.<sup>59</sup> As a result of the meeting, the Australian delegation made a number of cosmetic and drafting changes to their draft before it appeared as a formal Memorandum of the Australian Delegation.

### **The Australian, New Zealand and Ceylon joint memorandum**

However, on the afternoon of the following day Ceylon's Finance Minister Jayawardene pre-empted the Australian proposal by tabling a draft resolution, in which he proposed that the Commonwealth governments establish a committee of officials who would gather information and prepare a 10 year plan for development of South and South-East Asia.<sup>60</sup>

Subsequently, delegates of Australia, New Zealand and Ceylon met to work

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<sup>59</sup> Text of telegram No. 13 from the UK Delegation, Colombo to Foreign Office, repeated to selected posts, 13 January 1950, FO371/84539, FZ 1102/4, NAUK.

<sup>60</sup> F.M.M. (50), 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 10 January 1950, DO 35/2773, NAUK.

on a joint memorandum to present to the meeting. This joint memorandum, more than any other single piece of paper presented to the meeting, deserves to be regarded, as Le Pan claimed, as the 'kernel' of the Colombo Plan.<sup>61</sup>

The afternoon session on the fourth day was devoted to a discussion of economic aspects of South-East Asia. Without waiting to be formally invited by the Chair to lead the discussion, Spender rose and introduced his original paper, suggesting that the meeting adopt the recommendations in the joint Australia, New Zealand and Ceylon memorandum as the basis for discussion. According to a Ceylonese account of the proceedings, Ceylon Finance Minister Jayawardene had prepared a speech introducing the joint memorandum, but before he could do so, Spender rose and made what the source said was an 'excellent speech'. According to the source, Jayawardene was 'decidedly put out' and still wanted to take credit for initiating the ideas.<sup>62</sup> A New Zealand account of the rivalry between Spender and Jayawardene stated that: 'Spender elbowed aside the Ceylon people, who had put forward something similar, and even when the two propositions were combined he blared forth in the Press about the Spender Plan, and as such it became known to a wondering world'.<sup>63</sup>

In his speech, which was his main contribution to the debate on the need for a Colombo Plan, Spender said that while the concept of international collaboration for the furtherance of economic development in South-East Asia was not a new one, few practical results had followed. Economic development of the region would also bring benefits to other parts of the world and contribute to the solution of the monetary problem of the sterling

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<sup>61</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, p. 175.

<sup>62</sup> Cable from US Embassy, Colombo, to Secretary of State, 31 January 1950, reporting on discussions with Coomaraswamy, Assistant Secretary, Ceylon Ministry of Finance and Assistant Secretary, Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Secretariat, on Colombo Plan matters, 846E.00TA / 1 – 3150, NAUSA.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from McIntosh to Berendsen, 12 May 1950 in I McGibbon (ed.), *Undiplomatic dialogue: letters between Carl Berendsen and Alister McIntosh, 1943-52*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1993, p. 226.

area. While the basic priority requirements of South-East Asia were for consumption goods (to maintain minimum subsistence standards, technical advice and assistance and capital equipment, including agricultural equipment), Asia's primary need, in his view, was the extension of her production of food and raw materials, for which there was a ready market in dollar countries. It was necessary that any Commonwealth action be co-ordinated with the United States and, indeed, not much could be achieved without considerable assistance from the United States; but this aid was not likely to be forthcoming unless South-East Asia showed that it was willing to help itself.

Of the specific recommendations in the Australian Memorandum, Australia attached particular importance to the technical assistance program (and indeed had offered to Indonesia that Australia would seek means of making such assistance available to them). He stressed the importance of the envisaged consultative procedures in the Australian paper, particularly with respect to including countries outside the region who were interested in the development of South-East Asia and the need for shared responsibility with international organisations working in the field. Spender referred to the detailed recommendations in the joint memorandum, and said that he would recommend the Australian Government's whole-hearted acceptance of these proposals, including convening the first meeting of the Consultative Committee in Australia.

There was no real opposition from ministers to the recommendations proposed in the joint Australian, Ceylon and New Zealand memorandum. Nehru asked a number of questions about planning and the need for each country to draw up their own detailed plan of their own requirements before the Consultative Committee could make any real progress, but according to the Ceylon secretariat source, he was not hostile. New Zealand and Britain raised caveats about their own ability to contribute and Canada suggested that the recommendations be scrutinised by economic advisers present in

Colombo in order to avoid any ambiguities. Sir Roger Makins, who chaired the meeting of officials, seems to have been instrumental in having the possibility of mutual assistance inserted in the recommendations at the last moment. Although there is no direct evidence for this, Tange stated that one of the interesting features of the private discussions that took place during the period of negotiations on the final drafts was the emphasis by United Kingdom officials on the possibilities of mutual aid programs among the countries of the area itself, who also might expect some assistance from outside.<sup>64</sup> This idea of mutual assistance, which found its way into the recommendations approved by ministers (Recommendation [1] [v]) did not appear in the Australia, Ceylon or the 'Joint Memorandum' but did appear in the report by the drafting committee of officials and subsequently in the final recommendations of the meeting. Bevin later told Cabinet that the idea of mutual assistance within the area was specifically introduced into the recommendation with an eye to United States opinion.<sup>65</sup> The meeting agreed the draft recommendations with one minor amendment at its tenth meeting on 13 January. It also agreed that the Australian Government would be responsible for asking other governments whether they accepted the recommendations, and if so, at what stage would they be ready to send their representatives to a meeting of the Consultative Committee in Australia.<sup>66</sup>

### **Spender's exercises in public diplomacy and Australian reputation**

Spender's use of the media in Colombo and during his associated overseas visits to Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Singapore served three main purposes. First, Spender's apotheosis as a maker of history in the dual sense of being the author of the Colombo Plan and promoter of this idea in the press and academia, and through disparagement of contenders (such as

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'The Colombo Conference', op. cit.

<sup>66</sup> F.M.M., 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 14 January 1950, Annex B, DO 35/2773, NAUK.

Ceylon's Jayawardene),<sup>67</sup> required a successful contemporary public information strategy. In this, he gave early recognition to the importance of his own and Australia's image and reputation as an essential part of a state's strategic equity in global affairs.<sup>68</sup>

The reference to the 'Spender Plan' appears to have had its origin in off the record background briefings, which Spender gave to the Australian and other press in which he sought to differentiate his plan from Jayawardene's plan.<sup>69</sup> During and after the discussion of the recommendations on the penultimate and final days of the meeting, there had been a flood of press speculation and press comment on the import of the recommendations on the economic development in South and South-East Asia, together with competing claims by Ceylon and Australia to the credit of putting forward the proposal.<sup>70</sup>

Subsequently, the *Sydney Morning Herald* under the heading, 'Spender Plan for Asia: Decision at Colombo', reported that the 'Spender Plan for Asia' gave the meeting a foundation on which to build a new practical program of aid.<sup>71</sup> However, Canadian and New Zealand accounts regarded Spender's use of the press in Colombo as self-aggrandisement. For example, the Canadians reported that: 'The Australian Delegation did not hesitate to let the press know that it was the Spender Plan for the economic development of South and Southeast Asia which saved the Conference from failure.'<sup>72</sup> The New Zealand Secretary of External Affairs also wrote that Spender was 'as great an exhibitionist as Evatt and just as keen on press publicity'.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> P Williamson, 'Baldwin's reputation: politics and history, 1937 – 1967', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2004, pp. 127-168, (cited in the first chapter) pp. 130-31, provided the idea on which this argument was structured.

<sup>68</sup> P Van Ham, 'The rise of the brand state: the postmodern politics of image and reputation', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 5, 2001, pp. 2-10.

<sup>69</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 238.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'The Colombo Conference', op. cit.; Tange, 'Report on Economic Aspects', 31 January 1950, op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> "'Spender Plan" for Asia: Decision at Colombo', *SMH*, 14 January 1950, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> 'Commonwealth Meeting on Foreign Affairs, Colombo, Ceylon, January 9-14 1950', 30 March 1950, E46, vol. 7, MG 31, NAC.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from McIntosh to Berendsen, 1 February 1950, *Undiplomatic dialogue*, op. cit., p. 203.

The 'Spender Plan' designation gained early ascendancy in British and United States diplomatic and media discourses on the Colombo Conference, largely as a result of Spender's promotional activities, and British official support for Spender's plan. For example, Commonwealth Relations Secretary Noel-Baker wrote to Spender in April 1950 stating that he was 'a convinced supporter of the Spender Plan' and would continue to do everything in his power to promote it at the London end<sup>74</sup> and *The Economist* of 21 January 1950 wrote in a leading article:

The Spender Plan, though its origins went far beyond a single man, was his in the sense that his initiative and drive brought it through the conference and his wise indiscretions brought it out into the open.<sup>75</sup>

The Spender Plan descriptor, however, was finally laid to rest in London in September 1950. Spender, unavoidably, arrived late for the London Consultative meeting. On his arrival at the meeting, Gaitskell took him aside and explained that ministers in a private meeting before the first public session had been discussing the title of the report and had considered that the most appropriate title would be 'The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development' or the 'Colombo Plan' in short, and did he have any objection? Spender replied that he had none.<sup>76</sup>

Second, Spender's public information activities were designed to keep the Australian public informed of developments. During the course of the Colombo Conference, Spender had, as he mentioned in his memoir, kept the Australian press up to speed on daily developments at the meeting where he considered important Australian interests were at stake.<sup>77</sup> Australian domestic public acceptance of the Spender's initiative at Colombo was important in view of mounting press apprehension in Australia about

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 232.

<sup>75</sup> 'New Patterns for the Commonwealth', *The Economist*, 21 January 1950, p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 267. He added in a footnote on the same page: 'Up to this time the Plan had commonly been referred to as "the Spender Plan".'

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-239.

Australia developing close ties with countries in the region.<sup>78</sup> In a series of radio broadcasts addressed to the Australian public during his overseas visit, Spender used the opportunity to inform his Australian audience that while the countries in the region were facing enormous difficulties as new nations, they were well disposed towards Australia, and Australia could not afford to be indifferent to their situation. Anything Australia could do to increase their political, social and economic stability through technical assistance, increased trade and other means would be important for Australia, and for Australia's mode of life.<sup>79</sup>

In his foreign policy speech to Parliament on 9 March 1950, Spender drew three lessons from his experience in Colombo and from subsequent discussions in the region:

- the need for Australia to maintain stable and democratic governments in power in the region and increase the material welfare of their peoples, as the best defence for them and for Australia against the effective penetration of Communist imperialism;
- the need for a satisfactory solution of the Japanese problem; and
- the desirability of some form of regional pact for common defence.

The specific proposals Australia had put forward at Colombo addressed the first of these concerns, and in this respect he made three points: first, the proposals could not be expected to achieve spectacular results in a short time; second, there was no intention to restrict the scheme to Commonwealth countries even though the British Commonwealth had suggested itself as the appropriate body to initiate the task of economic development in the South and South-East Asia region (but even then the solution to these problems required the active cooperation of the United States); and third, the aid that was envisaged should not be regarded as 'handouts' - one of the aims of the

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<sup>78</sup> For example: 'Australia not part of Asia', *SMH*, 22 January 1950, editorial, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Texts of speeches recorded in Jakarta, New Delhi and Karachi, respectively, for subsequent broadcast by the Macquarie network, *Spender Papers*, box 12, Speeches, Press statements, Jan-June 1950, MS4875, NLA.



scheme was to stimulate the productive capacity in the region from which Australia was well-positioned to benefit.<sup>80</sup>

The third purpose of his public information activities can appropriately be described as an early example of 'public diplomacy' in that it focuses on the ways in which a country communicates with citizens in other societies:

To be effective, public diplomacy must be seen as a two-way street. It involves not only shaping the message(s) that a country wishes to present abroad, but also analysing and understanding the ways that the message is interpreted by diverse societies and developing the tools of listening and conversation as well as the tools of persuasion.<sup>81</sup>

One of Spender's main purposes in making public the essential features of his plan was to ensure that the plan received a good reception in the United States, not only with the US Administration, but also with the American public:

To have avoided any comment whatever would have resulted in false speculation which could well have prejudiced the reception of the Plan in the U.S.A., without whose support it would have failed to accomplish much. Public opinion in its favour was essential to obtain.<sup>82</sup>

In his public diplomacy broadcasts to audiences in other countries, Spender emphasised the changes that had occurred in Australian foreign policy and sought to create a positive image of a new-look Australia. The messages were tailored for each audience, but using the theme of Australia's role in establishing the Colombo Plan as a peg for each message. For example, in a broadcast prepared for the British Broadcasting Corporation, Spender affirmed the new Australian Government's commitment to strengthening the association of the British Commonwealth (including Britain's full economic recovery and its increasing prestige and influence in the world) as one of basic principles of the Government's foreign policy - 'a policy which springs not merely from the decisions of Governments, but from fundamental

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<sup>80</sup> CPD, H of R, vol. 206, 9 March 1950, pp. 621-636.

<sup>81</sup> USC Centre on Public Diplomacy, 'What is public diplomacy?' retrieved 11 September 2008, <<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/about/whatis.pd>>.

<sup>82</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 238-9.

sentiments of kinship between our two peoples'. Spender emphasised that South and South-East Asia were a concern for the whole Commonwealth and that Commonwealth countries could provide a strong nucleus for cooperative effort in the region.

Australia had already shown that it had accepted increasing responsibilities in the area through the leading part it had played in the Commonwealth war effort against Japan. At Colombo, Australia had accepted increasing obligations to aid the economic recovery of South-east Asia and had advanced proposals for continuing consultations among Commonwealth countries with a view to mobilising real efforts to check the spread of Communism through the area, providing the people with more secure living standards.<sup>83</sup>

In his press statements and broadcasts in India, Spender stressed Australia's regional interests and obligations both as a mature democracy and as an advanced economy, suggesting that Australia intended to build its reputation within the region by contributing in these domains. In a broadcast on All-India Radio on the occasion of the inauguration of the Indian Republic on 26 January, he stated that Australia hoped to benefit culturally from closer familiarity with India, as it had in the past. Australia, on the other hand, had progressed economically, industrially and in the realm of social justice and had built up a reputation in these areas, with many other and older countries looking to Australia as an example. Australia was therefore in a good position to offer some important indirect reciprocal benefits, lending credibility to an essential aspect of public diplomacy.

The limitations on Australia's ambition to play a leadership role in the region began to appear during Spender's visit to New Delhi. At Spender's main press conference in New Delhi, after a few general questions about Australia's relations with India, China and the Japanese Peace Treaty, the

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<sup>83</sup> Draft 2 For Broadcast by the Hon. P. C. Spender to the British Broadcast Corporation, *Spender Papers*, box 12, Speeches, Press statements, Jan-June 1950, MS4875, NLA.

Indian press homed in on Australian foreign and domestic policies. According to a report in the *Hindustan Times*, the 'tough, blunt, remarkably outspoken' Australian politician, in response to a barrage of questions, strongly defended the 'White Australia' policy, Australia's intake of refugees, the increase in the price of the sale of Australian wheat to India, the Australian Government's plan to abolish the Communist Party in Australia, and American aid to the region.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, in relation to Indonesia, a country with which Australia believed that it had a special relationship, rifts began to appear as a result of Australian opposition to Indonesian policy on West Irian. By seeking to engage more closely in South and South-East Asia, Australia was drawing attention to the contradictions in its internal and foreign policies, which in turn impacted on its new foreign policy directions.

### **The Consultative Committee Meeting, Sydney, May 1950**

The principal mandated task of the British Commonwealth Consultative Committee Meeting, Sydney, 14-19 May 1950, was to receive from participating governments an indication of the actions which they considered feasible in response to the recommendations of the Colombo Meeting, and to make recommendations to governments. Spender viewed his task in more action-orientated terms. For him, the meeting's chief objective was 'to formulate means to give effect to the Colombo recommendations'.<sup>85</sup> The meeting was held at ministerial level. The Australian and New Zealand delegations were led by their respective foreign ministers, the UK by Lord Macdonald, their Postmaster General (the third highest ranking minister in the UK Treasury) assisted by UK Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald. The other delegations were led by ministers from various domestic economic portfolios. Among them, Ceylon's Finance Minister Jayawardene alone had been present at Colombo. Spender's duty as Chair of the meeting was to promote consultation and cooperation in the

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<sup>84</sup> 'Indo-Australian friendship will endure', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 19 January 1950, *Spender Papers*, box 12, speeches, press statements, Jan-June 1950, MS4875, NLA.

<sup>85</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 244.

Commonwealth and to facilitate a successful outcome of the meeting for the Commonwealth as a whole. His international standing and international reputation in these respects were also on trial.

Australia's reputation at the Colombo Conference as the initiator and champion of the 'Spender Plan' was a strong motivating factor in Australian preparations for the meeting. External Affairs officials, who began to prepare vigorously for the meeting after Spender's return to Australia, worked on the assumption that as 'author of the Colombo proposal, and as host Government to the meeting', Australia would be expected to state what it was prepared to do in the area, lest it be embarrassed at the meeting.<sup>86</sup> Departmentally, Australia was taking a 'realistic' view about what the Commonwealth could achieve on its own without US participation.<sup>87</sup> Further departmental research and analysis only confirmed earlier indications that the prospect of Australia making a major contribution to economic development in South and South-East Asia was limited.

Largely with Indonesia in mind, Australia framed its ideas for the meeting in the two broad fields in which Australia believed that it, along with other Commonwealth countries, could take concrete action - namely technical assistance - and more generally, priority financial and economic aid. Australia presented these ideas to the meeting as ideas having general application. In particular, DEA officials prepared a detailed memorandum on technical assistance.<sup>88</sup> They also prepared an annotated agenda for the meeting, which suggested that the Consultative Committee consider the creation of a Commonwealth Fund that would be available to provide assistance to South and South-East Asian countries in the forms of technical assistance, emergency relief supplies and credits for urgent import

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<sup>86</sup> Draft Submission from Department of External Affairs to Spender, Canberra, 8 March 1950, 'Preparations for the Consultative Committee for South and South-East Asia', A1838, 381/3/1/3, part 1b, NAA.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Tange to Critchley, Canberra, 10 February 1950, A1838, TS708/9/2, part 1, NAA.

<sup>88</sup> Memorandum by Australian Delegation; Technical Assistance, Sydney, May 1950, A10617, 1950/8, NAA.

requirements.<sup>89</sup> However, in drawing up this agenda, External Affairs admitted that it necessarily looked to the UK (with its long established relations with the region) to provide information on urgent economic requirements. External Affairs felt handicapped by the lack of adequate information on the actual and immediate needs of countries with respect to technical assistance.<sup>90</sup> These information gaps were major restraints on Australia pushing its proposals at the meeting in the face of strong opposition, or even threatening to go it alone with whom-so-ever was willing to join it.

While Britain and Australia had worked closely at the Colombo meeting, Britain's general approach to the Sydney meeting was diametrically opposite to Australia's emphasis on urgent priority measures. This is largely reflected in the views of officials in the UK Treasury who had assumed carriage of the follow up to the Colombo recommendations during the UK February 1950 general elections. In a memorandum to other Commonwealth Governments in March 1950, Britain proposed a 'radical attack' on the problem of development in the area. They proposed that the best way to tackle the problem was by means of the preparation of individual practical and realistic, long-term country plans that clearly identified needs and gaps. Britain also cautioned that the need for the sterling area to balance its dollar accounts and restore its sterling reserves should be the first charge on resources, especially as Marshall Aid was falling and would soon come to an end. In these circumstances, it was unlikely that Britain would be able to make a substantial contribution in either the short or longer term.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Telegram from Australian Government to Commonwealth Governments, Canberra, 3 May 1950, A3320, 3/4/2/1 part 1, NAA.

<sup>90</sup> Telegram from Australian Government to United Kingdom Government, Canberra, 19 April 1950, A3320, 3/4/2/1 part 1, NAA; 'Memorandum from Tange to Australian representatives in South-East Asia', Canberra, 20 April 1950, 1838, 708/ 9/2 part 2, NAA.

<sup>91</sup> Foreign Office, Sydney Conference: Text of memorandum by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom which is being communicated to other Commonwealth Governments, A3320, 3/4/2/1 part 1, NAA.

Further, UK Treasury officials considered that the proposals that Australia submitted in its draft agenda were ill-digested and likely to cause difficulty at the meeting.<sup>92</sup> While it is possible to detect in this attitude a British-colonial disposition to regard self-determined, dominion pursuit of national interests as rash or irresponsible (as they could only be carried out at the expense of the sterling balance), and based on specious arguments,<sup>93</sup> the onus was nevertheless on Australia to argue and demonstrate the contestability - in Treasury parlance - of its proposals. A major problem for Australia in this regard was that while the British, Canadian, Indian and Ceylonese delegations were supported by high-level economic and financial advisors, the Australian delegation was largely confined to Department of External Affairs representatives, and as Macdonald observed:

They were alone in this; in most Delegations the major weight was on the economic and financial side, and in every Delegation except that of Australia there was strong evidence that policies had been worked out reconciling the interests of all Departments.<sup>94</sup>

India considered that the best contribution it could make to the problem of development in South and South-East Asia was to raise its own people's standard of living. It was prepared to participate in any US assisted scheme, particularly in order to resume projects that were in abeyance, provided that no strings were attached and any regional arrangement did not work to India's disadvantage. India, economically and administratively, was at the time, the most stable country in South and South-East Asia and could negotiate aid assistance with the US and international bodies on her own.

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<sup>92</sup> Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor, 'Commonwealth Consultative Committee on Economic Development in South and South-East Asia: Sydney May 1950: Memorandum by the Postmaster-General', 16 June 1950, C.P. (50) 123, CAB/129/40, NAUK.

<sup>93</sup> Hugh Gaitskell, then British Minister for Fuel and Power, had reacted in his diary in these terms to Australian proposals on petrol rationing in February 1950 following the Colombo Conference. See PM Williams (ed.), *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell 1945-1956*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1983, pp. 162-163.

<sup>94</sup> Lord Macdonald, *op. cit.*

India was also, to some extent, prepared to assist other countries in the region.<sup>95</sup>

According to a senior Ceylonese finance official, Ceylon had intended to go to Sydney with a well-developed program so that Finance Minister Jayawardene could win back some of the acclaim taken from him by popular identification of the Colombo Plan with Spender.<sup>96</sup> Jayawardene had prepared a paper and plan of action for the meeting,<sup>97</sup> which Macdonald described as 'an admirable paper on development, closely akin to ours'.<sup>98</sup> New Zealand had expressed support for both Spender's proposals for short term assistance and for the UK's proposals for long-term planning, but indicated that New Zealand would not be in a position to make a substantial contribution.

At some time in April or May 1950, as Lowe has written, Spender had decided that he would no longer allow British reservation and procrastination to divert him from seeking early and tangible outcomes for the Colombo Conference recommendations.<sup>99</sup> Spender sought and gained Cabinet Committee agreement to negotiate within an overall limit of £13 million in 1950-51 to 'fund constructive plans for submission to the Consultative Committee'. The aim of deliberately increased commercial relations with each of the countries of South-East Asia was to gain financial assistance in cooperation with the United States and other countries, and technical assistance and other forms of assistance that would help to stabilise conditions in South-East Asia and promote Australian economic and security

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<sup>95</sup> Telegram no. 1448, 15 May 1950, from the British High Commission, New Delhi, to the Commonwealth Relations Office and the U. K. Delegation to the Consultative Committee. FO 371 / 84546, NAUK. The telegram provided a précis of the official instructions given to the Indian delegation.

<sup>96</sup> Cable from U.S. Embassy to Secretary of State, Colombo, 31 January 1950, 846E.00TA/ 1-3150, NAUSA.

<sup>97</sup> Memorandum by Ceylon Delegation, 'Economic Development of South and South-East Asia: A Plan of Action', DO 35 / 2770, F 2320 / 26, NAUK.

<sup>98</sup> Lord Macdonald, *op. cit.*

<sup>99</sup> D Lowe, 'Percy Spender and the Colombo Plan 1950', p. 170.

interests.<sup>100</sup> This was a major Cabinet coup for the External Affairs Minister, and he was well aware that if he did not spend the allocated funds, they would return to general revenue. Calls in the Australian press for urgent action to check communist advances in South-East Asia,<sup>101</sup> and the uncertain passage in Parliament of the Government's *Anti-Communist Bill* (and the hype associated with it)<sup>102</sup> provided added domestic political imperatives. The stage was set for a clash between the Australian and British delegations. In the context of this impending stand-off, Canada's role at the meeting would be important, for unlike the British delegation, the Canadian's instructions allowed the delegation some leeway with regard to technical assistance. Canada was prepared to cooperate in any well-conceived plans for providing technical assistance over and above what the countries might legitimately be expected to receive through the United Nations.<sup>103</sup> Spender, therefore, had a potential ally in Canada for his technical assistance proposals. However, this was not to be the case, largely owing to the Canadian delegation's distrust of Spender.

At Colombo, Canadian participation in the proposed Colombo Plan was welcome, but optional. At first, Canada had been equivocal about attending the Consultative Committee meeting in Sydney in other than an observer capacity but it had been encouraged by Spender's initial letter of invitation. This letter assured Canada that its participation in the meeting did not imply any commitment of contribution. However, Canada felt that this trust had been rudely shattered by Spender's circulation of his proposed agenda of 3 May, which spoke of agreements, had little to say about long-term programs, and proposed a Commonwealth Fund and a Secretariat. Le Pan commented

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<sup>100</sup> Cabinet Committee on Aid to South and S.E. Asia (Minutes of meeting, Canberra - 22 March 1950), A1838, 381/3/1/3, part 1b, NAA.

<sup>101</sup> For example: 'Checking communist advance in South-East Asia', *SMH*, 9 May 1950, editorial p. 2; 'Asian Conference cannot afford to fail', *SMH*, 18 May 1950, editorial, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> For example, 'Opposition plans state war on reds', *SMH*, 18 May 1950, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, p. 191.



that the reaction in Ottawa was one of 'astonishment, incredulity, anger'.<sup>104</sup> Pearson sent a stern letter to Spender, which Spender responded to in an attempt to paper over the cracks. However, for Canada, the first crisis of the conference - lack of trust in the Chairman and his word, and hence his reputation - had occurred even before the conference began.<sup>105</sup> The second crisis for Canada occurred just before the first plenary session and, again, trust in Spender was the issue. Spender had made it clear that he wanted the opening session to be open to the public and the press, to which other delegates gave their consent, but on the clear understanding that Spender circulated his draft speech beforehand, and that it should contain nothing controversial. However, when the Canadians received the draft speech they were outraged because it included all the Australian proposals Spender had included in his earlier proposed agenda, to which Pearson had objected. Commenting on the distrust that Spender had engendered at the meeting - and which had been increased by Spender's rough and even brutal tactics - the Canadian delegation reported: 'It sometimes seems as though the spirit of Dr. Evatt had passed by transmission to his successor'.<sup>106</sup>

In the 1980s, Jervis raised the question whether reputations in international affairs attach to the decision-maker, the regime, or the country.<sup>107</sup> Both in reputation theory<sup>108</sup> and intuitively, reputations should not pass from one foreign minister to his successor, but clearly in Canadian perceptions of Australia in the period immediately after the end of the Second World War, they did. The effect of this transmission of a reputation for untrustworthiness from Evatt to Spender was to increase Spender's transaction costs of doing successful business at the Sydney meeting. Consequently, it was only on the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>105</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, pp. 192-93.

<sup>106</sup> High Commissioner in Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canberra, Telegram no. 73, 14 May 1950, in G Donaghy (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. 17, 1951, doc. 664, p. 1216.

<sup>107</sup> R Jervis, 'Deterrence and Perception', *International Security*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Winter, 1982-1983), pp. 3-30, p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> For example, J Mercer, *Reputation and international politics*.

very last day of the meeting, and in the last few minutes, that Canada announced that it would participate in the technical assistance scheme.

Nevertheless, and despite Spender's 'rashness and recklessness', 'intemperate statements', 'abuse of officials', 'failure to honour commitments', 'brutal and eccentric tactics', and the prevailing bedlam in Committee sessions, the Consultative Committee resulted in two main sets of recommendations. The first related to the procedures for drawing up a comprehensive plan for economic development in South and South-East Asia. Spender claimed that the meeting had little difficulty in arriving at agreed conclusions on long-term planning, but in reality, Australia contributed little to the discussion. Indeed, at the second plenary session on 15 May, Spender stated that while he accepted the need for long-term planning, he found the UK point of view disturbing, in that it implied a lack of any real attempt to carry out the Colombo decisions with any sense of urgency and would be coldly regarded in the United States. Macdonald responded that the United Kingdom was better informed about US policy and intentions than any other country in the world.<sup>109</sup> In short, Britain was able to use its prestige in the Commonwealth, the large amount of its economic contributions to South-East Asia since the War, its experience with economic development in the area since the War, its access to US thinking and the expertise of its officials, to shift attention away from short-term measures and win support for its plan for longer term aid.

The second set of recommendations agreed at the meeting related to Australia's proposals for a Commonwealth technical assistance scheme, to which the meeting added a Commonwealth bureau in Colombo to coordinate its work relating to the provision of technical personnel, trainees and technical education and equipment. Spender had proposed that Australia, together with Britain, share two-thirds of the costs of £Stg. 8 million to

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<sup>109</sup> Consultative Committee, 'Second Plenary Session, Monday 15 May, 1950, Summary Record', DO 35 / 2770, F 2320/26, NAUK.

establish the scheme, or £Stg. 2.6 million each with the final third made up from other Commonwealth country contributions. Spender originally presented the scheme as part of an Australian package deal for immediate action, which also included the establishment of a Commonwealth Fund of £Stg.15 million to finance, by revolving credits, priority supplies of agricultural equipment and materials, as well as urgently needed supplies such as medicines. Macdonald claimed that it was evident that little serious thought had been given to these proposals, which in his view were apparently designed for political and publicity purposes, rather than a workable course of action.<sup>110</sup> When support from Britain and other delegations for the overall package was not forthcoming, Spender suspended the meeting so that delegates could seek authority for funding and wrote to Bevin to get the UK Government to countermand Macdonald's instructions, threatening to inform the Australian Parliament that the meeting had broken down, to attribute blame, and to reveal the rift to the press.<sup>111</sup>

Spender's threat to attribute blame for the breakdown of the discussions caused the British Delegation to go into damage control and to prepare a draft detailed press release to counter these allegations. However, on the morning of 17 May, Spender withdrew his earlier package and substituted a proposal for a stand-alone technical assistance scheme, which, as it would be supplementary to the UN scheme, was more acceptable to the UK delegation. This commended itself to other delegations, and Macdonald announced that he would recommend its acceptance to his Government. He informed Whitehall that: 'No other course was possible short of wrecking the Conference and finding ourselves in disagreement with every other delegation'. This was especially true as Ceylon and Pakistan had agreed to contribute, India would provide bilateral assistance, New Zealand intended to

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<sup>110</sup> Lord Macdonald, *op. cit.*

<sup>111</sup> For example, 'Australia, U.K. clash: rift on Asian aid plans', *SMH*, 17 May 1950, p. 1.

recommend a contribution and Canada would most certainly also contribute.<sup>112</sup>

Through brinkmanship, Spender had succeeded in getting the Australian proposals for technical assistance agreed at the meeting. This was to be Australia's only substantial contribution to the outcome of the meeting. Spender was not so fortunate with his other proposals in his proposed Commonwealth Fund for Emergency Assistance. Canada, in particular, was opposed to any new Commonwealth machinery, and Britain strongly opposed the Australian proposals for priority economic requirements for a relief fund and for credits to non-Commonwealth countries in South-East Asia. Britain argued on the grounds that a strong case had not been made out, and that the proposals appeared to be a guise for Commonwealth assistance to Indonesia. Macdonald later informed Cabinet:

Indeed, it appears that their real objective was to get Commonwealth cover for Australian credits to Indonesia, so that they could appear to their Parliament to be carrying out not merely Australian but Commonwealth policy. In the end, this problem of emergency action was postponed until September; it is not clear whether the Australians intend to give credit to Indonesia or not. It is unfortunate that the question whether a genuine case existed for emergency action was never really examined: a proper investigation was made impossible by the concentration of attention upon the unrealistic Australian proposals.<sup>113</sup>

Overall, Spender's reputation as a Commonwealth and world statesman suffered as a result of his handling of the meeting, particularly with Britain and the United States. The UK High Commissioner to Australia, Williams, reported to the UK Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (Noel-Baker - one of Spender's strongest supporters in London after the Colombo Conference) that:

Less happily it must be added that Mr. Spender's hopes that his reputation as an international statesman would be firmly established by the Sydney

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<sup>112</sup> Telegram No. 34 'For Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of Exchequer and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from Paymaster General', Sydney, 17 May 1950, FO 371 / 84547, F 21102/131, NAUK.

<sup>113</sup> Lord Macdonald, *op. cit.*

meeting have been completely disappointed. It is to be expected that other Delegations will in reporting to their Governments not fail to comment not only on his arrogant and willful conduct and undignified withdrawals, but also on his patent failure in the ordinary duties of a chairman.<sup>114</sup>

Le Pan claimed that he had never known a rougher conference than the first meeting of the Consultative Committee in Sydney and noted that 'it was rough because Mr Spender made it that way'.<sup>115</sup> In particular, Spender's statement which he delivered in the first closed session of the meeting 'was more intemperate than any I have ever heard except at conferences where the Soviets were present'.<sup>116</sup> Macdonald reported to the British Cabinet that Spender had failed to discharge his ordinary duties as Chair, and that he seemed to confuse far too often the function of Chairman of the Conference with that of being Australian Delegate at the Conference. He went on to say that, as a result of his experience at the meeting, he could not recommend that any future Commonwealth meeting should take place in Australia under the *aegis* of the Department of External Affairs.<sup>117</sup>

Adeleke claimed that Spender's 'cocksparrow diplomacy' almost predicated a crisis in Commonwealth relations by offending Commonwealth relations and traditions, particularly through his use of tactics and means which did not fit the medium, and claimed that Spender's actions and behaviour placed relations within the organisation in jeopardy.<sup>118</sup> However, a New Zealand report on the meeting stated categorically that Commonwealth relations did not materially suffer from the Conference and that, while other donor countries were not prepared to be 'the children to Australia's Pied Piper, in fairness to the Australians it can be recorded here that they argued a difficult

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<sup>114</sup> Williams, United Kingdom High Commissioner in Australia to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 29 June 1950, FO 371/84548, NAUK.

<sup>115</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, p. 187.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>117</sup> Lord Macdonald, *op. cit.*

<sup>118</sup> A Adeleke, "Cocksparrow diplomacy": Percy Spender, the Colombo Plan and Commonwealth relations, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2008, pp. 173-185, retrieved 31 July 2008, Expanded Academic ASAP database.

case with great force and tenacity'.<sup>119</sup> Bevin praised the work of Australia at the Colombo and Sydney conferences, describing the Sydney conference as 'virile'.<sup>120</sup>

Oakman tends to agree with Adeleke that Spender's conduct at the meeting was detrimental to a collaborative atmosphere, but states:

His greatest sin, however, was to have upset Washington, who thought Spender was 'heavy-handed and tactless', intent on establishing 'a foreign policy independent, not only of the UK, but of the entire Commonwealth in those areas where it cannot obtain general agreement'. By casting aside the 'soft language of diplomacy' (as Spender called it) he almost destroyed the collaborative atmosphere he thought so crucial to getting the United States involved. And at the conclusion of the meeting a solid commitment from the Americans remained outstanding.<sup>121</sup>

Further, the meeting handed to Britain, rather than Australia, the task of taking the lead in advising the appropriate moment for a formal joint approach to the United States.

A New Zealand report on the meeting provides a reasonably accurate, if at times somewhat biased, report card on Australia's standing and reputation as demonstrated at the meeting:

The Australians were determined to have a successful Conference, successful to them meaning acceptance of the Australian proposals. They worked hard and, with a losing hand, again and again tried to turn the Conference their way or to salvage something from the wreck of their plans. Right from the start they fed information to the press which drummed up a phoney crisis atmosphere, the intention apparently being to stampede other delegations into line or at least to brand publicly those responsible for an 'unsuccessful' conference. Boiled down, the Australian case was almost as weak as their use of the Press would imply. They attempted to found an economic programme on a political argument and they failed when their proposals were subjected to practical criticism. Unfortunately for the Australians no one attempted to argue on the political aspect – that apparently was decided at Colombo...

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<sup>119</sup> New Zealand Department of External Affairs. 'Report for Departmental Use of Meeting of Commonwealth Consultative Committee Sydney 15-19 May 1950, 7 June 1950', YS 118G, Box 1962B, NANZ.

<sup>120</sup> 'Mr Bevin's Warning on Russia: Praise for Australia', *CT*, 26 May 1950, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Oakman, *Facing Asia*, p. 52.

Matched against the United Kingdom, Indian and Canadian delegations, the Australians had an appearance almost of immaturity manifested by lack of finesse, lack of tact and rigidity: on the other hand – and the Australians would probably be the last to admit this – they did have a successful Conference because they secured a technical assistance scheme in a positive form which was not thought desirable by the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand at least.<sup>122</sup>

Notwithstanding Washington's displeasure at Spender's tactics at the Sydney meeting, Washington's unwillingness to commit to the 'Spender Plan' had a long history. The US had welcomed the initiative Australia had taken at Colombo and had hoped that the Consultative Committee meeting in Sydney would result in constructive planning to implement the general principles agreed at Colombo. It also expressed a willingness, as far as possible, to coordinate its own projects in the area with projects to be undertaken by the Commonwealth as a result of the Sydney meeting.<sup>123</sup> While the US wished to see the Commonwealth take constructive steps of its own before committing itself, the Philippines, Indonesia and Indo-China were greater priority areas for US aid than the South and South-East Asian Commonwealth countries covered by the Colombo conference proposals. The US was also reluctant to tie aid with any easing of the British position on sterling balances, and it did not wish to receive to receive proposal from Commonwealth countries asking the US to meet a deficit in funding. However, after implications of Korean War in June 1950 for stability in South and South-East Asia began to be realised, Washington began to approach the Colombo proposals with a more open mind. During the Consultative Committee meeting in London in October 1950, Colombo Plan delegates decided that external aid should be granted on a bilateral basis rather than being channelled through a central allocating agency. This apparently met one of the conditions for American involvement

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<sup>122</sup> 'Report for departmental use of meeting of Commonwealth Consultative Committee, Sydney, 15-19 May 1950', 7 June 1950, box 1962, YS118G, p. 9, NANZ.

<sup>123</sup> The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Australia, 19 April 1950, *FRUS*, vol VI, pp. 81-82.

in the Plan, and Washington subsequently gave Commonwealth initiative its support without specifying the nature of its contribution.<sup>124</sup>

### **London Consultative Committee Meeting, 25 September - 6 October 1950**

The main purpose of the meeting was to agree on a final report, based on country chapters outlining their individual country needs, agreed in Sydney, and written in such a way that it could be used as a prospectus to invite the United States to invest in the joint venture, without appearing to be a plea for help. The various stages of the meetings were well-planned. British Treasury officials prepared a synopsis of the final report which was sent to participating governments for comment; senior officials met before the meeting of ministers to resolve outstanding issues in the proposed draft; ministers met formally from 25-30 September as the Commonwealth Consultative Meeting on South and South-East Asia to examine and agree the Report, with final editing left in the hands of British (and Canadian) officials. The meeting also adopted the report of the Standing Committee at Colombo, including the proposed constitution for the Council for Technical Cooperation. The British Minister for Economic Affairs, Hugh Gaitskell, chaired the ministerial meeting, most of whose delegates had been present at either the Colombo or Sydney meetings, or both. Ministers interrupted their meeting on 2-3 October for discussions with representatives of non-Commonwealth nations attending the Meeting as delegates or observers - the Indo-China states, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia.

Immediately after the Sydney meeting, Spender took leave of absence, but in between the two meetings, according to his own account, he spoke at considerable length about the Plan to the press, both in the US and in the United Kingdom.<sup>125</sup> In the lead up to the London meeting, he wrote to Bevin

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<sup>124</sup> Secretary of State to the Embassy in London, 22 November 1950, *FRUS*, vol. V1, 1950. pp. 160-161.

<sup>125</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 272.



to propose they make a joint approach to US Secretary of State Acheson in Washington in mid-September to obtain a clearer understanding of the probable US reaction before the meeting, but this meeting did not eventuate.<sup>126</sup> In the event, Spender met with Thorpe (US Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs) and a number of other officials, to outline the genesis of the 'Spender Plan' (as he continued to describe it) and the steps taken towards its fulfillment, emphasising the mutual aid character of the proposal and the need for South-East Asia non-Commonwealth countries to become members as soon as possible. Although US officials were non-committal, and indeed indicated a fear that without an expanded membership the 'white nations' might predominate,<sup>127</sup> Spender later claimed that these discussions had been a small contributing factor to the subsequent US decision to become a member of the Consultative Committee.<sup>128</sup>

Spender did not play a major role at the London meeting, and indeed had to leave at the end of the first week to return to the United Nations for an important vote on Korea. His, and the Australian delegation's actions were directed to encouraging non-Commonwealth countries in South-East Asia to come in, which would enable the Commonwealth to pass to the Americans a report which at least contained some reference to the economic needs of South-East Asia and to prevent a situation in which the Americans were being asked to interest themselves solely in the economic development of the four British Commonwealth territories which traditionally the Americans regarded as a British concern alone.<sup>129</sup> He also intervened in the discussions to raise the problem of the large proportion of the Indian and Pakistani budgets devoted to defence, and to chide the British that there was too much emphasis in the proposed program on assisting the UK sterling balance problem and not enough on the humanitarian approach; and even that the

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<sup>126</sup> Letter from Spender to Bevin, London, 5 September 1950, A3320, 3/4/2/1, part 2, NAA.

<sup>127</sup> Notes on Conversation at the State Department, Washington, 14 September 1950, A5460, 301/5, NAA.

<sup>128</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 272.

<sup>129</sup> Cablegram from Spender to Menzies, London, 8 September 1950, A3320, 3/4/2/1, part 2, NAA.

limited UK Treasury approach indicated little interest in having South-East Asian governments associated with the scheme.<sup>130</sup> Gaitskell later wrote in his diary of Spender that he was:

...like a little terrier, self-important, talks a good deal, but on the whole quite sensibly - though sometimes before he has really thought things out. He has no inhibitions about raising awkward subjects and is what you would call fairly crude - but then so are most Australians.<sup>131</sup>

The London Consultative Committee also confirmed that the carriage of the Colombo Plan and its implementation, including the timing, form and manner of an approach to the Americans, had passed from Australia to Britain.

The Report of the Consultative Committee had estimated that the cost of implementing the various development programmes was £Stg.1,869 million, of which external finance in the order of £Stg.1,084 million would be necessary. British officials informed the Canadian, Indian and Australian delegations at the meeting that the release of sterling funds to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and funding of its continuing programs in its Malay and Singapore dependencies, would be the UK's main contribution to the Plan. The British Government subsequently announced in Parliament that the UK contribution was likely to be in the order of at least £Stg.300 million sterling over the six year period, 1951-57.

In a change of tack, Spender wrote to Menzies in September before the London meeting, to inform him that while the programs advocated by Australia at Sydney were directed to meeting immediate priority requirements, he considered that the present programmes for long-term assistance, agreed at the Sydney meeting, might well prove to be the most effective in winning United States support,<sup>132</sup> to which Menzies agreed.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Departmental notes on the London Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, September 6 to October 4, 1950, A5460, 301/5, NAA.

<sup>131</sup> PM Williams (ed.), *The diary of Hugh Gaitskell*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>132</sup> Cablegram for Menzies from Spender, London, 8 September 1950, A3320, 3/4/2/1, part 2, NAA.

<sup>133</sup> Cablegram for Spender from Menzies, 'Commonwealth Consultative Committee', Canberra, 22 September 1950, A9879, 220/B, NAA.

In the lead up to the London meeting, Spender continued to emphasise Australia's potential leadership role in mobilising international economic assistance to South-East Asia. He told Menzies that he believed that an early indication of Australia's willingness to contribute along the lines he suggested (£Stg.10 million in 1951/52) was essential 'if we are to carry to success the initiative we have taken' - noting that other countries such as Canada were wanting to take over the lead on the Australian proposals. He also advised: 'Having carried negotiations to this point it would be most embarrassing if Australia were not in a position to make a substantial contribution to the programme as now presented'.<sup>134</sup> Spender believed that a forthcoming position by Australia on financing the Plan would regain the initiative for Australia lost at the Sydney meeting, and would revive Australia's reputation established at Colombo as a 'stalwart' in championing the Colombo Plan. Menzies replied that he agreed with the political objectives of the Consultative Committee and that he believed that Australia should make some contribution within its means in spite of extreme budgetary difficulties, but after giving thought to the size of the contribution Australia might reasonably make, he concluded that Australia could not possibly contemplate a contribution over the next six years beyond a total of £Stg.20-25 million. It is not clear how Menzies, in consultation with the Treasurer, arrived at these figures, but they represented 50 per cent of Spender's bid, and approximately 2 per cent of the total external finance required to finance the Plan. This figure is consistent with Australia's assessed contribution at the time to the administration budgets of the United Nations and its development programmes.

In his submission to Cabinet in December 1950 on Australia's contribution to the Colombo Plan, Spender continued to press arguments based on Australia's standing and obligations. He stated that when Australia had sponsored the proposal at the Colombo meeting, the Australian Delegation

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<sup>134</sup> Cablegram from Spender to Menzies, 'Consultative Committee', London, 27 September 1950, 3320, 3/4/2/1, part 2, NAA.

had fully recognised its responsibilities towards, and interest in, the countries of the region:

We must therefore show our sincerity to the peoples and Governments of the area, and we must demonstrate to the U.S.A our willingness to make some considerable contribution to assist in solving a problem which is of such special significance and importance to Australia, by undertaking to make available financial and economic aid for the Colombo Plan.<sup>135</sup>

Spender argued that the Plan was intended to contribute to peace within the area and to Australia's own security, and therefore needed to be paid for:

It is my submission that, having regard to the magnitude of the plan, to Australia's initiative and interest in it, to the world interest which the plan has created and the overriding necessity of committing the U.S.A. to this area of the world .. the total contribution for the six-year period should, I believe, be of the order of .. about £50-60 million sterling.<sup>136</sup>

Spender also hinted that, by failing to contribute a reasonable share of the required financial and economic aid to the Colombo Plan, and failing to act quickly so that the US and the Commonwealth could carry South and South-East Asia with them, Australia was in danger of reverting to deliberate isolation from the region and of being seen to concentrate internally on nation-building and population increase, losing the opportunity of using foreign policy effectively for Australia's long-term defence. In other words, Australia's international standing was in danger of reverting back to the situation prior to his statement in Parliament of 9 March 1950. However, in view of Menzies's opinion, Spender had no option but to concede and recommend that Australia contribute £Stg.25 million for the six year period, including an initial contribution of £Stg.7 million in the first year. In a press release, dated 20 December 1950, he announced that this would be Australia's contribution.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Submission from Spender to Cabinet, 'The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia', Canberra, December 1950, A4940, C353, NAA.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Press Release by Department of External Affairs, 'Statement by Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, on Australia's Financial Contribution to the Colombo Plan for Co-operative

A further consideration (listed in the Australian delegation's brief for the February 1951 Consultative Committee Meeting in Colombo as a defensive talking point) was that the Australian contribution to the Colombo Plan represented an entirely new obligation on the part of the Australian Government.<sup>138</sup> Other countries experienced the same dilemma. Escott Reid commented, with respect to Lester Pearson's difficulties in getting Canadian Cabinet agreement for its contribution:

It was one of the most difficult problems he ever had because this was something completely new in Canadian history, and in the history of most Western countries, that you should enter an agreement to transfer money from your taxpayers to the government of another country to help it speed up its development. And the first twenty-five million dollars was the hardest.<sup>139</sup>

The uncertainty of the amount the United States might contribute seems to have had a direct bearing on funding. As Le Pan pointed out (in respect to Canadian ministers' deliberations on an appropriate Canadian contribution), Canadian ministers knew in February 1951 about the British contribution of £Stg. 300 million over the six year period and that this was to take the form of releases from sterling reserves and they were not happy about it. They also knew that the Australian contribution of £Stg. 25 million over the same period was rather less than they had anticipated, noting that dissatisfaction on those two scores would have been more easily dealt with if there had been more concrete evidence of American intentions.<sup>140</sup>

Subsequent to the Australian announcement of its contribution, Gaitskell (now Chancellor of the Exchequer) approached Menzies at the 1951 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London on the subject of the level of Australia's contribution and pitched his argument in terms of Australian Commonwealth responsibilities and shared obligations.

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Economic Development in South and South East Asia', Canberra, 20 December 1950, A9879, 2202/EI, part 2, NAA.

<sup>138</sup> 'Brief for Australian Delegation to the Consultative Committee, Colombo', Canberra, February 1951, A1838, 851/18/8 part 3, NAA.

<sup>139</sup> P Stursberg, *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*, Doubleday Canada, Toronto, 1980, p. 116

<sup>140</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, p. 221.

He suggested that the Commonwealth together should aim to put up not less than half of the external finance required. This would demonstrate to the US Government that it was doing all that it could reasonably be expected to do to fend for itself, and thus substantially improve the atmosphere in which US assistance towards the plan would be considered. With a British contribution of about £300 million, this left a deficit of some £150 million to be shared between Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Gaitskell suggested that Australia consider doubling its announced contribution to something in the order of £Stg.50-60 million (as originally advocated by Spender).<sup>141</sup> Menzies gave Gaitskell an interim response on 17 January and later replied that Australia had considered all factors, but had decided not to alter its previous decision.

### **The Colombo Plan's own reputation**

The Colombo Plan for the Cooperative Economic Development of South and South-East Asia was officially launched on 1 July 1951. Initially, aid flowed to the Commonwealth countries in the region but soon expanded to include other non-Commonwealth countries in the region, such as Indonesia and Thailand. By the end of its initial six years, the Plan comprised 21 permanent members (16 Asian and five Western), six donor countries and fifteen recipients in a region extending from Afghanistan to the Philippines.<sup>142</sup> By the end of the following financial year (1958-59), it was estimated that countries in the scheme had received aid in the form of loans and grants, technical assistance and the supply of technical equipment and food grains worth approximately \$6,000 million and some 18,500 traineeships and 10,000 experts had been provided for the area. Australia's contribution for the same

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<sup>141</sup> Letter from Gaitskell to Menzies, 'Colombo Plan Finance', London, 9 January 1951, A1209, 1957/5406, NAA. In his autobiography, Healey commented on Gaitskell's persistence in negotiations, contending that 'he would insist on arguing to a conclusion rather than to a decision. Thus he would keep meetings of the Shadow Cabinet going long after he had obtained its consent to his proposals, because he wanted to be certain that everyone understood precisely why he was right'. D Healey, *The time of my life*, Penguin, London, 1990, p. 154.

<sup>142</sup> CL Burns, 'The Colombo Plan', *The Year Book of World Affairs, 1960*, Stevens & Sons, London, 1960, pp. 176-206, p. 178.

period amounted to more than Australian £30 million, of which nearly 80 per cent was in the form of direct grants for economic aid. Australia also provided over 2,600 traineeships, 1,300 correspondence courses and 818 experts through the Technical Assistance Scheme.<sup>143</sup>

While the politico-economic strategy adopted at the Colombo Conference to meet the challenge of Communist subversion was both simplistic and inadequate, the Plan nevertheless was considered to have contributed in a modest way to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.<sup>144</sup> Spender argued in 1969 that the importance of the Plan should be seen not so much in aggregate economic terms, but in its concept of partnership:

The reputation which the Plan has acquired and its unquestionable popularity is a consequence of the strong and continued emphasis, ever since it was first put forward at Colombo in January 1950, on the recipient country herself deciding what she wants and then ascertaining what other participating country or countries are able and ready to help.<sup>145</sup>

Writing in 1958, Linebarger commented:

In terms of its public opinion reception and the welcome which it receives, in many cases the Colombo Plan far surpasses anything which the United Nations has done or which the United States is likely to do. This arises in part from its Asian origin and in part the fact that, although modest, the plan proceeds with great skill, diplomacy, and tact in offering its developmental facilities to the nations affected.<sup>146</sup>

Williams added:

In comparison with the continent's heartbreaking poverty, its objectives were modest and its resources sadly inadequate. It was, however, an important monument to the new era that had just dawned in Asia... an era that had seen the emergence of new states. The Plan gave them a voice in the making of economic policy for their region. It also symbolised the beginning of economic co-operation among Asian countries and the end of economic exclusiveness that had been the hallmark of colonialism.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 183; p. 185.

<sup>144</sup> JE Williams, 'The Colombo Conference and Communist insurgency in South and South-East Asia', *International Relations*, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 94-107.

<sup>145</sup> Spender, *Exercises in diplomacy*, p. 276.

<sup>146</sup> Linebarger, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>147</sup> Williams, 'The Colombo Conference and Communist insurgency', p. 104.

## Summary

The case study on the Colombo Plan provides an opportunity to examine the importance of international standing and international reputation in the process of Australian adjustments in 1950 to major changes in its operating environment at a time when other countries were also adjusting to these same changes. In 1950, the centre of gravity in world affairs shifted from Europe to Asia, and the combined threats of communism, decolonisation and Asian poverty presented real challenges to Australia and its place in the region - and to the future of the British Commonwealth and the United States in the region. The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting scheduled to meet in Colombo in January, weeks after the Liberal Party gained power in the Australian general elections provided Spender, by accident, a chance in this first foray as the new Australian External Affairs Minister to address these interrelated issues and come up with a plan of action which would go some way to both help preserve the peace in the region and protect Australia's way of life.

Australia had good standing as a mature and stable democracy, a social state and an advanced economy with strengths in education, science, engineering and technology relevant to the region, and had shown a willingness to adjust to the new realities in the region. These were all seen as positives. On the negative side, Australia, on the eve of the Colombo Conference, was seen by its Commonwealth partners as a country having a reputation of being preoccupied with its own national development and which wished to be left to itself. This view was typified by Australia's White Australia Policy and parsimonious attitude to British requests that it accept its fair share of responsibilities in the region, in defence and in regional cooperation and development.

Spender sought to change both Australia's foreign policy directions and Australian cultural attitudes towards the region. He claimed in his memoir that the Colombo Plan provided evidence of Australia's maturity in foreign



affairs and of the role that Australia as a small nation could exercise in international affairs. At the time, there were seemingly irreconcilable differences in the future of international relations between Australia and Asian countries (as demonstrated by Australian policies and reputations with respect to decolonisation issues and Asian immigration). In that context, Australian officials considered economic and technical cooperation would serve Australian foreign policy objectives and help dissolve adverse attitudes by building bridges with Asia.<sup>148</sup>

In relation to the Colombo Plan, Spender was a maker of history in the dual senses of being its instigator (even one of his severest critics acknowledged that without him there might well have been no Colombo Plan)<sup>149</sup> and in writing a history of his own time, promulgating his own role in such a way as to disparage the claims of others.<sup>150</sup> However, by viewing historical reality through the eyes of others, the study reveals that Ceylon and India played a major role in Colombo in helping to define the problem that needed to be addressed. Britain also played a major shaping and nudging role in developing the Australian initiative, particularly in the articulation and recognition of the Colombo Plan principles of mutual assistance and self-help on which the Colombo Plan was to stake out its own reputation as an aid organisation. The 'Commonwealth' aspect of the plan appealed to the Canadians,<sup>151</sup> with Canada playing a major supporting role, particularly in its agreement to help fund the technical assistance arm, in the drafting of the Colombo Plan document, and by announcing early financial assistance at a substantially higher rate than Australia. The focus on international standing and reputation as seen through the regard of others has helped to bring these other contributions to light.

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<sup>148</sup> Paper by Tange, 'Political objectives of the Colombo Plan', 19 March 1952, A1838, 3004/11, part 1, NAA.

<sup>149</sup> Le Pan, *Bright glass of memory*, p. 174.

<sup>150</sup> P Williamson, 'Baldwin's reputation: politics and history, 1937 – 1967', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2004, pp. 127-168, p. 130.

<sup>151</sup> Paper by Tange, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

In years to come, Spender preciously safe-guarded his primary role in the establishment of the Colombo Plan. Parsons wrote that even years later, whenever he had a chance to mention 'The Colombo Plan' in a speech, Sir Percy had a Pavlovian-like compulsion to add, 'or as it is sometimes known, The Spender Plan'.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, Australia's belief in its own reputation as author of the Colombo Plan was an important motivator for the development of proposals for the Sydney meeting, for the preparations for the London meeting and, as Lowe mentions, for Australia's constructive involvement in the first meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Meeting in Colombo in February 1951.<sup>153</sup>

The Colombo Conference in January 1950 provided an intensive course in the realities of present Commonwealth relations for the new Australian Minister of External Affairs.<sup>154</sup> In the eyes of others, in respect to commitment to Commonwealth consultation and cooperation, Australia came to the Conference with a reputation as a 'fair-weather', but moved to the position as a 'stalwart' (largely as a result of its initiative and championship of the Colombo proposals, and its willingness to participate in a Commonwealth loan to Burma). Sadly, Australia tumbled down the reputational ladder at the Sydney meeting to the 'lemon' category as a result of Spender's performance as Chair of the conference, but returned to the 'fair-weather' at the September meeting in London when overall funding was indicated. Had Cabinet approved Australian funding at the level Spender recommended,

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<sup>152</sup> A Parsons, *South East Asian days*, p. 4. For example, Spender wrote on his copy of a speech he made in New York in 1955 on the Colombo Plan: 'On this occasion the Ambassadors for India and Ceylon (and I think also Pakistan) also spoke. The record will show that they referred to me as "The Father of the Colombo Plan" and in similar terms'. Sir Percy Spender, 'The Colombo Plan, its Origin and Development', New York, 5 May 1955, *Spender Papers*, box 4, folder 19, MS4875, NLA.

<sup>153</sup> Lowe writes: 'At the meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee, held in Colombo in February 1951, the Australian delegation maintained Australia's reputation as one of the moving spirits behind the plan, striking a balance between cautiously encouraging the expansion of membership and pressing on with more definite financial commitments and creating permanent features such as scheduled meetings of ministers and officials'. 'Introduction', DFAT, *Australia and the Colombo Plan 1949-1957, Documents on Australian foreign policy*, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2004, p. xxxi.

<sup>154</sup> Telegram from the Canadian delegation, Colombo, 17 January 1950.

Australia would have climbed back higher on the reputation ladder to the 'stalwart' rung.

Spender's manner at the Commonwealth meetings in 1950 attracted the nicknames of 'butcher-bird', 'cocksparrow', and 'terrier'.<sup>155</sup> These are more appropriately considered as labels or even personality characteristics than reputations, which, according to the working definitions adopted in this study, require judgement by an identifiable community, not a single individual, and are based on facts which are considered relevant by the community.

Spender used press and radio broadcasting opportunities for self-promotion, public information and public diplomacy purposes. With respect to the latter, and using the 'Spender Plan' as a peg, he sought to portray a new image of Australia as a responsible member of the Commonwealth, a concerned friend and neighbour to Asian countries and as a country adapting from a period of isolationism to engagement with the region, in association, where necessary, with the United States.

The idea of public information and public diplomacy as essential arms of reputation building can be seen in the beginnings of the Colombo Plan in the 1950's. These ideas were, in turn, to evolve into essential arms of Australia's future cultural diplomacy in relation to Asia.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> For references to these terms, see D Lowe, 'Percy Spender and the Colombo Plan'; A Adeleke, 'Cocksparrow diplomacy'; P Williams (ed.), *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell*.

<sup>156</sup> D Lowe, 'Australia, New Zealand and cultural diplomacy in the Cold War: an unanticipated consequence of the Colombo Plan for aid to South and Southeast Asia', unpublished paper, 2007.

## **CHAPTER 3. CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIAN PEACE INITIATIVES ON CAMBODIA, 1983-1991**

### **Introduction**

From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, Cambodia was one of the most complicated and intractable conflicts in the world. The conflict was played out at three distinct levels:<sup>1</sup>

- at the local level between the Cambodian political groups, who waged a war of attrition for well over a decade;
- at the regional level, involving historic rivalries between China, Vietnam and Thailand over spheres of influence in Indo-China; and
- at the international, major power level with the Soviet Union supporting Vietnam and the Vietnamese-installed communist Hun Sen Government in Cambodia - and China and the United States supporting the non-communist resistance groups of Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann.

Progress towards a Cambodian settlement over the period of the case study resembled a broken line.<sup>2</sup> At various turning points, leadership in the peace negotiations passed from, and at times reverted back to, the various interested parties, groups and sub-groups involved in the negotiations - such as the United Nations, the Association of South East Asian (ASEAN) Nations, Indonesia and its Jakarta Informal Meetings, France and the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, (PICC) member countries and the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council. For each of these groups, it was no consolation that leadership passed to another group at any

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<sup>1</sup> An assessment of the dynamics of the conflict is provided in G Evans, 'Achieving peace in Cambodia' in TLH McCormack et al. (eds), *A century of war and peace: Asia-Pacific perspectives on the century of the 1899 Hague Peace Conference*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2001, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> EH Carr, *What is history?* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Penguin Group (Australia), Camberwell, Victoria, 2008, pp. 116-117.

particular time, and at times this clouded their views on the contribution of others and their standing in the negotiation process. Australia, too, was not immune from this condition of being dismissive of the contributions of others. While taking account of these biases, the aim of the case study, nevertheless, is to arrive at a considered assessment of Australia's international standing and reputation in the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian conflict.

While Australia's diplomatic efforts in the search of a peaceful resolution for the Cambodian conflict spanned a decade, they fall into four main phases. The first phase encompasses the broad period from 1983 until the first Paris International Conference on Cambodia in 1989; the second phase covers the brief period, September 1989 to February 1990, and focuses on the Australian UN peace proposal; the third phase focuses on the development of the UN Permanent Five Framework Agreement in August 1990; while the fourth and final phase, which lasted a further year, focuses on nailing down the Agreement and the eventual success of the second Paris International Conference on Cambodia in September 1991. Evans and Grant noted the salience of the tragedy in Cambodia for Australian foreign diplomacy:

The horror of Cambodia's experience in the killing fields of the Khmer Rouge captured the attention, and emotions, of the world more than almost any other contemporary tragedy. Australia's efforts to help achieve a durable peace for Cambodia have occupied more time and attention in our diplomacy than any other single issue in recent years. These efforts, moreover, have probably done more than anything else to establish and define the essential character of Australian foreign policy as it is now practiced. For all these reasons, the story of Australia's involvement in the Cambodian problem is worth telling in some detail.<sup>3</sup>

Evans, like Spender, was a maker of diplomatic history in the dual sense of being a successful foreign minister as well as a contemporary chronicler of his initiatives and experiences. Australian official and academic accounts of

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<sup>3</sup> G Evans & B Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 221.

Australia's role in the political settlement of the Cambodian conflict rely heavily on Senator Evans' own accounts of events in his speeches, statements in Parliament and in several articles and book chapters he wrote, and on the views of ministerial advisers and senior officers intimately involved in the process.<sup>4</sup> In general, these accounts do not give adequate weight to the significance of the roles and contributions of others.

## **Phase One: 1983-1989**

### **The Hayden years**

The Hawke Labor Government came into power in 1983 with a commitment to an independent Australian stance in foreign affairs, and a desire to promote Australia's relations with the region. In relation to Indo-China, the 1982 Labor Party Platform called on the new Government to resume bilateral aid and cultural exchanges with Vietnam (embargoed by the previous Government when Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia in 1978) and to 'make strenuous efforts to promote regional solutions to Indo-Chinese problems and, in the interests of peace and stability in the region, attempt to decrease the involvement of the superpowers'.<sup>5</sup> These two issues became linked, as it quickly became clear to the Government, that in view of opposition expressed by the United States and ASEAN countries, if Australian bilateral aid to Vietnam were to be resumed, this could only occur in the context of a comprehensive Cambodian settlement.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: G Evans, 'Australia and Indo-China: a case study in the evolution of Australian foreign policy', the 1989 Beanland Lecture, Footscray Institute of Technology, Melbourne, 24 August 1989, retrieved 4 February 2009, <<http://www.gevans.org>>; M Costello, 'Cambodia – A diplomatic memoir', *The Sydney Papers*, Winter 1994, pp. 99-109; K Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue: Australia's initiative for peace*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 1997; F Frost, 'Labor and Cambodia' in D Lee & C Waters (eds), *Evatt to Evans: the Labor tradition in Australian foreign policy*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 1997, pp. 196-218; Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, especially 'Case Study: The Cambodia Peace Settlement', pp. 51-56.

<sup>5</sup> ALP National Secretariat, *Australian Labor Party platform, constitution and rules as approved by the 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Canberra, 1982*, p. 84.

In 1983, Australia was a new player on the scene with respect to promoting regional solutions to Indo-Chinese problems. It had no existing mandate to promote peace in Cambodia as had the United Nations and Austria,<sup>6</sup> and it had not been invited to play a role as mediator, as had other countries, such as India and Romania, at various times. It had to establish itself as a credible player on the issue. Building a reputation would require a long seasoning period<sup>7</sup> with milestones only defined as Australia moved towards them, with their significance and validity only verifiable as they were obtained.<sup>8</sup> In the process, Australia would be required by other regional players to pay an 'uncertainty premium' to cover risks until its credibility could be established. As a new player, it could also be expected to work harder and longer than an already established player to establish its position.<sup>9</sup>

Hawke's views that Australia could and should offer to play a role as 'facilitator', or 'honest broker', to promote dialogue between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Vietnam, provided the motivation for the Government's initial engagement in seeking to resolve the Cambodian conflict. Hayden claimed in his autobiography that it was Hawke who proposed that Australia initiate dialogue on Cambodia with countries in the region.<sup>10</sup> Hawke had campaigned in the 1983 general elections on the themes of leadership, building consensus and reconciliation, and, according to Hayden, believed that the same principles he had used to good effect in resolving domestic industrial disputes could be transferred to the 'bigger campus' of Cambodia.<sup>11</sup> Hawke's biographer Mills<sup>12</sup> agrees that Hayden's

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<sup>6</sup> Austria, as chair of the 1981 United Nations International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK), had a continuing role to promote a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the 'Cambodian problem' on behalf of the United Nations.

<sup>7</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*.

<sup>8</sup> EH Carr, *What is history?* p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> B Hayden, *Hayden: an autobiography*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1996, pp. 379-383.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 381.

<sup>12</sup> S Mills, *The Hawke years: the story from the inside*, Viking, Ringwood, Victoria, 1993, p. 182.

Peace Initiative, as it became known,<sup>13</sup> started off as a Hawke idea to get the Government off the hook of its ALP party commitment to resume bilateral aid to Vietnam, and to begin the process of reaching a broader regional consensus. Hawke allowed Hayden to take carriage of the initiative, and offered him firm support in face of ASEAN and US criticism.<sup>14</sup> There were inherent risks for Australian diplomacy, but according to Hayden, even the risk of total failure and being pilloried was no justification for 'fudging the challenge'.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, Hayden faced a formidable task in initiating dialogue in 1983. The Cold War divisions showed no sign of abating. The ASEAN nations, supported by China and the United States, were determined to keep Vietnam isolated from the international community, following its invasion of Cambodia. Within Cambodia, warfare escalated to become more serious and bitter than in the previous four years of fighting, with both sides believing that the military and political situation had turned in its favour.<sup>16</sup>

Hayden believed that Australia had a role to play on the issue and that it was in a unique position to do something about the problem, based on its perception of Australian even-handedness towards the Indo-China conflict, and its relationships with the various countries involved:

We are an ally of the United States who yet have constructive and cordial relations with the Soviet Union and China. We are long-standing friends of the ASEAN countries and have now established good working relations with Vietnam.<sup>17</sup>

In his first visit to ASEAN countries in April 1983, Hayden tackled them about normalising relations with Vietnam and taking new steps to resolve the

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<sup>13</sup> For example, P O'Brien, 'The making of Australia's Indochina policies under the Labor Government (1983-1986): the politics of circumspection?' Research Paper No. 39, Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, Griffith University, Brisbane, 1987.

<sup>14</sup> Mills, *The Hawke years*, p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> Hayden, *Hayden*, p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> E Becker, 'Kampuchea in 1983: further from peace', *Asian Survey*, vol. 24, no. 1, January 1984, pp. 37-48.

<sup>17</sup> B Hayden, 'Speech at graduation ceremony, School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 13 April 1985', *AFAR*, vol. 56, no. 4, 1985, pp. 293-95, p. 294.



Cambodian issue. According to Parsons, who accompanied Hayden on the visit as the Foreign Affairs departmental representative, the ASEAN countries:

...listened politely and gave some encouragement to Hayden's offer to act as an independent broker but had their reservations, if only because they were not sure about the new Australian Government or where its policies would lead.<sup>18</sup>

At the Bangkok meetings in June 1983, Hayden outlined his views on normalisation of relations with Vietnam, which US Secretary of State Shultz described as 'stupid'.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the polite initial response from ASEAN and the US turned into a 'grudging licence'. However, Hawke and Shultz reached an understanding on Australia's mediator role at their meeting in Washington on 14 June. Hawke reiterated that Australia stood ready to act as a mediator in South-East Asia and would not resume aid to Vietnam in the absence of a comprehensive settlement. Shultz, for his part, expressed his hope that Australia would be able to play a leading role in efforts to persuade Vietnam to withdraw its forces from Cambodia.<sup>20</sup>

The Australian initiative came under fire from the ASEAN nations in October 1983, when Australia announced that it would no longer co-sponsor the annual ASEAN United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution condemning the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia (on the basis, *inter alia*, that the resolution was too one-sidedly critical of Vietnam).<sup>21</sup> Hayden omitted any reference in his UNGA speech to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia or to any condemnation of Vietnam's continued occupation of Cambodia. Australia's relations with ASEAN countries deteriorated rapidly, only to be salvaged by fence-mending efforts by Hawke and Hayden in

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<sup>18</sup> A Parsons, *South East Asian days*, Griffith University, Brisbane, 1988, p. 163.

<sup>19</sup> D Snow, 'Shultz, Hayden in sharp clash', *FR*, 29 June 1983, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> 'Australia seeks peace role', *New York Times*, 15 June 1983, p. A12.

<sup>21</sup> Evans later commented: 'It took some time – probably not until Australia resumed its co-sponsorship of the ASEAN resolution in 1988 – before ASEAN accepted that Australia did not seek to erode the ASEAN position on Cambodia, that our involvement was legitimate, and that we were acting on assessments independently arrived at'. Evans, 'Australia and Indo-China: a case study in the evolution of Australian foreign policy', p. 9.

November, when Australia received cautious agreement that it could continue to pursue its mediator role and search for a dialogue. Yet, as a result of these *contretemps*, it became clear that ASEAN and its strong supporters of its Indo-China positions (like China and the US) had become less inclined to welcome Australia's role as mediator or facilitator in the conflict, and less likely to give weight to its views on the conflict. One contemporary US scholarly report on Cambodia for the year 1983 stated:

The newly elected Labor government of Australia offered to negotiate the issue, and its Foreign Minister visited Hanoi, but nothing came from the discussions.<sup>22</sup>

O'Brien<sup>23</sup> points out that one of the reasons for ASEAN's lukewarm (and at times hostile) responses to Australian efforts to play the role as independent broker, derived from a perception that Australia was mounting a challenge to ASEAN's primacy in Indo-China negotiations. ASEAN had built up its international standing and reputation as a regional organisation by keeping the Cambodian conflict on the international agenda through the 1981 ASEAN-initiated, UN-sponsored International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK). It did so by structuring international debate on the issue in the United Nations on ASEAN's terms, denying consolidation of the Vietnamese installed PRK regime in Cambodia, pursuing coercive diplomacy and by mobilising external support for the ASEAN strategy.<sup>24</sup> According to Acharya, the Cambodian problem had initially helped to strengthen ASEAN's unity and its international reputation.<sup>25</sup> It was this issue of ASEAN international standing, status and solidarity, more than ASEAN views on foreign policy in relation to Indo-China as such (on which even the ASEAN members were

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<sup>22</sup> Becker, 'Kampuchea in 1983', p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> O'Brien, 'The making of Australia's Indochina policies', p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> M Alagappa, 'Regionalism and the quest for security: ASEAN and the Cambodian conflict', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1993, pp. 439-467, retrieved 8 October 2009, Academic Search Premier database.

<sup>25</sup> A Acharya, P Lizée & S Peou, 'Introduction' in *Cambodia – The 1989 Paris Peace Conference; background analysis and documents*, Centre for International and Strategic Studies, York University, Kraus International Publications, New York, 1991, p. xlvi.

divided),<sup>26</sup> that seems to have provided the first major stumbling block to Australia's 'honest broker' initiative.

In the Cold War setting in which the Hayden initiative was launched, there were limitations to the extent to which Australia's independence or even-handedness were either possible or welcomed. Hayden's credibility as a facilitator had already been called into question, as far as ASEAN and China were concerned, by his statements prior to and following his visit to Vietnam in 1983, and by his refusal to co-sponsor ASEAN's annual UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia in October 1983.<sup>27</sup> However, ASEAN concern reached a crisis point in March 1985 when Hayden met the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) Prime Minister Hun Sen, the head of a government that Australia, ASEAN, China and the US did not recognise, at an unscheduled meeting in Ho Chi Minh City. Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar claimed that the meeting 'impinged on Hayden's credibility' and China claimed that Hayden had been used as a 'catspaw to achieve Vietnam's own criminal ends'.<sup>28</sup> Hayden later claimed that it was worth putting up with the discomfiture which took place because the extensive discussions he had with Hun Sen about the prospects of political processes being put in place at the time were important contributions to the evolution of later developments.<sup>29</sup> Costello also considered that Hayden's meeting with Hun Sen was important in establishing Australia's future credibility as a new independent actor on the scene:

Yet, equally, if it had not been for that meeting between Hayden and Hun Sen in Ho Chi Minh City we would have had no standing. We would have

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<sup>26</sup> Singapore led the charge for ASEAN on the outcome of Hayden's discussions in Vietnam in 1983, Thailand on the UNGA resolution in 1983 and Indonesia on Hayden's meeting with Hun Sen in 1985, with the other ASEAN countries offering either strong or lukewarm support.

<sup>27</sup> O'Brien, 'The making of Australia's Indochina policies', p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> I Davis, 'China calls Hayden a cat's paw for Hanoi', *The Age*, 14 March 1985, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Hayden, 'Kampuchea- Answer to Question in Parliament on 18 November 1987', *AFAR*, vol. 58, no. 10, 1987, p. 624.

been seen as another lackey of the United States. That is how most of the region saw us and, to a certain extent, still do.<sup>30</sup>

The problems caused by Hayden's visit to Vietnam in 1985 were eventually played down, but according to O'Brien, by this time, most of Australia's initiatives with respect to Indochina had either failed or had been seriously compromised.<sup>31</sup> In 1986, Hayden called for an international crimes tribunal to try Pol Pot and his senior associates and to determine acceptable leaders, but ASEAN countries did not warm to the suggestion. By December 1987, Hayden conceded that Australia had made its contribution to the search for a peaceful settlement as other regional countries, Indonesia in particular, gradually sought to play a more active diplomatic role through the Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM) process, which Hayden welcomed and said he would support. Hayden promised that Australia would nevertheless continue to play an active and constructive role in the area.<sup>32</sup>

Former Liberal Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and member of Spender's old seat of Warringah, Mackellar criticised Hayden in the Australian Parliament for his Cambodian initiatives, claiming that they hurt ASEAN's international reputation, diminished ASEAN's international position and produced uncertainty about Australia as a reliable friend and ally. Mackellar also accused Hayden of bending over backwards to please Vietnam, with the result that the cost to Australia's international reputation in the international community was seen to be reaching unacceptable proportions.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Comments in response to a question after a presentation to the Australian Institute for International Affairs Secretaries', Series, 8 November 2006, retrieved, 14 October 2009, <[http://epress.anu.edu.au/anzsog/steady\\_hands/mobile\\_devices/ch05s02.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/anzsog/steady_hands/mobile_devices/ch05s02.html)>.

<sup>31</sup> O'Brien, 'The making of Australia's Indochina policies', p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> B Hayden, 'Kampuchea: Answer to Question in Parliament', *AFAR*, vol. 58, no. 10, 18 November 1987, p. 624.

<sup>33</sup> Mackellar, 'Association of South East Asian Nations -Discussion of matter of public Importance', *CPD*, H of R, vol. 133, 11 October 1983, p. 1543- 1551; and 'Foreign Policy – Discussion of matter of public importance', *CPD*, H of R, vol. 133, 9 November 1983, p. 2493-2502.

Hayden did not appear to be frayed by these accusations. He took the philosophical view that:

We find some consolation that on the big issues of principle, while short-term popularity may have eluded us, the tide of history sways strongly in our support.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, he held the belief that history would decide the correctness of his approach and his reputation with regard to mediating in the Indo-China conflict.

Australian provision of refugee, relief, rehabilitation and development aid to Indo-China (and indications of increased aid, particularly for Vietnam) was an important arm of the Hawke Government's strategy to gain acceptance in the region as a concerned partner and to play a role in the search for dialogue in Cambodia. It was also an area where Australia had some competitive advantage in potential influence in the region, since its economy in the 1980s was larger than that of the combined ASEAN member countries. Australia's initial explorations were aimed at resuming bilateral aid to Vietnam and to assist in winning Vietnam's trust as well as being designed for humanitarian purposes. When its attempts proved unsuccessful, Australia, following a policy review in 1983, took the option of channeling humanitarian assistance to Vietnam and Cambodia through multilateral agencies and through non-government organisations. Its aid program to Cambodia soon became one of the largest in the country. Between 1980 and 1986, Australia provided an average of \$2.8m each year for relief and rehabilitation work for refugees inside Cambodia and on the Cambodia border with Thailand. Also, since 1975, Australia had been one of the major countries for the resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees, and the main country on a per-capita basis.

In 1987, O'Brien claimed that from a 'managing by objectives' perspective, Australian foreign policy objectives to bring about a peaceful solution to the

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<sup>34</sup> B Hayden, 'The Australian Government's foreign policy philosophy'. Edited transcript of a speech to the Australian Joint Services College, 10 April 1984, *AFAR*, vol. 55, no. 4, 1984, pp. 305–312, p. 305.

Cambodia problem had not been met and that, of all Australia's Indo-China policies under the Labor Government, only humanitarian assistance to the various countries in the region could be considered to have been successful.<sup>35</sup> From broader and outsider perspective, Hervouet argued that all the three unsuccessful attempts at mediation between 1983 and 1989 (those by Japan, Australia and Indonesia) failed for similar reasons.<sup>36</sup> First, the timing of the initiatives was not propitious; second, at the time of the initiatives, the main players for various reasons seemed satisfied with the status quo; third, none of the interventions took sufficient account of the principal 'dyad' - of China and Vietnam - in the conflict. In all three cases, Hervouet claimed, China never asked for any help, and the positive signals from Vietnam, provided by Nguyen Co Thach, were seen as an exercise in manipulation of a third party.<sup>37</sup>

### **The path to the 1989 Paris International Conference on Cambodia**

When Senator Evans took over from Hayden as Foreign Minister in December 1988, he claimed that Australian efforts over the previous five years had not been in vain and had helped to stake out a position for Australia as a concerned and involved player in the region on the Cambodia problem:

The achievement of the Hayden years, notwithstanding the problems it provoked with ASEAN, was to have Australia accepted by the international community, including ASEAN, as a responsible and knowledgeable voice on the issue of a Cambodian settlement. Our views at this time were not necessarily welcomed by all the parties, but they were given weight and taken into account. Australia had shown that good relations with ASEAN can survive differences of views on an important issue. Australia did not, at the end of the day, achieve any major breakthrough or substantive shift in the position of the majors. This was hardly surprising given that Australia is not, and cannot be in this context, a central player. But during the early years of

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<sup>35</sup> O'Brien, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> G Hervouet, 'The Cambodian conflict: the difficulties of intervention and compromise', *International Journal*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 258-291, especially pp. 277-284., retrieved 14 December 2009, JSTOR database.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

the Hawke Government, Australia did make a very real contribution to the quality and level of debate on Cambodia, and to imparting a sense of urgency to the effort to find a solution.<sup>38</sup>

On becoming Foreign Minister, Evans sought to rebuild Australia's standing with ASEAN with respect to Indo-China, a situation that was helped in 1988 when Australia resumed its co-sponsorship of the annual ASEAN UNGA resolution on Cambodia. An explicitly common position was forged at the ASEAN post-ministerial conference in Brunei in July, and by August 1989 Evans felt he could safely say that ASEAN- Australian disagreements over Indo-China 'are now behind us'.<sup>39</sup>

Having already, on assuming office, redefined Australia's national interests in terms of its political or strategic interests, economic and trade interests, and a national interest in being seen to be a good international citizen, Evans set out to define Australia's desired outcomes of the Cambodian conflict in these terms. For, example, it was in Australia's security interests to see a comprehensive settlement in Cambodia. The commercial opportunities that could open up in Indo-China (and elsewhere in Asia) were important for Australia, whose economic future depended on becoming an outward-looking, internationally competitive economy. Australia also had a humanitarian interest in seeing a lasting peace established in Indo-China, and offered emergency and humanitarian aid to help to address the problems that had been the core of the flow of refugees from the area. With regard to Australia's ability to influence these outcomes, and the reputational capital in terms of 'respect' that it could draw on, Evans stated:

Defining the Australian interests which would be served by a Cambodian settlement is one thing. Influencing an outcome which advances these interests is here, as always, quite another. To be realistic we must concede that our influence is limited and that Australia is not one of the major players on Cambodia. This, however, does not mean that Australia can aspire to be nothing more than an interested bystander. In multilateral efforts of the sort

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<sup>38</sup> Evans, Beanland Lecture, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

involved in a Cambodian settlement there is a role for Australia. We are respected for our general knowledge of the region, the active attempts we have made in the past to break the logjam in Cambodia (or at least move it a little further downstream), for the constructive and thoughtful role we have played through our aid program, and above all for the disproportionately large burden we have already shouldered in relation to Indo-Chinese refugees.<sup>40</sup>

The real test of the importance of the international community's acceptance of Australia as a responsible and knowledgeable voice, and its various contributions to finding a solution to the Cambodia conflict, would come in 1989 when France and Indonesia, the conveners of a proposed international conference in Paris to be held later that year, began to draw up a short list of participants. Australia feared that it might be considered as a mere 'interested bystander', and grew concerned that decisions might be taken at the conference affecting its interests without it having an opportunity to participate.

After a decade of intransigence and stalemate, the Cambodian peace process, in the first quarter of 1989, according to one contemporary scholar, 'again saw a flurry of renewed possibilities as governments and individuals scrambled to secure a ride on what appeared at times to be a fast train to resolution of the war'.<sup>41</sup>

This scramble also included a push by ASEAN member countries and other countries to secure an economic foothold to penetrate the Indo-China market following a Cambodian settlement, as illustrated by the Thai Prime Minister's much-reported statement about turning Indo-China from a battlefield to a market place.<sup>42</sup> Major events in this period included developments towards Sino-Soviet rapprochement, meetings between the Kampuchean Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the visit of the Thai Foreign

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>41</sup> K Um, 'Cambodia in 1989: still talking but no settlement', *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 1, a survey of Asia in 1989: Part 1 (Jan. 1990), pp. 96-104, p. 96, retrieved 21 September 2009, JSTOR database.

<sup>42</sup> 'Asean countries jostle for post-settlement trade – In place of enmity', *FEER*, 2 February 1989, pp. 12-13.



Minister to Vietnam in early January and the visit of PRK Prime Minister Hun Sen to Thailand later in the month, the opening of dialogue between Vietnam and China following the visit of the Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister to Beijing for talks on Cambodia in mid-January and the Indonesian-sponsored 'proximity talks' involving the Hun Sen Government and the Cambodian resistance factions.

On 6 January 1989, Vietnam offered to withdraw its troops from Cambodia by September that year, if a political solution could be reached. It also seemed to accept the idea of an international peace-keeping monitoring force to monitor the withdrawal of its troops. On 5 April, it announced that it would withdraw *all* its troops by the end of September 1989, whether or not a political solution eventuated, thus placing additional urgency on finding a comprehensive solution. The next day, Prince Sihanouk announced that he had sent a personal message to French President Mitterrand, requesting him to convene an international conference on a suitable date, with the aim of facilitating and hastening a just resolution of the Cambodian crisis,<sup>43</sup> to which France responded positively.<sup>44</sup> As a result of these developments, the setting for a resolution of the Cambodian conflict shifted from a regional to an international setting. However, Australia's participation in the proposed international conference was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Prince Sihanouk had previously indicated support for Australian participation in an international conference on Cambodia, and confirmed this with Evans during Evans' visit to Beijing in January 1989. Australia placed considerable weight on this outcome with respect to its Indo-China policy objectives and its standing in the international community in relation to the Cambodian conflict. During his first visit to the Asia region as Foreign Minister in January 1989, Evans lobbied his Asian counterparts on the question of Australian

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<sup>43</sup> F Deron, 'Le retrait vietnamien du Cambodge: Le prince Sihanouk demande à la France d'organiser une conférence internationale', *Le Monde*, 8 April 1989, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> 'La France souhaite « reprendre un rôle plus actif » en Indochine déclare M. Roland Dumas', *Le Monde*, 14 April 1989, p. 4.

participation at the conference. In Hanoi, Evans, with the Prime Minister's support, announced that Australia stood ready to consider any requests that might be made for it to participate in some appropriate control mechanism to monitor the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and to prevent outside interference in Cambodian affairs. At the same time, the Australian Minister for Defence began consideration of possible logistic implications if Australia were invited to participate in such a mechanism.<sup>45</sup> Prime Minister Hawke raised the issue of Australian participation in the conference on Cambodia during his visit to Asia of 29 January-13 February and in a statement to Parliament on 2 March 1989, he referred to Thai appreciation of the efforts Australia had made since 1983 to build a reputation as a concerned and credible player on Cambodia.

It is a measure of Australia's standing in the region and of the work of my Government since 1983 that Thailand wants Australia to participate in any international conference that might develop from the current process. I told Prime Minister Chatchai that Australia was prepared to play an active and constructive role in an international conference, if that was the wish of the parties more directly involved in the resolution of the conflict. As I indicated in Bangkok, it is too early yet to be definite about an Australian role in any international control mechanism, as the detail of such a mechanism is still unknown.<sup>46</sup>

When Sihanouk sent a personal message to Mitterrand in April, requesting that he convene an international conference on Cambodia in Paris, he included Australia in his suggested list of countries.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the Indo-China parties, Sihanouk's suggested guest list included France, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, China, the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, the six ASEAN states, Japan, India, Australia and New Zealand. He mentioned that the list was not exhaustive.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Evans, 'Questions without Notice – Kampuchea', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S132, 6, April 1989, p. 1077; Evans, 'Questions without Notice – Cambodia', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S133, 4 May 1989, p. 1798.

<sup>46</sup> Hawke, 'Visit to Asia – Ministerial Statement', *CPD*, H of R, vol. 165, 2 March 1989, p. 343.

<sup>47</sup> F Deron, 'Le prince Sihanouk demande à la France d'organiser une conférence internationale', *Le Monde*, 8 April 1989, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

However, by the end of April, Australia had not received an invitation from the French Government to attend the proposed conference, although other governments had been approached and some had even begun discussing their potential roles among themselves.<sup>49</sup> French-Australian relations were cordial at the time following their close co-operation on the Antarctic Minerals Treaty, so there was no reason to fear French opposition to Australia's candidature on political grounds. But Evans began to fear that six years of Australian diplomatic, ministerial and prime-ministerial engagement on Cambodia could come to nothing. He commissioned a senior DFAT officer to prepare a comprehensive brief which would establish Australia's claims for participation in the international conference. Evans also instructed the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta, Philip Flood, to reiterate Australia's wish to be involved in the conference with Sihanouk during Sihanouk's meeting with Hun Sen in Jakarta at the beginning of May.<sup>50</sup> Evans subsequently reported to Parliament on 4 May that Sihanouk had confirmed his support for Australian participation.<sup>51</sup>

Hun Sen commented on the question of Australia's participation in the international conference in an exchange of views with the (Malaysian) Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) in Phnom Penh on 15 May 1989, following his discussions with Prince Sihanouk in Jakarta earlier in May:

We have proposed the participants to the conference as follows: the six ASEAN countries, Laos and Vietnam, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (USA, China, France, UK and the USSR), the chairmen of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Non-aligned Summits, the United Nations Secretary-General and also a number of other countries which contribute to the settlement of the problem of Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk proposed to

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<sup>49</sup> RH Solomon, *Exiting Indochina: US leadership of the Cambodia settlement & normalization with Vietnam*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, D.C., 2000, pp. 19-20. Solomon mentions that French officials had approached him in early April to gain US support and involvement in the proposed international conference. See also *Le Monde*, 8 April 1989, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> H Patz, 'Die Kambodscha-Politik der Australischen Labor-Regierung 1983-1991: success against the odds', Unpublished PHD thesis, University of Hamburg, 2001, pp. 237-238.

<sup>51</sup> Evans, 'Questions Without Notice – Cambodia', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S133, 4 May 1989, p. 1798.

add Australia, New Zealand and Japan - I believe this is not a problem; we can include them. We have a few worries with regard to Japan but we do not want to exclude them, because in the international conference or in any meeting, we should not create a confrontational atmosphere. Japan has been on one side, it is difficult if one country is [on] one side. So even in a football match, you must get a neutral referee. Then the question was asked, why [do] we allow the ASEAN countries to take part? Well, the ASEAN countries are in the region. The ASEAN countries recognised the CGDK but we admit that the ASEAN countries are in the region and can take part in the solution. China has been opposing us but China is acceptable because China is a member of the United Nations Security Council. Japan is not a country in our region and is not a member of the United Nations Security Council. But I think Japan could take part.<sup>52</sup>

This passage is interesting for a number of reasons. First, Australia was not included in the first cut of the participants proposed jointly by Sihanouk and Hun Sen, but Sihanouk had proposed adding Australia to the joint list (presumably on his own account and possibly also as a result of Australian representations in Jakarta). Second, Hun Sen did not believe that Australia's participation would be a problem, presumably because, in the context of his remarks, he did not consider that Australia had been 'on one side'. However, Hun Sen did not regard Australia as being a country 'in the region' with an inherent claim to be included in the discussion of regional affairs, despite its 'honest broker' and other efforts since 1983 to engage in the region.

In an interview with the author, French Foreign Minister Dumas stated that France wanted to make the invitation list as wide as possible, and recalled that Australia came under consideration because it had an important role to play in relation to refugees and rehabilitation.<sup>53</sup> Evans picked up on this point of future roles as significant criteria for determining the short list of candidates when he stated at the Paris Conference:

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<sup>52</sup> ISIS, 'An informal exchange of views on Cambodia', 15 May 1989, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, pp. 32-33, quoted in Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, *Cambodian conflict, 1978-1989*, Institute of Strategic Studies, Malaysia, 1989, pp. 22-23.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Dumas, Paris, 10 June 2008.

The significance of this conference, and the hope of this conference, lies in the way it has brought all the players together, each with their own responsibilities and each with their own crucial role to play.<sup>54</sup>

Evans' comment suggests that the good reputation that Australia had established by accepting Indo-Chinese refugees since 1975, particularly under the former Fraser Government,<sup>55</sup> was particularly important reputational capital,<sup>56</sup> which Australia was able to draw on to gain a seat at the 1989 Paris conference. Since the fall of Saigon in 1975, Australia had accepted almost 120,000 Indo-Chinese refugees, which on a per capita basis, represented the highest ratio of all resettlement countries. This reputation, based on past actions over a number of years, also established a role for Australia at the conference as co-chair of the working group on reconstruction and resettlement.

Australia's case for a seat at the conference promoted Australia as an interested and concerned country, which was willing to work constructively for a settlement in Cambodia and play its part. This approach was helped by the fact that the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees was a top-of-mind issue in 1989 and a major topic in the regional press.<sup>57</sup> Since 1976, more than two million Indo-Chinese people left their homelands, and the flow showed no sign of abating. However, in 1988 the process of resettlement slowed and

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<sup>54</sup> 'Paris conference on Cambodia': Statement to the Paris conference on Cambodia by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, on 31 July, *Monthly Record*, July 1989, p. 345.

<sup>55</sup> M Steketee, 'Fraser the unsung hero of humane refugee policy', *The Australian*, 2-3 January 2010, p. 8 (Inquirer). Steketee was reporting on the public release of archived Cabinet papers for 1979.

<sup>56</sup> Evans (and Grant) commented on a separate occasion: '... there are some more direct returns that flow to a country that takes seriously its international citizenship obligations. Although there may be occasions when taking a principled stand carries costs for us, an international reputation as a good citizen tends to enhance any country's overall standing in the world, and will at times prove helpful in pursuing other international interests...'. Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> For example: M Hiebert, 'Vietnamese migrants seem likely to remain: Economic refugees', *FEER*, 12 January 1989, p. 18; E Lau, 'Public anger over continuing influx of boat people: Closed-door clamour', *FEER*, 5 May 1989, p. 23; F Williams, 'Conference paves way for boat people's repatriation: Involuntary return', *FEER*, 29 June 1989, p. 22; and 'La conférence de Genève sur les réfugiés indochinois: 90% des "boat people" sont menacés de rapatriement forcé', *Le Monde*, 15 June 1989, p. 5.

first asylum countries, including Hong Kong, began to show frustration with existing policies of automatic asylum.

Following the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' discussions in the region, the UN sponsored a 60 nation conference in Geneva (13-14 June) which Australia attended. While Evans joined with ASEAN countries and Britain at the conference in advocating mandatory repatriation of 'economic refugees', Australia was one of few countries to continue to accept Vietnamese migrants under its Vietnam migration program at existing levels. This gained it some credit, since it was known that the maintenance of the intake policy at existing levels was at some political cost in view of the immigration debate in Australia at the time. At the Geneva conference, French delegated Minister for Foreign Affairs Mme. Edwige Avice formally announced the date of the Paris conference on Cambodia, the final invitees (including Australia) and the proposed conference working groups, including a working group focusing on the problem of refugees and reconstruction.<sup>58</sup> Mme. Avice's announcement appears to confirm that French thinking on the conference participants, and their proposed roles at the conference, had proceeded in tandem.

### **The Paris International Conference on Cambodia and the Australian peace proposal**

The Paris International Conference on Cambodia (PICC), 30 July - 30 August 1989, can perhaps best be described as a *dirigist* multilateral conference directed by its co-chairs, the French and Indonesian Foreign Ministers, with the French Foreign Minister and French officials taking the upper hand.<sup>59</sup> An unusual feature of the conference was that it was not preceded by a preparatory meeting of senior officials. Instead, the PICC began with a short meeting at which the participating ministers made their general statements,

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<sup>58</sup> *Le Monde*, 15 June 1989, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 19.

adopted rules of procedure and an agreed work schedule. After their departure, the conference continued its work in four committees - on the subjects of the modalities of a ceasefire and an international control commission to monitor the ceasefire; international guarantees; rehabilitation and reconstruction; and an ad-hoc committee, comprising the four Cambodian parties and the co-chairs, which focused on questions of national reconciliation and the structure of an interim authority to organise elections.

Lead-up meetings between Sihanouk and Hun Sen were inconclusive and the four Cambodian groups could neither agree among themselves on the nature of the problem nor on power-sharing arrangements, with the consequence that a fundamental prerequisite for the success of the conference was missing.<sup>60</sup> Some participants, nevertheless, thought that it had a 50 percent chance of achieving a breakthrough.<sup>61</sup> Sturkey observed that France, as the host country, and many others hoped that the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the participation of a group of interested countries would demonstrate the strength of international concern to resolve the conflict and help to induce the Cambodian factions to reach some accommodation.<sup>62</sup>

Given the nature of the conference, and heated debates between the Cambodian factions, there was not a great deal of scope for Australian ideas or initiatives to be put forward. In his opening address, Evans did not highlight previous Australian efforts to promote mediation on Cambodia or Australia's acceptance by, and credibility with, all major players - a factor which had been a feature of previous Australian foreign policy belief. Only one country (Russia) mentioned Australia as having been important in the

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<sup>60</sup> Dumas told the author that after an opening session at a round table at the chateau La Celle-Saint-Cloud the Cambodian parties were not talking to each other, and he had to act as a conduit between them (Interview with M. Dumas, Paris, 10 June 2008).

<sup>61</sup> TTB Koh, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia: a multilateral negotiation that "failed"', *Negotiation Journal*, January 1990, pp. 81-87, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> D Sturkey, 'Cambodia - Australia's role' in G Klintworth (ed.), *Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia: regional issues and realignments*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1990, p. 111.

Paris Conference pre-negotiation phase: Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated that 'questions of Cambodian settlement have always been present on the agenda of our talks with the United States of America, Britain, Japan, Australia and many other countries'.<sup>63</sup> Evans supported the ASEAN position on seeking an accommodation between all four Cambodian groups, while claiming that Australia would not support any settlement that facilitated the return of Pol Pot or his close associates to any positions of authority in Cambodia. With regard to Australia's contribution to the peace effort, Evans confined himself to suggesting that Australia and other concerned countries could play a supportive role in underpinning the agreements made by the Cambodian parties:

The more general role, which all external participants at this Conference could and should play, is to contribute to the setting in place of arrangements to underpin the agreements which the Cambodian groups themselves will need to make. These arrangements should cover international guarantees for a neutral, independent and non-aligned Cambodia; practical arrangements for an international control mechanism; the resettlement of displaced persons; and international co-ordination of reconstruction assistance. Australia will itself certainly work constructively for agreement in all these areas.<sup>64</sup>

In terms of concrete action, Evans repeated his earlier offer that Australia was willing to consider, if asked, to participate in an appropriate international control mechanism and, more immediately, to participate in a preliminary reconnaissance mission, as suggested the previous day by the UN Secretary-General.<sup>65</sup>

Australia fulfilled the role assigned to it by the conference as co-chair with Japan on the committee on reconstruction and repatriation. The committee produced the only formally agreed document at the conference, outlining the

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<sup>63</sup> 'Eduard Shevardnadze's speech at the International Conference on Cambodia', in Acharaya et al., p. 78.

<sup>64</sup> 'Statement to the Paris Conference on Cambodia by Senator the Honourable Gareth Evans QC, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, in A Acharaya et al., op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>65</sup> In the event, Australia participated in the fact-finding mission and provided an air operations and communications officer.



broad principles relating to the objectives, timeframe and coordination of an international effort for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia. However, the third committee was considered to have had the easiest task.<sup>66</sup> Australia and Japan were less successful with their other task of defining the conditions that would enable refugees and displaced persons to return home, which was held up over the question of Vietnamese 'settlers'. At the resumed ministerial session at the end of August, Evans proposed a number of confidence building measures and a special working group to be convened after the conference, but his proposal did not attract the necessary universal support for it to be adopted.

Australia's participation in the conference was significant in relation to subsequent developments in one further important respect. Participation in the conference gave Australia an international *locus standi* as one of a small group of countries involved in the search for a Cambodian settlement, which included the major powers, all the relevant regional countries and the internal Cambodia parties. It also gave Australia the right to consult and be consulted, access to conference documents and deliberations, and a number of both official and informal contacts without which it would have been difficult to pursue its later initiatives.

In his statement to Parliament on 24 November 1989, Evans indicated that the Paris Conference came very close to succeeding. In particular, a comprehensive settlement has been mapped out involving - in broad terms - a cease-fire, the monitored withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces, the cessation of external support, the creation of a transitional administration and the holding of free elections. These actions were all to be completed under the supervision of an international control mechanism.<sup>67</sup> These elements of a comprehensive settlement and the deliberations and documents of the

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<sup>66</sup> Hass, *Genocide by proxy*, p. 48.

<sup>67</sup> Evans, 'Cambodia - Questions without Notice', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S137, 24 November 1989, p. 3298.

conference would provide building blocks for subsequent initiatives, including Australia's.

## **Phase Two: The Australian Peace Proposal**

### **The political situation**

After the failure of the 1989 PICC to reach agreement on a comprehensive settlement for Cambodia, events moved quickly. Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia on 26 September but without the UN supervision, control and verification deemed necessary at the PICC for international acceptance. Without the presence of Vietnamese troops, the Khmer Rouge militia made local gains inside Cambodia in a test of strength with the Phnom Penh government, but in the (northern) autumn, the balance of internal forces did not give a clear advantage to either side.<sup>68</sup> The Khmer Rouge advances inside Cambodia provoked an alarmist campaign in the western media that the Khmer Rouge would once again resume power in the country,<sup>69</sup> leading to pressures on governments, including Australia, to isolate the Khmer Rouge by recognising the Hun Sen 'de facto' government in Cambodia.<sup>70</sup> In November, the United Nations General Assembly stated that it was greatly disturbed about the continuing fighting and instability in Cambodia, and reiterated its support for a just, lasting and comprehensive political settlement as elaborated at the PICC.<sup>71</sup>

The PICC co-Presidents decided to let the matter rest for the time being and to recommence consultation with participants within six months with a view to reconvening the Conference. This created a hiatus in the negotiations which

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<sup>68</sup> WS Turley, 'The Khmer war: Cambodia after Paris', *Survival*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 437-453, especially pp. 442-445.

<sup>69</sup> P Isoart, 'La difficile paix au Cambodge', *Annuaire français de droit international*, vol. 36, 1990, pp. 267-297, p. 290. However, for Australian foreign policy decision-makers these fears were real and influenced policy. DFAT Deputy-Secretary Costello recalled: 'We faced the situation where, quite frankly, our assessment was that within a year or eighteen months, if nothing was done, the Khmer Rouge would be back in Phnom Penh'. M Costello, 'Cambodia – A diplomatic memoir', p. 100.

<sup>70</sup> 'EC States pressed to isolate Khmer Rouge', *The Age*, 25 November 1989, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> UNGA Resolution 44/22, 'The situation in Kampuchea', 16 November 1989.

provided an opportunity for countries like Thailand, Japan and Australia to play a role of proactive diplomacy in the peace process. Thai Prime Minister Chatichai attempted to broker a ceasefire among the Khmer factions prior to the announced withdrawal of Vietnamese troops but to no avail. Japan pondered the next steps that needed to be taken and whether it could make some diplomatic contribution to the peace-making process itself, as a major by-product of its participation at the Conference, and prompted by a growing awareness among Japanese people that Japan should make a greater contribution to the international community.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Australian idea**

The opportunity for Australia to make a mark on the international stage in relation to the search for a Cambodia settlement came by chance in discussions between Evans and US Congressman Stephen Solarz in New York on 6 October 1989, when Solarz raised with Evans the idea of a UN neutral administration in Cambodia to break the diplomatic logjam and as a means of preventing the Khmer Rouge from returning to power. These discussions, which Evans acknowledged on many occasions, were crucial in shaping his thinking:

It follows the discussion that we had right at the outset of this whole exercise in 1989 when he [Solarz] put to me the idea in outline of the UN peace plan. I thought then that it had the potential to produce a settlement, said so to him, and he said to me that if you can make this work, if you can actually help produce a settlement, that will be worthy of a Nobel Prize and I'd be delighted to nominate you.<sup>73</sup>

The meeting between Evans and Solarz demonstrated the serendipitous nature of international diplomacy breakthroughs. As Evans later put it:

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<sup>72</sup> M Kohno, 'In search of proactive diplomacy: increasing Japan's international role in the 1990s, with Cambodia and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as case studies', CNAPS Working Paper, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., Fall, 1999, retrieved 4 February 2009, <[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/1999/fall\\_japan\\_kohno.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/1999/fall_japan_kohno.aspx)>.

<sup>73</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 23. Nobel peace prize winners are usually announced in October, and the subject may have been topical at the time.

You're only given an opportunity in this life to make an impact in a larger-scale environment very rarely and it's a matter of grabbing the opportunity for the finite time it's available.<sup>74</sup>

The development and announcement of the Australian initiative on Cambodia has been told and retold on a number of occasions and is relayed here in summary form.<sup>75</sup>

Following his discussion with Solarz, Evans directed his department to examine the justification and possible role of a UN interim authority in Cambodia.<sup>76</sup> On 24 November 1989, Evans announced the Australian idea of a UN transitional authority to break the impasse in the Cambodian negotiations in the Australian Senate.<sup>77</sup> In essence he proposed a UN transitional administration along the lines of the UN administration in Namibia to side-step the power-sharing issue which had bedeviled the Paris Conference. The UN administration would also mean that no Cambodian party would be in a position to decide the country's destiny pending free and fair elections organised by the UN. As a corollary, and in order for the UN to play the role envisaged for it, the Cambodian seat at the UN would need to be declared vacant, or occupied by the interim authority, until the elections determined a legitimate government in Cambodia. The proposal also addressed concerns about the Khmer Rouge being in a position of transitional authority, which so many people had found abhorrent for obvious reasons, given the regime's appalling record.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> A Attwood, 'Gareth Evans: the man behind the mouth', *The Australian Magazine*, 14 July 1991, p. 24.

<sup>75</sup> For example, Evans & Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations: in the World in the 1990s*; G Evans, 'The comprehensive political settlement to the Cambodian conflict: an exercise in cooperating for peace', in H Smith (ed.), *International peace keeping: building on the Cambodian experience*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1994, pp. 1-13; Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>77</sup> Evans, 'Cambodia - Answer to Questions without Notice', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S137, 24 November 1989, p. 3298-3300.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

The immediate regional and international reaction to Evans' statement on 24 November ranged from great enthusiasm to simply ignoring it.<sup>79</sup> Sihanouk endorsed the idea, saying that the plan represented his 'correct ideas at the global level'.<sup>80</sup> Thai reactions were divided, reflecting policy differences between the prime minister and foreign minister advisers. Hun Sen stated that his government regarded the UN administration in Namibia as a useful precedent. The US Administration was annoyed that Evans' Cambodia initiative, premised on a lead UN role with a substantial US financial commitment, had been launched without prior consultation with itself, the United Nations or other members of the UNSC.<sup>81</sup> *Le Monde* reported the Australian announcement briefly in a roundup of recent initiatives on Cambodia.<sup>82</sup> The Khmer Rouge chose to ignore the statement; and there was no reaction at all from Beijing.<sup>83</sup>

The initial reactions from senior UN officials were more guarded. UN Assistant Secretary-General Annabi commented:

The idea had been suggested by Sihanouk, back in 1981. He said 'This is nothing new, why is everybody [talking about it]; I suggested this back in 1981'. It had been put by this guy, who was a congressman for New York, Solarz. He came to the Secretary - General - I was in that meeting - and suggested this idea of an interim administration. But what made the difference was that for the first time, this idea was put forward by a foreign minister, a man who was a responsible member of the government who was playing an important role in all this. That gave it a lot of publicity, but it was clear that it was a non-starter.

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<sup>79</sup> Evans and Grant claimed: 'The initial international response to the Australian proposal was nothing less than remarkable. It very quickly became clear that the idea was one whose time had come'. The authors appear to use the word 'initial' to include both the immediate responses, i.e., within days of the announcement, and 'initial' reactions over a period of weeks. Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*; p. 229.

<sup>80</sup> 'Sihanouk backs Evans plan', *The Age*, 26 November 1989, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, n.33, pp. 54-55. The U.S. Administration remembered that the Australian APEC initiative had also been launched earlier in the year without prior consultation with them.

<sup>82</sup> P de Beer, 'M. Chatichai Choonhavan a proposé un plan pour résoudre graduellement la crise cambodgienne', *Le Monde*, 5 October 1989, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 25.

...In our discussion (with all the parties) we said, 'Your idea of an interim administration is a non-starter but the concept of what we called 'an enhanced role for the United Nations' may provide something that is acceptable to everybody, in between, that is acceptable to everybody and more realistic'.<sup>84</sup>

With Evans' approval, DFAT Deputy-Secretary Costello made a quick visit to Hanoi in December 1990 for preliminary soundings on the Australian idea, which he followed up with that which Evans described as a 'remarkable feat of diplomatic endurance' in conducting 30 meetings in 13 countries over 21 days in December 1989 - January 1990, covering meetings with both regional and major power interlocutors.<sup>85</sup> Costello's round of discussions received widespread coverage in the regional and international press,<sup>86</sup> and in particular, recognition for its contribution to reviving the Paris Conference Cambodian peace process. *The New York Times*, for example, reported that:

The catalyst for the new flurry of diplomacy is an Australian proposal that the warring Cambodian factions allow the United Nations to administer the country for at least a year with the presence of a strong international peacekeeping force and control mechanism to monitor a cease-fire in place.<sup>87</sup>

Apart from being a catalyst for heightened diplomatic activity on Cambodia, the Australian proposal had an important impact on international agenda-setting in the January – February 1990 period. Australia's profile on the Cambodian settlement had never been higher. For example, a French Government spokesman was reported as saying that representatives of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council would give special attention to the Australian plan for an enhanced role for the UN in Cambodia at their first meeting in Paris, 15-16 January 1990, convened to arrive at agreed principles in working for a resolution of the Cambodian

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<sup>84</sup> J Sutterlin, 'Interview with Hedi Annabi', 31 October 1997, New York, in Yale UN-Oral History Series, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UN New York, p. 17.

<sup>85</sup> G Evans, 'Cambodia, Indo-China and the Cambodian peace plan', Address to Sydney Institute, 13 March 1990, *Monthly Record*, March 1990, p. 145.

<sup>86</sup> For example, 'Regime of last resort', *FEER*, 25 January 1990, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> S Erlanger, 'UN Seeks expanded Cambodian role', *New York Times*, 11 January 1990, p. A3.

problem.<sup>88</sup> Further, progress towards a UN-sponsored solution of the Cambodian problem was the principal focus of a US Senate Hearing on 'Prospects for Peace in Cambodia' on 28 February 1990, which the Chairman noted had begun recently 'under the good auspices of the Australians'.<sup>89</sup> In the Hearing, US Senators referred to Australia on 13 separate occasions and Australia received only five fewer citations in the Hearing than the USSR, and eight more than France.<sup>90</sup> Beer and Boynton commented:

In the world of the conversation, however, the national actors are not weighted by material resources. Minor powers have major roles, major powers appear as supporting players.<sup>91</sup>

The Australian proposal appeared to have gained the support of the permanent members of the UNSC, other than China, for an enhanced UN role as a means of overcoming the diplomatic impasse.<sup>92</sup> China's position, however, was important for any UN involvement in the Cambodian settlement, since, according to a senior UN official, the UN Secretary-General was a conservative man, and the UN would not commit without absolute assurances of full cooperation from China: 'Even an abstention by China in the Security Council won't be enough', he said, 'We need a positive vote from China'.<sup>93</sup>

Costello attributed the success of his diplomatic shuttle to a number of factors. His mission had demonstrated that it had clear strategic goals, tactical flexibility when needed, openness and trust in negotiations, persistence and endurance. The Labor Government had gained credibility

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<sup>88</sup> A Riding, '5 Countries to meet on reviving Cambodian peace talks, Paris says', *New York Times*, 10 January 1990, p. A6.

<sup>89</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 'Hearing before the Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Prospects for peace in Cambodia', 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 28 February 1990, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> FA Beer & GR. Boynton, 'Realistic rhetoric but not realism: a senatorial conversation on Cambodia' in FA Beer & R Hariman (eds), *Post-Realism: the rhetorical turn in international relations*, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, 1996, p. 371.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>92</sup> A Riding, 'Plan for Interim UN rule in Cambodia gains', *New York Times*, 14 January 1990, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Erlanger, 'UN seeks expanded Cambodian role', *op. cit.*

with Hun Sen, Vietnam and others; and Australia was not seen as a threat to anyone involved in the conflict or as having a particular vested interest.<sup>94</sup> He also suggested that his mission in selling the Australian idea was helped considerably by the reputation Australia had accrued through thirty years of 'extremely good diplomacy' in the region:

You don't do something like this off the top of your head; you don't do something like this even after six months work; you do something like this because you build up over ten, twenty, thirty years, assets, credibility, knowledge and abilities in the region, and that is what had happened. Our embassies throughout the region, in the United States, in Europe - Paris and London particularly - all played an absolutely vital role in guiding me and directing me in what I did, and in selling our ideas. They knew exactly the people I needed to talk to, they knew what their interests were, what their political situation was. They made it relatively easy for me because I could draw on thirty years, forty years, of extremely good diplomacy throughout the region.<sup>95</sup>

Gyngell and Wesley purported to see in Costello's 'buccaneering' efforts to explain, elaborate and develop the Australian idea, a distinctive tone of Australian diplomacy, which, in their view, encompassed 'irrepressible activism, self-confidence, doggedness, and a looseness - even an element of tinkering - in foreign policy-making'.<sup>96</sup> Others, such as US Assistant Secretary of State Solomon viewed the Australian way of negotiating in the Cambodian settlement in a different light:

The Australians play their politics much like they play rugby, with rough-and-tumble scrums and a good deal of open-field running. This was the character of our relationship with the government in Canberra as the Cambodia negotiations advanced.<sup>97</sup>

Both Evans and Costello believed that Australia was the right country to be given the task of developing and carrying the initiative. Evans told Solarz that Australia, with the benefit of its middle power status and the fact that it was

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<sup>94</sup> Costello, 'Cambodia: a diplomatic memoir'.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>96</sup> Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 54.



clearly not supporting any of the factions, might be well placed to sound out others on the idea.<sup>98</sup> Costello stated:

Australia was the right country, if I may say. We were no threat to anyone involved in this; we were not seen as having a particular vested interest; and we had credibility. Credibility because we are of a reasonable size; credibility with Hun Sen and with Vietnam ... and we had credibility with others. We had not resumed aid to Vietnam during that ten years, and we had not done so specifically to preserve our credibility with those who didn't want us to resume aid so that we could play a part in Cambodia. We had remained "anti" the Vietnamese invasion; we had not withdrawn our condemnation of that. So we had credibility.<sup>99</sup>

Solarz needed a Foreign Minister with some stature and reputation in the region to promote his idea and work out the details. Evans and Australia in the 1990s provided an ideal combination of personal activism and drive and middle power status to carry the initiative. As Evans' biographer noted:

Australia's contribution to the settlement in Cambodia in 1991 is the best example of the coming together of Evans' own personal political style and the role he carved out for Australia as an activist middle power in the Asia-Pacific region. It had the element of coalition-building which Evans believed to be characteristic of middle-power diplomacy. It was a major issue in South-East Asia, and it was a demonstration of Australia meeting the conditions Evans believed were necessary for middle powers to be effective: the identification of an opportunity; enough physical capacity to follow an issue through; a degree of intellectual imagination and creativity; and credibility. It was also an example of Evans taking someone else's idea and applying his energy and intellect to giving it substance and form and seeing it through to fruition.<sup>100</sup>

These views about Evans' capabilities for the task were echoed by representatives of other countries involved in the search for a settlement. In interview, Dumas, for example, told the author: 'You had a good Foreign Minister, with whom I had a good relationship'.<sup>101</sup> And Solomon stated in interview:

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<sup>98</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 23.

<sup>99</sup> Costello, 'Cambodia: a diplomatic memoir', p. 103.

<sup>100</sup> K Scott, *Gareth Evans*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, p. 263.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with M. Dumas, Paris, 10 June 2008.

So you had many levels of activity, and here's where the leadership and the activeness of then Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, had a significant impact, in activating several levels of that process, and I think it's fair to say, Gareth Evans helped to energise and provide some structure to the process ...

So, Australia was a very important voice, it was very active with again, Gareth Evans - how can I put it - making sure that DFAT was very active with playing within this process.<sup>102</sup>

However, in another interview, one Permanent Five member country representative stated:

I think that on Cambodia, first of all Australia made a useful contribution to the eventual solution on Cambodia. There were times when Australia thought it was going to deliver that solution itself; that was never on the cards and in the end it really became a matter for the P5 members of the Security Council, but nevertheless that is an issue where I think that the intellectual contribution was very strong.<sup>103</sup>

### **The Australian 'Red Book'**

As a direct result of Costello's discussions and some preliminary ground work in DFAT, the Australian 'idea' became a fully-fledged Australian plan.<sup>104</sup> Australian work on the plan received added impetus when Indonesian Foreign Minister Alatas decided in February 1990 that the time was opportune to convene a further informal meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta at the end of the month. He invited the four Cambodian parties, Vietnam and Laos, the ASEAN countries, France (as co-president of the PICC) and Australia, Canada, India and the UN as resource delegations. Australia, according to Berry, had been invited to attend the meeting in recognition of the contribution it was making to the peace process.<sup>105</sup> Indonesia's invitation also reflected Indonesia's closer bilateral relations with Australia at the time, Alatas' close personal relationship with Evans, and his belief that the Australian proposal offered an improved chance of making further progress towards a comprehensive solution to the Cambodian conflict.

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with R Solomon, Washington, 9 July 2008.

<sup>103</sup> Key informant interview # 20, 2 September 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Evans, 'Ministerial Statement', 6 December 1990.

<sup>105</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 57.

Consequently, a departmental task force reporting directly to Evans expeditiously produced a 155-page brief of working papers for the meeting. These were subsequently published in a book entitled an 'Australian Peace Proposal', which was often referred to in discussions as the Australian 'Red Book' because of the colour of its cover.<sup>106</sup> The 'Red Book' was both comprehensive and detailed. It comprised an introduction and summary, six working papers with annexes addressing such subjects as the structure of government, civil administration, electoral organisation, and security in the transition period; guarantees for a sovereign, independent and neutral Cambodia, and reconstruction; and a number of supplementary papers with suggestions relating to a draft UN mandate, the framework of a negotiating text, timetable, and resource requirements. According to one observer present in Jakarta for the ICM, 'Canberra had done its homework'.<sup>107</sup>

In his *Cambodia from red to blue: Australia's initiative for peace*, Berry made significant claims about the seminal nature of the 'Red Book', and to Australia's reputation as a respected negotiating partner, by producing a high quality product with limited resources in a limited time frame:

Indeed, while the eventual Paris Agreements were considerably less detailed than the Australian proposals, ... there is virtually no element of the Agreements that cannot be traced to the Red Book. These efforts justifiably earned Australia - a middle-sized power with a public service small by comparison to many of the others involved in the Paris Conference - a reputation as a respected partner with the necessary commitment to put its' limited resources to full use in pursuing a selected target.<sup>108</sup>

An examination of this claim would require a great deal of content analysis and textual exegesis, with anticipated diminishing returns about the origins of 'new ideas' in the Cambodian peace process. In his *Exiting IndoChina*, Solomon wrote:

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<sup>106</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Cambodia: an Australian peace proposal: working papers prepared for the Informal Meeting on Cambodia Jakarta, 26-28 February 1990*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 1990.

<sup>107</sup> Hass, *Genocide by proxy*, p. 221.

<sup>108</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 76.

In the fall of 1989, as we were laying the groundwork for the Secretary of State to launch the Perm Five effort, Foreign Minister Evans's ministry was preparing what came to be called 'the Red Book'. The volume, which pulled together much of the discussion at the Paris Conference, was a compendium of issues and possible solutions that had to be dealt with in constructing an UN-administered settlement of the Cambodian conflict.<sup>109</sup>

Above all, there is the (international trade related) question relating to 'rules of origin'. Solomon recalled:

I think it's fair to say Gareth Evans helped to energise and provide some structure to the process ... Gareth Evans had his staff correlate many of the ideas that had been put forward in what he called his Red Book, and there was a question of, you know, was that an Australian product or was it a product that came out of the international conference - was it sort of a mix?<sup>110</sup>

A reading of the 'Red Book' reveals that it drew on a number of sources, such as the report of an Australian technical mission which visited Cambodia in the first half of February, the UN's experience in peacekeeping and supervising elections in Namibia (in which Australia was involved), Paris Conference documents and the broader corpus of peace settlement documentation, not necessarily confined to Cambodia. Further, as a senior UN official claimed, the UN prepared a raft of relevant background papers for the 1989 Paris Conference and wrote the annexes to the agreement, all of which would have been available to the Australian delegation:

What they (scholars) don't see is, that not only all the basic papers at the beginning of 1989 were ours, they were all written by us, and all very well received, and then the actual agreement - and the French said, 'We don't know how we should go about supervising the cease fire and this and that - you just tell us'. We wrote the annexes for them, all the annexes.<sup>111</sup>

More importantly for international diplomacy on Cambodia, however, there is the question how and in what way the material and options outlined in the 'Red Book' contributed to solving the riddle of a lasting comprehensive settlement for Cambodia. Evans himself acknowledged that, while the two

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<sup>109</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 55.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Solomon, Washington D.C., 9 July 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Sutterlin, 'Interview with Hedi Annabi', p. 27.

central themes of the Australian initiative - an enhanced role for the UN and the tackling of the UN seat issue - were not especially new, the significance of the Australian proposal and its ability to break the diplomatic ice lay in its packaging, its timing and in the energy and professionalism with which it was pursued.<sup>112</sup> Berry touched on this point when he stated that the most important impact of the 'Red Book' was to show the many other participants in the search for a settlement in Cambodia that it was plausible 'to reduce the complexities of the Cambodian problem to a workable solution (given the requisite political will)'.<sup>113</sup> This was the challenge that Solarz had put to Evans, and which the Australian proposal was designed to meet; and, as Gyngell and Wesley pointed out: 'Perhaps other countries could have provided a similar intellectual foundation for UN involvement, but none did so'.<sup>114</sup>

### **The Jakarta Informal Meeting on Cambodia (IMC), February 1990**

The Jakarta IMC, 26-28 February 1990, provided the first opportunity to road test the Australia proposal. Alatas proposed that the meeting use the central idea of the Australian proposal, outlining an enhanced UN role in Cambodia as a basis of discussion at the IMC, with the IMC itself being an initial first step leading to the convening of a full-fledged, formal Paris Conference. Australian officials believed that the timing of the IMC was propitious for the Australian proposal, and that the ideas contained in the six working papers Australia had prepared for the meeting could be worked into a proposal for all sides to consider endorsing at the talks.<sup>115</sup>

In his introductory address to the Jakarta Meeting, Evans stated:

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<sup>112</sup> Evans, Address to Sydney Institute, 13 March 1990, p. 148.

<sup>113</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 63.

<sup>114</sup> Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, p. 55.

<sup>115</sup> M Vatikiotis, 'Tying a new knot', *FEER*, 22 February 1990, p. 26.

What we *have* sought to do is play the role, as it were, [of] mapmaker to identify the places we would all like to get to, and to find way[s] of getting there that have not previously been fully explored.<sup>116</sup>

According to Berry's account of the meeting, Evans played a much larger role than his announced 'map-maker' or 'resource person'. Evans arrived in Jakarta three full days before the meeting was due to start, in order to have intensive consultations with Alatas and to have bilateral meetings with the Cambodian factional leaders. During the meeting, Australian and Indonesian officials worked closely in drafting a 'non-paper' entitled 'Possible Points of Common Understanding'. Evans pushed strenuously for acceptance of the role of the UN in the transitional arrangements and had substantive discussions, including discussions on drafting points, with Vietnam's Foreign Minister Thach, and three of the Cambodian leaders. However, he and the Australian delegation were less successful in engaging the Khmer Rouge in discussions.<sup>117</sup>

The meeting failed to arrive at an agreed statement, with the main sticking points being very much the same as those which had stymied the Paris Conference – the genocide issue, put by Vietnam, and the power-sharing issue, put by the Khmer Rouge.<sup>118</sup> At the end of the last closed session, Alatas criticised both the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese for fighting over words and harping on the arguments of the past, while one senior Asian diplomat was reported as saying that: 'Both sides made difficulties over non-essential aspects of the text in order to avoid having to openly disagree on the essential point - UN involvement in civil administration'.<sup>119</sup> Evans' disappointment after having put so much effort into trying to achieve success at the meeting was palpable. The IMC took place during the 1990 general elections campaign in Australia and Evans would clearly have liked to have

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<sup>116</sup> Evans, 'Introductory address to the Informal meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta', *Monthly Record*, February 1990, p. 71.

<sup>117</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, pp. 65-77.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>119</sup> S Erlanger, 'Peace talks on Cambodia break down', *New York Times*, 1 March 1990, p. 3.

had a successful outcome before the end of his first period in office to announce to the Australian voters. He was accused by some participants in corridor discussions of attempting to use the blunt style of Australian politics in the Asian forum.<sup>120</sup> Also in keeping with his (character) reputation for irascibility, he showed his exasperation by blaming the Khmer Rouge (but not the Vietnamese) for their wrecking role at the meeting over peripheral matters and, after months of playing a key role in the Cambodian peace process, he reportedly told the press: 'There is a limit to my masochism'.<sup>121</sup> However, he later confirmed in a letter to Solarz that he saw a continuing role for Australia in the Cambodian negotiations, and that it would be both irresolute and irresponsible for Australia to give up just yet.<sup>122</sup> This letter, however, was written two months later, on 11 May 1990.

At the Jakarta IMC, Australia appears to have cemented its relations with Indonesia and the ASEAN countries over Cambodia. Berry stated that ASEAN delegations were uniformly supportive of the Australian positions; and at a meeting with President Suharto after the meeting, the Indonesian President expressed his appreciation of Australian efforts to help resolve the Cambodia conflict.<sup>123</sup> However, Suharto also said publicly that the matter should be left alone for several months, and in a sense, as Berry reported: 'Foreign Minister Alatas had put his status and reputation within Indonesia on the line by pursuing the Cambodian peace process'.<sup>124</sup> French senior official Martin, who deputised for Dumas after his departure, signaled a change of venue and settings for the negotiations, when he announced at the conclusion of the meeting that the permanent members of the UNSC would be meeting later in the month and again in April to take the process further.

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<sup>120</sup> S Sargent, 'Cambodian peace closer, despite failure of talks', *FR*, 2 March 1990, p. 14.

<sup>121</sup> 'There is hope for Cambodia', *The Age*, 2 March 1990, p. 8, editorial opinion.

<sup>122</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 77.

<sup>123</sup> S Sargent, 'Khmer agreement boosts Australia', *FR*, 1 March 1990, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 82.

## **Phase Three: The Permanent Five Framework Agreement**

### **Consultative meetings**

After the collapse of the Jakarta IMC, the burden of finding a solution shifted to the efforts of the UN Permanent Five. When the 1989 Paris Conference failed to reach an agreement, US Secretary of State Baker proposed that efforts be made to reach a solution under the auspices of the UN Permanent Five, an initiative he claimed culminated in the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement.<sup>125</sup> The Permanent Five held six consultative meetings, alternating between Paris and New York, between January and August 1990. At their first meeting in Paris, 16-17 January 1990, they agreed that they would be guided by sixteen principles in working to resolve the Cambodian problem, which from an Australian interest and perspective, included an enhanced UN role and recognition that a Supreme National Council might be the repository of Cambodian sovereignty during the transition process, but the communiqué made no mention of the Australian idea as a source of inspiration.<sup>126</sup>

The third meeting, held in Paris, 12-13 March, took place soon after the Jakarta IMC. Australian diplomats had lobbied hard after the IMC meeting in the Permanent Five capitals to ensure that the peace process build on the positive aspects of the Jakarta meeting, and that progress be made at the next Permanent Five meeting, lest the negative media coverage of the Jakarta meeting, and lack of progress at the Permanent Five Meeting lead to a strong public perception that the process was at a standstill.<sup>127</sup> Their efforts were rewarded with the inclusion of the following paragraph in the communiqué of the meeting:

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<sup>125</sup> JA Baker with TM Defrank, *The politics of diplomacy: revolution, war and peace 1989–1992*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1995, p. 588.

<sup>126</sup> JC Pomonti, 'La relance de la négociation sur le Cambodge: Les cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité discutent à Paris d'un mandat de l'ONU', *Le Monde*, 16 January 1990, p. 7: Acharaya et. al., op. cit., pp. 487-488.

<sup>127</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 84.



Although no text was formally adopted in Jakarta, the Five noted that in the course of the meeting, common understanding was reached among all concerned, notably the Cambodian parties, on the need for the United Nations to have an enhanced role in dealing with the various aspects of the Cambodian settlement process and for the establishment of a Supreme National Council.<sup>128</sup>

The Five agreed on principles guiding the organisation of the elections and on the role of the Supreme National Council, drawing in part on the Australian Red Book.<sup>129</sup> They agreed that the UN should form a transitional authority for the settlement process, but the scope of its mandate was left undefined.<sup>130</sup> The communiqué also mentioned that the Five consulted again with representatives of a number other countries also actively engaged in the search for a peaceful settlement in Cambodia, and they signaled their intention to maintain contact with the UN Secretary-General's Task Force on Cambodia, and would continue their consultations with other interested parties.

Despite their expressed intentions to continue their consultations with other interested parties, the Five began to close ranks at their fourth meeting in New York on 25 May when they focused on five preconditions for UN involvement in Cambodia (UN control over the ceasefire, end to foreign military aid, free and fair elections under UN auspices, respect for human rights and guarantees for Cambodian independence and unity), which they presented as a 'take it or leave it' statement of the minimum requirements for UN involvement.<sup>131</sup> The growing Permanent Five consensus and authority in the negotiation process marked a change in opportunities for Australia (and Japan and other countries, such as Thailand) to influence the outcome of the

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<sup>128</sup> 'Statement on Cambodia: the five permanent members of the Security Council, Paris, March 13, 1990', in Acharaya et. al., op. cit., p. 492.

<sup>129</sup> For example, p. 41 on underlying guiding principles for the elections, and p. 3 on the role of the SNC.

<sup>130</sup> 'Statement on Cambodia: the five permanent members of the Security Council, Paris, March 13, 1990', Acharaya et. al., op. cit., pp. 492-494; 'Des progrès auraient été accomplis vers un règlement du conflit du Cambodge', *Le Monde*, 14 March 1990, p. 8.

<sup>131</sup> Acharaya et. al., *The 1989 Paris Peace Conference*, p. 492.

'Summary of conclusions', *ibid*, pp. 495-497; Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 85.

discussions. The Permanent Five began to construct a delicately balanced house of cards. It was clear they were wary of this collapsing through new ideas and new initiatives from any sources outside the Permanent Five consultations.<sup>132</sup> Evans acknowledged later that:

Necessarily, our role during this period has been supportive and back-room in character, rather than politically centre-stage, but it has been no less substantial and constructive for that, and has been widely acknowledged as such.<sup>133</sup>

He also asserted that Australia continued to exert an influence through the force of its ideas:

Moreover, the concepts and suggestions in the Australian Working Papers began to permeate international thinking, and found expression in papers developed by the Permanent Five over the course of six major consultative meetings on Cambodia they held between January and August this year.<sup>134</sup>

US Permanent Five negotiator Solomon put it another way: 'As the Permanent Five consensus on a framework agreement grew, Evans' effort naturally merged with it'.<sup>135</sup>

Evans also took every opportunity in his media statements on the outcomes of the Permanent Five consultations to remind his domestic audience of the continued importance of the Australian contribution by stating that the relevant communiqué either 'picks up the major theme of the Australian proposal and, although understandably unspecific, contains everything we could reasonably have hoped for at this stage',<sup>136</sup> or the communiqué agrees 'several key basic ideas put forward by Australia in the Red Book Working Papers'<sup>137</sup> or, more generally, 'it endorses a number of key Australian ideas'.

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<sup>132</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 45.

<sup>133</sup> G Evans, 'Prospects for a Cambodian peace settlement', Ministerial Statement', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S142, 6 December 1990, pp. 5164-75.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 56.

<sup>136</sup> 'Paris Cambodian communiqué: Statement on January 17 by Senator Evans', *Monthly Record*, January 1990, p. 35.

<sup>137</sup> G Evans, 'Cambodia: major progress by the UN Permanent Five: Statement on March 15', *Monthly Record*, March 1990, p. 169.

The real breakthrough in the P-5 negotiations in 1990 came after Baker's shock announcement in Paris on 18 July that the US would withdraw its support for the resistance parties CGDK coalition to occupy Cambodia's UN seat if the CGDK included members of the Khmer Rouge, and said that the US would open a dialogue with the Vietnamese Government to permit free elections in Cambodia and even establish contact with Hun Sen. The decision caused consternation among ASEAN countries, who had been the main backers of the resistance coalition, on the eve of their annual ministerial meeting in Jakarta,<sup>138</sup> but according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*:

Although the timing of this policy shift ... makes it appear essentially a tactical ploy to head off a confrontation with the US Congress, it has set in motion a process that is likely to generate new momentum to solve the Cambodian problem and produce long-term consequences for US policy in Asia.<sup>139</sup>

As Solomon stated at the next Permanent Five session in New York, the final elements of a settlement framework quickly fell into place.<sup>140</sup>

On 28 August 1990, the Permanent Five publicly announced their agreement on a framework for an UN-centred, comprehensive, political settlement of the Cambodian conflict. The decision reflected newly-found compromise and collaboration in the United Nations Security Council following their decision earlier in the month to demand the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The agreement comprised five sections which the Permanent Five members described as 'the indispensable requirements' for a peaceful settlement in Cambodia. These requirements covered transitional arrangements regarding the administration of Cambodia during a pre-election period (including the formation of a Supreme National Council); military arrangements during the transitional period; United Nations-supervised elections; human rights guarantees; and international guarantees regarding the neutrality of a

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<sup>138</sup> 'Muted outrage', *FEER*, 2 August 1990, p. 12.

<sup>139</sup> N Chanda, 'For reasons of state', *FEER*, 2 August 1990, p. 10.

<sup>140</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 47.

restructured Cambodia.<sup>141</sup> The agreement still required acceptance by the four political factions in Cambodia. The Permanent Five urged them to accept the framework in its entirety as the basis for settling the Cambodian conflict and to meet to form the Supreme National Council, at the same time seeking maximum self-restraint in order to facilitate the achievement and implementation of the settlement.

Australia's reaction to the Five Power agreement was muted when compared with the fulsome responses of some other countries.<sup>142</sup> Australia welcomed the document as a major contribution to the peace process<sup>143</sup> (not 'an historic event', or a 'major breakthrough' or as the 'first real step in the Cambodian peace process' as reported in the US and French press)<sup>144</sup> with Evans adding somewhat gratuitously: 'While there were naturally areas where we wanted to see further elaboration, we considered it to represent a skillful and judicious balance of the various interests involved'.<sup>145</sup>

The Permanent Five framework document required the endorsement of the Cambodian factions, who, at their meeting in Jakarta on 9-10 September, agreed the framework document in its entirety and also agreed the composition of the Supreme National Council. Evans chose to celebrate this event, rather than the Permanent Five agreement in August, as the significant milestone in 1990. He described the outcome of the Jakarta meeting as representing 'an enormous breakthrough - unquestionably the most important breakthrough - in the whole grueling peace process to date'.<sup>146</sup> In so doing, he used the occasion to pay tribute to Indonesia and Foreign Minister Alatas for their courage, determination and perseverance

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<sup>141</sup> FJ Prial, 'Five U.N. Powers announce accord on Cambodia War', *New York Times*, 29 August 1990, p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid; S Marti, 'L'accord conclu à l'ONU entre les Cinq ouvre la voie à un règlement global du conflit', *Le Monde*, 30 August 1990, p. 8.

<sup>143</sup> Evans, 'Prospects for a Cambodian peace settlement', Ministerial Statement, 6 December 1990.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Evans, 'Questions without Notice - Cambodia', *CPD*, Senate, vol. S140, 11 September 1990, p. 2220-22.

against numerous setbacks over the past two years including unsuccessful meetings of one kind or another, particularly in Indonesia. In an obvious predilection towards regional solutions, as distinct from 'major power' solutions to regional problems, he said in his media statement:

While long and difficult negotiations on matters of detail still lay ahead, he was confident that if the Cambodian parties and other participants continued to show the political will demonstrated at Jakarta, then a comprehensive settlement, which would end the human suffering of the Cambodian people once and for all, was now well and truly in sight by the end of the year.<sup>147</sup>

While a number of important steps remained to tie down the Permanent Five framework agreement and the negotiation process would continue for another year, in Australian Labor Party historiography, 'the deal was actually done in September 1990'.<sup>148</sup>

#### **Phase Four: The final stage of the negotiations**

The final phase of Australian involvement in the Cambodian peace negotiations - from acceptance of the Permanent Five Framework Agreement in September 1990 to the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in September 1991 - was characterised by continued Australian activism but within narrower windows of opportunity, and diminishing returns. There were several reasons for this. First, as Solomon claimed, with the success in building the Framework Agreement, the Permanent Five had acquired a certain measure of paternity and vested interest in the UN settlement plan envisaged in the Agreement, which they were reluctant to see changed:

The Perm Five effort had acquired a momentum and authority that proved difficult for governments with other ideas and other interests either to resist or to subvert. My instructions were to work along with these other interests but also to protect our investment in the advancing Security Council effort.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Evans, 'Australia 'delighted with Jakarta talks', *Monthly Record*, September 1990, p. 667.

<sup>148</sup> Comments in response to a question after a presentation to the Australian Institute for International Affairs Secretaries', Series, 8 November 2006, retrieved, 14 October 2009, <[http://epress.anu.edu.au/anzsog/steady\\_hands/mobile\\_devices/ch05s02.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/anzsog/steady_hands/mobile_devices/ch05s02.html)>.

<sup>149</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, p. 50. Solomon described his own efforts during this period in co-ordinating third party mediators, including Australia, as a task of 'herding cats' (pp. 50-57).

Second, China, having agreed at the July 1990 Permanent Five meeting to cease arm shipments to the Khmer Rouge,<sup>150</sup> took the firm position that the Permanent Five represented the will of the international community, and that all views had been taken into account in the drafting of the Permanent Five text, and as a result 'not a word could be changed'.<sup>151</sup> Third, there were grounds around the end of 1990 for fearing that the window of opportunity for a comprehensive settlement might start to close, since other issues such as the Gulf War were clamouring for attention of the Permanent Five and the UN Security Council, who along with other key players did not have infinite reservoirs of commitment or patience.<sup>152</sup> In summary, it was not the time for new ideas or to suggest substantial changes to the text of the Framework Agreement.

The United Nations Security Council endorsed the Permanent Five framework for a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian conflict on 20 September 1990 and encouraged the continuing efforts of the Permanent Five in this regard.<sup>153</sup> The preamble to the decision also took note and showed appreciation for the efforts of the co-presidents of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, and those of the ASEAN nations and other countries involved in promoting the search for a comprehensive settlement, but did not specifically mention Australian efforts in these tributes. Berry claimed that France was unilaterally opposed to any reference to Australia's role in the peace process in the resolution,<sup>154</sup> and that the other members of the UNSC also did not seem to be in favour of including a reference to Australia, if this meant challenging France's views as co-President.

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<sup>150</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 127. Berry noted that, on the balance of the available evidence (presumably DFAT reporting and intelligence), China had kept its word.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>152</sup> Dumas warned that there was a limit to the patience of the international community if the Cambodian leaders did not show the political will to reach a settlement at a time when other matters were demanding attention. *Le Monde*, 23 December 1990, p. 6.

<sup>153</sup> SC Res. 668, 294, 'The situation in Cambodia', 45<sup>th</sup> session, 2941<sup>st</sup> meeting, 20 September 1990.

<sup>154</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 117.

Evans had wanted the UNSC decision to refer to military self-restraint and to a UN good offices role in this regard, but the Permanent Five considered that such a reference was untimely, preferring the resolution to limit itself to only those issues covered in the framework document.<sup>155</sup> In a similar manner, the United Nations General Assembly, while noting the contributions of the Jakarta JIM meetings and the Paris Conference on Cambodia (but not those of any specific country), urged cooperation among the Cambodian leaders, and called on the co-presidents of the PICC to intensify their efforts and to draw up a detailed plan of implementation in accordance with the framework for a comprehensive political settlement.<sup>156</sup>

Australia had greater success in having an input into the negotiation process at the Working Group meeting in Jakarta on 9-10 November, which met to continue the work begun by the Permanent Five in New York in October and, specifically, to prepare the body of a settlement agreement, based on the framework document. However, Australia's involvement at the meeting had to overcome a major hurdle. According to Berry, France had argued against Australian participation in the Jakarta meeting at the New York meeting and this quickly became a threshold question which caused considerable angst for Australia.<sup>157</sup> However, on this occasion, Britain and the United States supported Australia's participation, and the question was resolved by including all the chairs of the PICC working groups. Australia had prepared a single negotiating text for the meeting. This was substantially drawn on at the meeting and eventually merged into a co-chairmen's composite text. Berry commented from a DFAT international lawyer's perspective:

From a national point of view, there was also a degree of pleasure that the meeting resulted in widespread recognition of Australia's work in preparing the SNT, and that much of it would be reflected in the final comprehensive settlement.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> UNGA Res. 45/3, 'The situation in Cambodia', 45<sup>th</sup> session, 30<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, 15 October 1990.

<sup>157</sup> Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

According to Berry, the assessment of the outcome of the Jakarta meeting was very much in the eye of the beholder. Alatas called it a major breakthrough, while the media treated the meeting as a failure.<sup>159</sup> The following week, the leader of the federal opposition in the Australian Parliament addressed a question without notice to the Prime Minister, drawing attention to the recent upsurge in military activity by the Khmer Rouge and claiming that the current peace plan failed to provide any guarantees that Pol Pot would not return to a position of power in Cambodia. This provoked Hawke, in his reply in the Australian Parliament, to make the following reputational claims for Australia in relation to the Cambodian peace settlement:

The facts in regard to Cambodia and the position of this Government are such that I think even the Leader of the Opposition would by now understand that there is virtually a universal recognition that no government has done more to advance the cause of an equitable, sustainable, peaceful resolution of the tragedy in Cambodia than has the Australian Government. That is recognised in the United Nations: it is recognised supremely by the fact that the Permanent Five have embraced the book provided by the Australian Government as the very basis upon which the Permanent Five of the Security Council have advanced the cause of peaceful resolution in that country.

The reputation of this country has been very substantially enhanced by the initiative led by Senator Evans, our Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, pursued at the level of officials by Mr. Michael Costello... Under the leadership of Evans and Costello, Australia has supremely taken the lead in providing for the United Nations, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and all other interested groups the basis for providing peace in Cambodia.

As recently as last weekend in Jakarta, in the most recent discussions on this issue, again, those involved in dealing with this issue returned to the Australian plan as the basis for the resolution of this crisis ...

The thinking and the formulation of Australia has been embraced by the Permanent Five, ASEAN and all those directly concerned because it is understood that the Australian plan is directed towards ensuring, as far as is humanly possible, that that sort of outcome [the return to power of the Khmer Rouge] does not eventuate.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.



If there is one area in the conduct of foreign affairs in which Opposition members, in terms of their record, should be quiet, it is this area, because their record in regard to Indo China is one of abysmal failure, both in government and in opposition. They should be totally silent in this area. If they had any skerrick of decency and understood what the Permanent Five, ASEAN and the rest of the world understood, they should be sharing a sense of pride that it is this country which is leading the world on this issue, under the leadership of the Foreign Minister and through the work of the very efficient officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Instead of this irrelevant sniping, they should be sharing the sense of pride that it is Australia leading the world in trying to bring this tragedy to an end.<sup>160</sup>

Hawke's reply is quoted in some detail because it illustrates a number of salient aspects of international reputation, as viewed by the Australian Government, in relation to Australia's involvement in the Cambodian peace settlement. Hawke's statement addressed the question of '*reputation for what?*' namely, the assertion that Australia had taken the lead in providing the basis for peace in Cambodia upon which the Permanent Five had advanced the cause of a peaceful resolution which excluded the return of the Khmer Rouge to a position of power in Cambodia. Hawke's reply also addresses the question, '*reputation with whom?*' He claimed that Australia had achieved 'virtually a universal recognition' for its role. He claimed there was specific recognition by the United Nations and, in particular, the Permanent Five, ASEAN and all those directly concerned that no government had done more to advance the cause of an equitable, sustainable, peaceful resolution of the tragedy in Cambodia than the Australian Government. In addition, Hawke's response contrasted the Labor Government's efforts to reach a settlement with the Opposition's record on Indo-China, including responsibility for Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. In doing so, he demonstrated the importance of international reputation for domestic political rhetorical purposes. Finally, the Prime Minister linked reputation to 'a sense of pride' that Australia had been leading the world in trying to bring the Cambodian tragedy to an end.

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<sup>160</sup> Hawke, 'Questions Without Notice – Cambodia', *CPD*, H of R, vol. 174, 14 November 1990, p. 4020-21.

One year on from Evans' statement in Parliament on 24 November 1989, in which he launched Australia's peace initiative, Evans made a major statement in Parliament reviewing progress. The statement served three purposes. First, 'to put on record, so far as it is now possible, the full extent of Australia's involvement in these diplomatic efforts';<sup>161</sup> second, to answer his critics that there was 'something fundamentally flawed' about the Australian peace plan in relation to the role envisaged for the Khmer Rouge in the settlement; and third, to caution that, while a workable, comprehensive settlement was closer than it had ever been, there were grounds for fearing that the window of opportunity may well start to close around the end of the year, since other issues such as the Gulf War were clamouring for attention of the Permanent Five.<sup>162</sup>

Evans' statement concluded with relatively modest reputational claims in relation to Australian leadership in diplomatic problem-solving of the Cambodian problem, Australia's regional standing and the Labor Government's foreign policy resolve:

We are further reinforced in our commitment by the knowledge that Australia's diplomatic contribution to the solution of this deep-seated and complex problem has been welcomed and encouraged by the key international players in the negotiating process and all Cambodian parties except the Khmer Rouge. Just as importantly, Indonesia and other regional partners have welcomed the contribution we have made towards resolving an issue which has obstructed the harmonious development of relations in our region for over a decade.

Given all that has been achieved so far in the Cambodian peace process, and given the importance of the issues at stake - partly in terms of our own regional standing, but more importantly for the long-suffering Cambodian people - we do not intend to walk away from the effort to achieve a comprehensive settlement as long as there remains some reasonable prospect of success. While we may eventually have to consider other options if others allow the window of opportunity to once again slam shut, to do so now would be to demonstrate a lack of that nerve and stamina in

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

foreign policy which is increasingly necessary in the ever-more fluid and uncertain international environment we now face.<sup>163</sup>

While Australia believed that by the end of 1990 all the necessary foundations had been laid, the process of bedding down the draft comprehensive agreement would take a further year. In the first six months of 1991, the process seemed likely to stall completely, accompanied by outbursts of low key fighting inside Cambodia during the dry season.<sup>164</sup> With the world's attention (and particularly the United Nations Security Council's attention) focused on the Gulf War and, in the face of the Permanent Five's determination to safeguard their carefully balanced agreement, Australian diplomatic efforts to improve settlement provisions struggled to attract attention. Australia became increasingly alienated from the Permanent Five negotiation settlement process.

There was a perception in DFAT of an imbalance in the weight accorded to the competing interests of China on the one hand and Cambodia and Vietnam on the other, with Permanent Five texts in favour of the former. As a result, Australia submitted a number of suggested drafting changes to the comprehensive settlement produced after the Jakarta meeting, but these suggestions were virtually ignored and rejected on the grounds that they would involve an extensive rewrite of the existing documents.<sup>165</sup> In January 1991, Australia made representations in the PICC capitals, calling for an early resumption of the PICC process in an effort to countermand the Permanent Five's influence and as a wider avenue for asserting Australian influence - in Berry's words, by 'playing the role of a gadfly'.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, pp. 231-233; R Tasker, 'Elusive peace', *FEER*, 31 January 1991, pp. 19-20.

<sup>165</sup> Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 138. On the general question of suggested changes to the negotiation text, Dumas told the author that there were just too many papers around to consider, waving his hands as if to clear all the papers on his desk. Interview with M. Dumas, Paris, 10 June 2008.

<sup>166</sup> Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

On the crucial question of army demobilisation, Australia favoured some form of review mechanism for each phase. To leave out such a provision might imply that the United Nations could use force to implement a next phase over the objections of one or more faction. Australia used its standing as a potential UNTAC troop contributor, advocating a belief in the centrality of its role in the whole peace process, combined with a threat that it might not sign the eventual treaty. This was an outright attempt to influence others to follow suit, but on this issue it had to accept that the UN would have the final say in what was workable, and the UN remained convinced of the need for total demobilisation.<sup>167</sup> Further, during this period, Australia, despite its claims to be impartial, appeared to tilt towards the Hun Sen and Vietnamese position (for example, on army demobilisation, weapons custody and direct references to genocide in the accords).<sup>168</sup>

In June 1991, a rush of events injected immense new life into the settlement process.<sup>169</sup> These events, over which Australia exerted no direct influence, included secret negotiations between China and Vietnam between June and September 1991, US - Vietnamese in-principle agreement on a 'road map' for normalisation of relations, Sihanouk's decision to re-engage actively in the peace process, a *rapprochement* and a further round of Sihanouk-Hun Sen discussions, and a highly successful meeting of the Supreme National Council in Pattaya, Thailand, 24-26 June. The Council meeting brokered a series of agreements between the four Cambodian parties under the PICC co-president auspices.<sup>170</sup> At this meeting, the Cambodian parties reiterated

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

<sup>168</sup> Solomon commented that at one point [unspecified] 'the Australian position tilted in the direction of working primarily with Hun Sen rather than Sihanouk, but the UN process ended up creating a settlement process that again had Sihanouk in the middle of it'. Interview with Solomon, 9 July, 2008. Berry noted that criticism 'had occasionally been made that Australia was not in fact neutral but was partisan of the SOC'. In defence, he claimed that Australia, the SOC and Vietnam officials had arrived at the same conclusions about the deficiencies of the Permanent Five text under their own steam. Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 143.

<sup>169</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, p. 232.

<sup>170</sup> *Le Monde* reported that the head of the French delegation, M. Jean-David Levitte, the Asian director in the French ministry of foreign affairs, played a crucial role as 'counsellor' in the successful

their support for the Permanent Five framework and for the reconvening of the Paris Conference. Following a meeting between Sihanouk and Dumas in Paris on 9 September, the two agreed that, in view of the decisive progress that had been made over the past three months, the Paris Conference on Cambodia would be reconvened as soon as possible. The Ministerial meeting was held on 21-23 October 1991 and the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict were signed at the final meeting, on 23 October 1991.

At the final session of the resumed Paris Conference, Dumas, in his opening address,<sup>171</sup> paid tribute to all the countries that had contributed to the success of the negotiations, which he described as a shared success (*un succès partagé*). He said Indonesia was the first country to recognise the importance of dialogue and had laid the foundations for future dialogue. France shared the same conviction and had joined Indonesia in its efforts, praising Alatas for his patience, courtesy, flexibility and reason. Other Asian countries had supported the negotiation process in their time (*en leur temps*). Thailand assured continuity of the dialogue and contributed by keeping world attention focused on the Cambodian drama. Japan provided similar support and furthermore had promised to participate actively in Cambodia's reconstruction. Vietnam and China had shown willingness to compromise, and had played a positive role during the last stage of the negotiations. On Australia's contribution, Dumas said:

Indeed, no one will forget that the agreement which we are going to sign shortly owes much to the initiative which she was able to bring to bear at the moment when hope was weakening. It is thanks to this veritable second wind that the five members of the Security Council [*sic*] and the Secretary-

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negotiations between the Cambodian parties at Pattaya, which were conducted in French. 'Un rôle substantiel pour la France', *Le Monde*, 2 September 1991, p. 6. It was an opportunity for direct influence over the negotiations at a crucial stage, not available to Australia.

<sup>171</sup> 'Conférence de Paris sur le Cambodge: Discours de M. Roland Dumas, ministre d'Etat, ministre des Affaires étrangères, Paris, 23 October 1991', retrieved, 17 May 2010, <<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>>.

General of the United Nations were able to return to the task from a new starting point.<sup>172</sup>

Turning to the UN, he said that the Permanent Five and the UN Secretary-General in their turn worked relentlessly, bringing determination, imagination and patience to their task. Finally, Dumas praised the good will and spirit of the Cambodian leaders demonstrated in the previous few months, and especially the eminent role played by Prince Sihanouk.

Co-President Alatas, while first of all paying tribute to the efforts of Indonesia and the ASEAN countries in his opening statement, noted that the Agreements

...resulted from the combined initiatives, ideas and efforts contributed by many sides, both by the countries of Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region as well as by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who by their achievement of an agreed framework for a comprehensive settlement in August last year, provided a major breakthrough in the ongoing peace process. However, foremost tribute should rightly be paid to the Cambodian leaders themselves.<sup>173</sup>

In its own official account of the negotiation process, the United Nations document that published the Accords also emphasised the notion of a 'shared success'. In relation to Australia's contribution it noted:

In the course of their deliberations, the Five considered an Australian proposal to enhance the role of the United Nations in the settlement process, and took account of the discussions among the Cambodian parties, including those at an Informal Meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta in February 1990, and, in June, at a meeting held in Tokyo. Throughout the process, the Five maintained regular contacts with the Secretary-General. They welcomed his decision to establish a Secretariat task force to facilitate contingency planning for an eventual United Nations operation in Cambodia.<sup>174</sup>

In his statement at the Conference, Evans noted that 'success has many fathers'. He highlighted the contributions of the ASEAN dialogues led by Indonesia, the driving force of the Permanent Five, the work of many other

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<sup>172</sup> English translation of Dumas' remarks in Berry, *Cambodia: from red to blue*, p. 203.

<sup>173</sup> Ali Alatas, *A voice for a just peace: a collection of speeches by Ali Alatas*, Jakarta, PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2001, p. 296.

<sup>174</sup> United Nations, 'Background note on the negotiation process', *Agreements on a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodia conflict, Paris 23 October 1991*, United Nations, New York, p. v.

countries and the work of the Cambodian parties themselves before referring to Australia's own contribution:

So Australia is privileged and delighted to be here to sign these documents today, not least because their substance is very close to that which we first proposed in late 1989 and early 1990, and because we were able to play some useful part in the complex negotiating process.<sup>175</sup>

In terms of Australia's international obligations arising from the accords, Evans promised to provide 'all the support and assistance we can'.<sup>176</sup>

The metaphor of the 'father' of the accords gained some currency in relation to Australia's role, especially after Cambodian leader Hun Sen stated during an official visit to Australia (26-31 October) immediately following the Paris Conference that: 'Right now there are a lot of fathers. But let me tell you the real father is Gareth Evans'.<sup>177</sup>

In Parliament, Hawke referred to Hun Sen's 'unqualified and richly deserved compliment', congratulated Evans for his remarkable achievement, and stated (to the interjection of Opposition members) that: 'His nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize is simply a fitting recognition of that achievement'.<sup>178</sup>

The Australian press, too, were ecstatic about the outcome of the Paris Conference, and about Australia's positive role in the peace process:

The peace agreement signed in Paris would not have come about without the Australian initiative and the sustained diplomatic campaign Australia waged on its behalf. As such it is a unique episode in Australia's diplomatic history.<sup>179</sup>

However, in the context of the complex Cambodian peace process negotiations, the metaphor of 'father' is an imprecise and misleading one. French Foreign Minister Dumas, for example, when asked a question

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<sup>175</sup> Evans, 'Peace in Cambodia'. Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade on the signing of agreements on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict, Paris, 23 October 1991, *The Monthly Record*, October 1991, p. 631.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 633.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Hawke, 'Questions without Notice - Cambodia', *CPD*, H of R, vol. 180, 5 November 1991, p. 2279.

<sup>179</sup> G Sheridan, 'Midwife to a fragile Cambodian peace', *The Australian*, 30 October 1991, p. 13.

whether he acknowledged the Paris accords as his own child, replied: 'It would be an exaggeration to say that, or rather I should say, it would be necessary to have a paternity test'.<sup>180</sup>

In the same interview, Dumas described his own role as a *cheville ouvrière*,<sup>181</sup> literally the pole bolt of a coach, but figuratively the king pin or lynch pin which was indispensable for the whole operation. More fundamentally, by convening the PICC, France had invested considerable prestige in the PICC process and its own role in that process. Dumas later described his involvement in the negotiations of the Cambodian peace settlement of his most important diplomatic success as Foreign Minister, since, in his words, he had started from scratch and had brought the negotiations to a successful conclusion.<sup>182</sup> Dumas was the first Foreign Minister to be invited by Sihanouk to visit Cambodia after the Paris agreements (in his role as co-president of the PICC), where, in Phnom Penh, Sihanouk thanked France for bringing peace to Cambodia and told Dumas: 'You are my President'.<sup>183</sup> Thus, from the Cambodian leaders' points of view, while Hun Sen praised Australia and Evans for being the 'father' of the Cambodian settlements, Sihanouk thanked France and Dumas in similar vein. Even on the question of allocating praise then, the Cambodian leaders could not agree among themselves.

## Summary

From 1983-1989, Australian initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue on Cambodia were an essential element of the Hawke Labor Government's

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<sup>180</sup> 'Interview accordée par M. Roland Dumas, Ministre des Affaires étrangères à France Inter, Paris, 25 October 1991', retrieved 17 May 2010, < <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>>.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> 'Par exemple, ma plus grande réussite diplomatique a été la Conférence de Paris sur le Cambodge parce que je l'ai prise de zéro et l'ai amené à la réussite'. Interview de Roland Dumas par Sylvie Audibert, June 2008, retrieved 15 February 2010, < [http://www.lsefrance.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=55&Itemid=65](http://www.lsefrance.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=55&Itemid=65)>

<sup>183</sup> J MacCartney, 'Prince Sihanouk thanks France for Cambodia peace role', *Reuters News*, 22 November 1991, retrieved 22 September 2009, <<http://global.factiva.com.ezproxy.deakin.edu.au/aa/default.aspx?pp=Print&hc=Publicat...>>.



policy to promote Australia's relations with the region. In pursuit of this objective, Australia sought to gain a reputation, and be accepted in the region, as a concerned partner with a role to play in the search for a settlement of the Cambodian conflict. The experience of the Hayden years 1983-1988, supports Tomz's contention that the reputations of new players on the scene initially have to undergo a 'seasoning process', and new reputations take many years to build. An essential element in the building of an Australian reputation as a concerned partner was the changing nature of regional views about Australia's disposition to be an accepted participant in the peace process. Australian commitment to the peace process over a long period of time, despite setbacks, and Australian support to the countries involved in the conflict, directly and indirectly, through humanitarian aid and refugee aid and resettlement, were important elements in forming regional views about Australia's growing reputation in the region with regard to the Cambodian conflict.

Australia's *locus standi* on Cambodia, internationally, was put to the test in 1989 when France, as host of the first Paris Conference on Cambodia, in consultation with Indonesia, Prince Sihanouk, Hun Sen and others, drew up a short-list for countries to be invited to the conference: in this case, Australia's reputation as a recipient country for Indo-Chinese refugees and its possible role in rehabilitation after the end of the conflict appears to have weighed more heavily in the minds of its hosts than its previous mediation activities in relation to Cambodia.

Evans' Cambodia peace initiative was one of the most ambitious, risky, multi-faceted, complex, intricate and demanding diplomatic endeavours ever undertaken by Australia. Australia contributed ideas, concepts, a map and detailed planning suggestions, draft negotiating texts and diplomatic expertise and drive in getting its United Nations peace plan proposal on the international agenda. Australia's initiative was acknowledged by other participants in the Paris International Conference on Cambodia group as

having provided a second breath to the peace process when other efforts were flagging, and providing the basis for breaking the logjam in the peace process.

After the failure of the Jakarta meeting in February 1990, which provided the first opportunity to road test the ideas and concepts in the Australian 'Red Book' and develop a regional solution to the problem, the Permanent Five members of the United Nations Security Council assumed carriage of the negotiations. Australia continued to plug away as an objective generator of ideas and detailed proposals and a facilitator of dialogue, based on its belief in Australia's central role in the peace process, its access to all the parties and its even-handedness, but with diminishing returns as the Permanent Five became resistant to new ideas which could subvert the process or upset the delicate balance of interests achieved in their negotiations. During this period, Australia achieved a reputation as a 'gadfly' or one of a number of 'cats which needed to be herded'<sup>184</sup> in order to keep the P5 process on track.

Hawke claimed in 1990 that no government had done more than the Australian Government to advance the cause of an equitable, sustainable, peaceful resolution of the tragedy in Cambodia. Australia's international reputation had, as a result, been enhanced and this was a source of national pride. This claim underlines the inter-relationship between international standing, reputation, esteem and national pride; and in this sense, Hawke also suggests that reputations do matter.

However, the general consensus at the resumed Paris Conference in 1991 was that the Paris accords were a 'shared success' to which many other countries, in their own way and in their own time, also contributed. While a decreased involvement of major powers in the region had been a key initial Australian foreign policy goal, this was an issue which was resolved among the major powers themselves, with the US taking a leading role. The process

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<sup>184</sup> Solomon, *Exiting Indochina*, pp. 49-57.

involved secret negotiations between China and Vietnam in 1991 and bilateral negotiations between the US and Vietnam in the context of normalising their relations. At the local level of the Cambodian political parties, the major breakthroughs in 1987, 1989 and 1991 came largely through face-to-face dialogues and understandings between Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen, which France, Thailand, and Japan did more to foster than Australia. This is an aspect of the peace negotiations that is not comprehensively covered in the literature on the Paris Peace Conference negotiations, but was important for their eventual outcome, as Hun Sen said in an interview with *Le Monde* in November 1991, after the signing of the Paris accords:

Since our first meeting in 1987, we established personal ties of trust even if we did not achieve a lot at the time. The situation came to maturity in June 1991. Our mutual understanding, since that date, has been the catalyst and the dynamic for all of the solutions. Without that understanding, nothing would have been realised.<sup>185</sup>

DFAT professionalism and performance, which Evans claimed had been a feature of the Australian initiative, were also a feature of other major Australian initiatives at the time, such as on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Antarctica, chemical weapons and the Cairns Group and helped to get them launched, with the result that, as Evans claimed in 1990, 'today Australia cuts quite a significant and respected figure on the international, and especially the Asia Pacific, regional stage'.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> J C Pomonti, 'Un entretien avec le premier ministre cambodgien', *Le Monde*, 20 November, 1991, p. 8. 'Depuis notre première rencontre en 1987, nous avons établi des liens personnels de confiance, même si nous n'avons pas réalisé grand-chose à l'époque. La situation est venue à maturité en juin 1991. Notre compréhension mutuelle a été, depuis cette date, le catalyseur, la dynamique de toutes les solutions. Sans cette compréhension, rien n'aurait pu se réaliser'. Author's translation.

<sup>186</sup> Evans, 'Address to the Sydney Institute, 13 March 1990', p. 148.

## **CHAPTER 4. CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORUM (APEC)**

### **Introduction**

Australia's diplomacy in relation to the formation of APEC has been billed as Australia's most important foreign policy victory for over a decade.<sup>1</sup> The case study provides an opportunity to examine Australian foreign policy leadership in building and participating in new regional architecture and in response to an economic threat (and opportunity) associated with the economic ascendancy of regional economies, which threatened to lock Australia out of its markets. According to Walker, 'fear of military vulnerability had been replaced by our economic vulnerability'.<sup>2</sup> Australia's APEC initiative and the flanking policy of 'enmeshment' in Asia built on earlier successes of engagement with Asia, including in particular, the Colombo Plan. The case study covers the period from the Australian proposal and its establishment in 1989 to the second APEC leaders' meeting in Bogor, Indonesia in 1994 (by which time the leaders' meetings could be said to have become institutionalised).

This case study focuses on the roles played by Prime Ministers Hawke and Keating. Hawke and Keating were, respectively, the driving forces behind the launch of the APEC idea in 1989 and the suggestion and lobbying for the APEC leaders' summits. As the Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans acknowledged:

In recent times, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation proposal and the campaign to ban mining and oil drilling in Antarctica are two important and high-profile examples of foreign policy initiatives in which the Prime Minister was unequivocally the prime mover, with the portfolio Ministers playing a subsequent implementation role.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, quoted in R Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> D Walker, 'Australia as Asia' in W Hudson & G Bolton (eds), *Creating Australia: changing Australian history*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1997, pp. 131-141, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world of the 1990s*, p. 47.

The focus on national leaders, rather than primarily on foreign ministers and their departments in the formulation of foreign policy, also draws attention to the importance of summitry (i.e., the APEC leaders' meetings) in the development of APEC. However, summit meetings, as Reynolds points out, have their own dynamics, promoted by the epic nature of these meetings.<sup>4</sup> As the case study shows, summits can play an important role in helping to define identity for the region and its participants (including Australia) and in contributing to both symbolic as well as substantive outcomes for regional institutional development. They also present reputational advantages and dangers for summitters.

Former Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Secretary Richard Woolcott described the Australian contribution to the creation of APEC as its most important foreign policy initiative since the Colombo Plan and the ANZUS Treaty were developed in the 1950s.<sup>5</sup> In this context, APEC, at Australia's instigation, was to become the pre-eminent economic forum in our region, enhancing Australia's standing and influence.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Hawke initiative**

#### **The call for a regional approach**

The literature on Asia-Pacific regional institution building and the formation of APEC gives credit to Hawke for his leadership in calling, in 1989, for regional co-operation when the time was ripe for such a regional initiative. In his speech to Korean business associations in Seoul on 31 January 1989, Hawke stated:

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<sup>4</sup> D Reynolds, *Summits*, p. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> R Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 234.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

I believe the time has come for us substantially to increase our efforts towards building regional co-operation and seriously to investigate what areas it might focus on and what forms it might take.<sup>7</sup>

He added:

What we are seeking to develop is a capacity for analysis and consultation on economic and social issues, not as an academic exercise but to help inform policy development by our respective governments.<sup>8</sup>

Hawke said that he saw merit in the OECD model (albeit provided in a different context) and foreshadowed a regional Ministerial meeting by the end of the year to investigate this question.

Ideas of regional co-operation, such as those promulgated within the Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference (PECC) network, or proposed by former Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone, former US Secretary of State George Shultz and US Senator Bill Bradley, had been circulating for some time before Hawke's proposal, leading to a growing consensus in late 1988 and early 1989 that institutionalising regional economic co-operation at the inter-governmental level was 'an idea whose time had come'. However, the idea required regional leadership of some stature and drive to pick up the ball and run with it. In the context of other contemporary ideas about Asia-Pacific regional co-operation, Australian academic and former head of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs Stuart Harris summed up the significance of the Hawke contribution in the following way:

Ultimately, Hawke's 'initiative' in respect of APEC was not of an institutional development, moving beyond existing processes ... It was a political question of judging the feasibility, including timing, in the light of regional caution, and moving forward on that. That was the Hawke contribution.<sup>9</sup>

Japanese journalist Funabashi added:

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<sup>7</sup> B Hawke, Speech by the Prime Minister, Luncheon of Korean Business Associations, 'Regional Co-operation: Challenges for Korea and Australia', Korea, 31 January 1989, reprinted as 'Challenges for Korea and Australia' in *The Monthly Record*, vol. 60, no. 1, January 1989, pp. 5-7, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> S Harris, 'Ellis Krauss on APEC origins', *Pacific Review*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2000, pp. 521-523, p. 523.

Yet it is no secret that Hawke was the father of APEC. If the most critical element of politics is a sense of timing, Hawke obviously had it. When he proposed APEC in 1989, the region was primed.<sup>10</sup>

In 2000, ten years after APEC's establishment, Krauss<sup>11</sup> challenged the 'inherited view' or 'mythologised historical view' on APEC's formation and the centrality of Australia's role.<sup>12</sup> In the mythologised account, Hawke took the initiative in Seoul in 1989, calling for a forum to discuss furthering regional co-operation, after which Australia garnered support for the initiative through high-level diplomacy. This led to Australia hosting the inaugural APEC ministerial meeting later in the same year in Canberra. Krauss acknowledges Australia's essential leadership in the foundation process, but drawing on his own research and that of Funabashi<sup>13</sup> and Terada,<sup>14</sup> argues that Japan played a much more central role in the foundation of APEC than previously acknowledged. He also gives credit to positive US thinking at the time about the importance of regional institutional building in the Asia-Pacific region.

In support for their claims for greater recognition for Japan's pivotal role in the formation of APEC, Krauss, Funabashi and Terada submit as evidence an internal study conducted by the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in 1988 - a year before Hawke's announcement - which Prime Minister Takeshita had commissioned following his visit to Washington earlier in the year. The MITI report, according to Krauss, 'envisions APEC in the form it eventually developed: an open, regional forum of economies with

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<sup>10</sup> Y Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion: Japan's role in APEC*, Institute for International Economics, Washington DC, 1995, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> ES Krauss, 'Japan, the US, and the emergence of multilateralism in Asia', *Pacific Review*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2000, pp. 473-494.

<sup>12</sup> For example: 'When the United States to some extent dropped the ball on regional leadership as the Cold War was ending Australia produced the blueprint for and founded the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum'. G Sheridan, *Tigers: leaders of the new Asia-Pacific*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, 1997, p. xvi-xvii.

<sup>13</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*.

<sup>14</sup> For example: T Terada, 'The genesis of APEC: Australia-Japan political initiatives', Australia-Pacific Economic Paper, Japan Research Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, 2004, retrieved via Demetrius at the Australian National University, 8 July 2010,

<<http://hdl.handle.net/1885/40456>> .

government participation cooperating to achieve more integrated and balanced growth with a gradualist and consensual approach respectful of the region's diversity'.<sup>15</sup>

The report was sent to MITI's counterparts in twelve countries, including Australia, which expressed an interest; and its ideas were advanced in official contacts between the two countries and other Asian nations. However, as Harris comments, it was not clear at the time that the MITI report envisioned APEC in the form it developed, and the issue was clouded by bureaucratic rivalry between MITI and the Gaimusho, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which presented problems for the Australian Government in knowing what Japan was proposing officially.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, Japan tried to interest Australia in taking the lead on the promotion of regional co-operation. MITI Vice-Minister for International Affairs Muraoka reportedly told Australian Special Minister for Trade Negotiations Duffy in Montreal in December 1988 that Japan was interested in a regional initiative and was even willing to give Australia full credit for the initiative.<sup>17</sup> In his Seoul speech, Hawke mentioned that senior Australian Ministers had had 'constructive talks' on the issue of regional co-operation with the Japanese leadership earlier in the week. He also mentioned that Japan and Australia had undertaken a joint study of the potential regional impact of the 1992 integration of Europe and the recent North American Free Trade Agreement, and that he would be discussing with Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita how best to familiarise other countries in the region with its findings. However, no causal link has been established yet between the MITI study, Japanese approaches to Australian Ministers, bilateral ministerial discussions between Japan and Australia on regional issues, and the form of Hawke's announcement in Seoul. Indeed, Hawke's staffers closely involved

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<sup>15</sup> Krauss, 'Japan, the US, and the emergence of multilateralism in Asia', p. 477.

<sup>16</sup> Harris, 'Ellis Krauss on APEC origins', p. 522.

<sup>17</sup> Terada, 'The genesis of APEC', p. 17.



in the drafting of Hawke's speech firmly denied that the plan was given to Australia by Japanese bureaucrats.<sup>18</sup>

In one sense, Australia assumed leadership of the push for greater regional co-operation in 1989 by default. Japan, which had been active in promoting the idea, was reluctant to take the lead. The Gaimusho feared that Japanese activism on regional collaboration (given the legacy of Japanese wartime involvement in Asia) would damage Japan's image in the region. This issue became even more of a restraining factor following the death of Emperor Hirohito in January 1989 and the ensuing controversy over his war role. In relation to Japan's support for Australia's own leadership role in regional co-operation building, Japan did not consider Australia as a threat. It considered that Australia was, like Japan, a principal industrialised democracy in the Asia-Pacific region that had worked closely with Japan on regional economic matters. However, Japan noted that Australia was interested in broadening its ties with the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>19</sup> Australia's international standing and reputation as an informed and constructive dialogue partner on regional economic matters, as perceived by Japan, were therefore important considerations underlying Japanese support for Australia taking the initiative.

Hawke, as Strauss pointed out, 'had his own motivations, views and goals for pushing a regional forum in 1989'.<sup>20</sup> In his memoirs, Hawke described his initiative on APEC as being of the same conceptual thrust as the Australian initiative in 1986 that to convene the Cairns Group of free traders in agriculture. The Cairns Group aimed at bringing, 'by force of argument and coalition building', a more open multilateral trading environment<sup>21</sup> and brought together two of Hawke's fundamental and inter-related themes of a free international trading environment and Australia's greater enmeshment

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<sup>18</sup> G Sheridan, 'How Hawke's idea took off', *Weekend Australian*, 6-7 January 1994, Focus, pp. 17-18.

<sup>19</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, particularly p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Krauss, 'Japan, the US, and the emergence of multilateralism in Asia', p. 479.

<sup>21</sup> B Hawke, *The Hawke memoirs*, Port Melbourne, Mandarin, 1996, p. 233.

with the region.<sup>22</sup> Hawke also stated in his memoirs that his Government, from 1983 onwards, was guided by a perception of Australia's place in the world and its capacity to secure its national interest objectives, which later was formulated in Garnaut's *Australia and the North East Asian ascendancy*:

As a nation of substantial but limited weight, we have relevance to international discussions affecting our future, but not the capacity to secure objectives through the exercise of national power. As a 'middle power' we must rely on persuading other countries, and influential groups within these countries, that it is in their own interest to move in directions that are consistent with our own interests.<sup>23</sup>

However, Hawke's speech writer Mills claimed that Hawke had a starker view of Australia's place in the world than is encapsulated in the reference to Australia as 'a nation of substantial but limited weight' and as a 'middle power':

In pursuing these priorities, Hawke had a realistic sense of what Australia, and the Australian Prime Minister, could actually get done. He harked back repeatedly to 'the basic fact': Australia's population of 17 million in a world of 5.5 billion. That expressed for Hawke the constraints on Australia's political and economic influence in the world. But from that starting point, Hawke pushed Australia's influence as far as he could.<sup>24</sup>

Enmeshment, in Hawke's view, required a new mind set and radical change in Australian attitudes, and was intractably linked with ideas about Australia's future status, esteem, and place in the world.

Enmeshment with Asia was not just words. It was a whole new mind set, a different way of thinking about the region and about ourselves. Enmeshment meant change, radical change. It was a case of change or be left behind, with our living standards declining, our economy and way of life stagnant, our citizens envious and, in the long term, left to become the poor white trash of Asia.<sup>25</sup>

Through 'enmeshment', as Hawke explained to delegates at the first APEC ministerial meeting held in Canberra in November 1989, Australia was

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 429.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 232; Ross Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian ascendancy*, Canberra, AGPS, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Mills, *The Hawke years*, p. 157.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

seeking to cast off one reputation – for economic and cultural insularity - for an alternative one, which was in the process of being developed through his Government's policy of 'enmeshment' with the region:

With our historical roots in Europe, and our reputation - let me concede it was sometimes in decades past a well-earned reputation - for economic and cultural insularity, Australia has not been seen by some in the region as an integral part of the region. Indeed sometimes Australians haven't seen themselves in that light either.

But those days are gone - gone forever. Increasingly our domestic attitudes - and certainly, at the level of my Government, our domestic and foreign policy making - recognise the truth that our future is thoroughly interwoven with that of the Asia Pacific region.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1980s' North-East Asia (comprising, for the purposes of this study, Japan, China - including Taiwan and Hong Kong - and South Korea) emerged as one of the three main centres of world production, trade and savings. Australia's proximity to the region and the complementarities of the Australian economy with the North-East Asian economies in terms of trade in goods and services and capital required for Australian investment offered a means of moderating Australia's sense of isolation. As Garnaut, the author of a 1989 report to the Prime Minister on Australia and North-East Asia, stated:

The emergence of East Asia as a major centre of world economic activity has greatly moderated Australia's relative isolation, which had been an enduring feature of earlier Australian development. This moderation continues as the economic dynamism of North-East Asia induces accelerated growth in Australia's immediate neighbourhood, South-East Asia.<sup>27</sup>

However, Garnaut nominated Australian protectionism as the main reputational baggage for developing Australian economic relations with the region:

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<sup>26</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Speech by the Prime Minister, Welcome Dinner for Delegates to the Ministerial Meeting on Asia Pacific Cooperation, Canberra, 5 November 1989', retrieved 8 July 2010, The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, <<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/bhpml/>>.

<sup>27</sup> Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian ascendancy*, p. 2.

For the first seven decades of the Federation a fearful, defensive Australia built walls to protect itself against the challenge of the outside world and found that it had protected itself against the recognition and utilisation of opportunity. The tide has turned through the 1980s, although we carry still most of the dead weight of a protectionist past.<sup>28</sup>

Garnaut's view resonated in Australia's region. In a joint interview with Bob Hawke for the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation in 1987, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew stated:

But to play your part in Asia, in the Pacific, you have got to be part of the economic mainstream. You can't have protective walls.<sup>29</sup>

In 1988, eight of Australia's top ten export markets were in the Asia-Pacific region, thus illustrating Australia's interdependence with the region. However, Australia's share of North-East Asian trade had been declining, more or less in line with the decline in its share of world trade,<sup>30</sup> and there was no inevitability of Australian success in its future economic relations with the region. Australia's future success, according to Garnaut, depended on it accelerating the progress that had already been achieved by the government in domestic economic reform in order to build a 'flexible, internationally-orientated economy that is capable of grasping the opportunities that will emerge in the decades ahead'.<sup>31</sup> He added:

Of greatest direct relevance are the needs to press ahead with trade liberalisation, towards the abolition of all official restrictions in trade imposed at Australia's borders by the end of the century; to maintain a strong economic orientation in a non-discriminatory immigration program on the current scale; and to continue with liberal, non-discriminatory policies on direct foreign investment.<sup>32</sup>

More generally, Garnaut reported that Australia's central economic interests in relation to North-East Asia lay in the continuation of internationally-

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Transcript of Interview for Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, 'The Challenge of Change in Asia-Pacific: A Discussion with two Prime Ministers', 28 November 1987, p. 12, retrieved 8 July 2010, The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, <<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/bhpml/>>.

<sup>30</sup> Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy*, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

orientated growth in the area; in the maintenance of non-discriminatory access to trading opportunities that emerge from that growth; and that this should be the focus of Australia's economic diplomacy in relation to the region.

In Hawke's speech in Seoul, and in his subsequent speech to combined business committees in Bangkok three days later,<sup>33</sup> international trade problems were uppermost in his mind. In Seoul, Hawke drew attention to the serious cracks that were beginning to appear in the international trading system as a result of bilateral trade pressures, associated with significant trade imbalances between a number of regional countries and the United States (e.g., Japan),<sup>34</sup> the formation of bilateral or regional trading arrangements (e.g., the recent US/Canada Free Trade Agreement, the anticipated establishment of a European single market in 1992) and fundamental tensions within the GATT international trading system which were reflected in the impasse at the recent GATT interim review meeting in Montreal over trade in agriculture and services. Hawke called on regional economies to liberalise their own markets and investigate the scope for further dismantling trade barriers in the region, and to work together to save the GATT system warning that, if the current Uruguay round of discussions failed, the underlining tensions could corrode the open and non-discriminatory international trading system that it represented. As a sign of the urgency with which he viewed regional and international trade concerns and the implications for Australia, his speech is peppered with phrases implying responsibility and obligation, for example:

We must work together to save the GATT system. The region's role will be critical given its strong growth, reliance on trade and growing world importance and responsibility.

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<sup>33</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Speech by the Prime Minister: Luncheon of Combined Business Committees, Bangkok, 3 February 1989', retrieved 8 July 2010, The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, <<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/bhpml/>>.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, M Gyobu, 'Trade friction: trade disputes become more complex as domestic distribution system comes under US attack', *Japan Economic Almanac*, (Supplement to the *Japan Economic Journal*) 1989, p. 28.

and

Equally we believe the newly industrialising countries have a responsibility to liberalise their own markets to reflect their phenomenal growth in trade and investment.<sup>35</sup>

In calling on all regional countries to recognise their responsibilities to liberalise their own markets, to support the GATT system, and to identify common broad economic interests for possible policy coordination, Hawke acknowledged that Australia's credibility, and hence reputation in the region as a free-trader and a liberalised economy was crucial. In his memoirs, he wrote that he was able to call for joint action in his address in Korea from a position of strength since, as he told the meeting:

In Australia, we have implemented a range of reforms to liberalise our economy. We are intent on continuing this process and the reforms to date are already providing new opportunities for countries such as Korea.

We have floated the Australian dollar, deregulated our financial markets, liberalised our foreign investment policy, cut the rate of company taxation, reduced by a third the level of tariff protection afforded to Australian manufacturing industry, and made our primary industries more responsive to changes in the international market place.<sup>36</sup>

During his visit to Asia in January – February 1989, Hawke took every opportunity to explore Australian trade and investment opportunities in the countries he visited. He emphasised the commercial opportunities offered by an increasingly 'diversified, productive, efficient and competitive Australia' and through its growing enmeshment in the region. However, Australia's growing standing (both in the region and outside) as a 'well-regarded competitor'<sup>37</sup> encompassed many *individual* reputations. During the visit, Hawke stressed Australia's acknowledged reputation as a reliable and competitive supplier of raw materials, its growing expertise in communications and the reputation for excellence it was developing in such

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<sup>35</sup> Hawke, Speech to Korean Business Associations, 31 January 1989.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid,

<sup>37</sup> R O'Neill, 'Australia and Asia: A View from Europe' in J Cotton & J Ravenhill (eds), *Seeking Asian Engagement: Australia in World Affairs, 1991-95*, Oxford University Press in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 46-60, p. 48.

areas as the building of roads and ports and in power-generation schemes.<sup>38</sup> For example, Australia's involvement in the design and construction of a bridge across the Mekong River, linking Thailand and Laos, would bring the benefits of economic development, but also substantially lift Australia's profile in the region.

However, in 1989, Australia's export performance came under a sustained attack in the Australian financial press for failing to grasp opportunities in the region, for lagging behind the rest of the world in not increasing its ratio of exports to GNP, for lacking an export culture, for not appreciating the Asian way of doing business, for devoting only a small proportion of overseas investment in Asia and even then limiting these investments to countries where English was the language of business.<sup>39</sup> Dramatic changes in Australian business attitudes and behaviour would be required to take full advantage of the Hawke Government's foreign and economic policy of enmeshment.

### **Implementation of the Hawke initiative**

Woolcott claimed that the first APEC ministerial meeting in Canberra in November 1989 was 'a foreign and trade policy achievement for Australia of great potential importance' and that:

How this happened, how the raw concept advanced by Bob Hawke in January 1989 was developed into the first APEC Ministerial Meeting only nine months later, is a piece of recent Australian diplomatic history that is likely to be of interest to students of the processes by which a policy idea can, as Lee Kuan Yew put it, be brought to fruition.<sup>40</sup>

However, while acknowledging Woolcott's own central role in bringing the original Hawke idea into fruition, this case study views his role within the context of the roles played by various other actors, and focuses on those

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<sup>38</sup> 'PM to push for bigger share of Asian trade', *The Australian*, 30 January 1989, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> For example: M Byrnes, 'Evans exhorts business to try harder for Asian trade', *FR*, 27 January 1989, p. 8; G McKanna, 'Poor export performance "shooting Aust in the head"', *FR*, 26 October 1989, p. 7; 'Asia, a fertile but feared investment field', editorial, *FR*, 14 February 1989, p. 14; S Sargent, 'Culture gap costing Aust contracts in Asia', *FR*, 26 July 1989, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 232.

aspects of international standing and reputation that were important in achieving the result. These actors and their roles are discussed in the order that they appeared on the scene.

### ***Bob Hawke***

Hawke's reference in his Seoul speech to the desirability of the region furthering the idea of regional cooperation through the establishment of an OECD-type regional body received prominent coverage in the Australian and regional press<sup>41</sup> but caused a great deal of consternation in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.<sup>42</sup> In Bangkok, three days later, in his speech to combined business committees, Hawke repeated his suggestion that the region look closely at the OECD model.<sup>43</sup> He raised the OECD idea later in the month, in a satellite television appearance at the PacRim '89 conference in Hong Kong, where his initiative was well received by the Asian delegates, particularly the South Korean and Thai business discussion leaders, who said they shared Hawke's call for a Pacific Rim economic grouping and welcomed Australian leadership on the matter.<sup>44</sup>

In his message to the conference, Hawke restated his belief that 'some sort of consultative mechanism on the OECD model' would bring both internal benefits for the countries involved and for the region as a whole if it entailed greater flows of information on directions in member countries; would allow for better policy making in the individual countries; and maximise opportunities for the region as a whole. However, while Hawke seemed to be clear in his own mind of the benefits of an OECD-type model, the initial response from the Australian bureaucracy, according to Mills, was characterised by 'foot dragging', 'hand wringing' and 'head shaking' that was

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<sup>41</sup> For example: P Logue, 'Hawke wants an OECD-type regional body', *The Australian*, 1 February 1989, p. 3; G Kitney, 'PM calls for Asian regional body', *FR*, 1 February 1989, p. 3; 'Siddhi sees ASEAN role in regional trade body', *Bangkok Post*, 26 March 1989, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 233.

<sup>43</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Speech by the Prime Minister: Luncheon of Combined Business Committees, Bangkok, 3 February 1989'.

<sup>44</sup> M Byrnes, 'Asians applaud Hawke call for regional economic body', *FR*, 23 February 1989, p. 8.



'a marvel to see'.<sup>45</sup> According to Mills, there was deep unease in the DFAT bureaucracy about Hawke even mentioning an 'Asian OECD', spanning large countries like Japan and Pacific micro-states like Tuvalu, and about Hawke seeking to force the pace.<sup>46</sup>

Eventually, the OECD idea was subsumed on the agenda for a regional ministerial meeting, and OECD-style economic cooperation became one of the three bands or streams of APEC activity agreed at the meeting. Hawke did not mention his preference for an OECD model in his address to delegates at the first ministerial meeting in November, and in deference to the ASEAN position, said that he did not wish to see the meeting result in the creation of a 'vast, expensive or cumbersome bureaucracy', or the duplication of existing organisations such as ASEAN. Instead, he expressed a preference for a 'small, high-calibre group of officials, seconded from our governments' to prepare the groundwork for forthcoming meetings and follow up on issues, which would also draw on available analytical resources in the region.

The way heads of government view each other is considered to be an important element in nation state relations.<sup>47</sup> Hawke placed importance on personal relations at the head of government / head of state level in international relations.<sup>48</sup> He wrote in his memoirs that he had discussed his ideas on APEC with President Roh Tae Woo the day before his speech in Seoul and received enthusiastic support from him. Accordingly, he believed that he could speak with more confidence when announcing his proposal the following day. The importance of good personal relations and, in particular, the reputational attributes of friendship and trust, is evident in the following passage in his memoirs about his relationship with Roh:

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<sup>45</sup> Mills, *The Hawke years*, p. 193.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> R O'Neill, 'Australia and Asia: A View from Europe', p. 50.

<sup>48</sup> Hawke, *The Hawke memoirs*, p. 430.

Roh gave immediate and effusive support to APEC, going out of his way to make it clear that he wanted to be seen to be identified with it. The fact that I had warm and friendly relations with President Roh was significant. We liked and trusted one another. .. When I outlined the APEC concept to Roh it was to a man who was prepared out of friendship and trust to discuss seriously any proposal I raised with him. It was yet another example of the importance of personal relations in the conduct of international affairs.<sup>49</sup>

Mills commented that Hawke's diplomacy was essentially *personal* diplomacy. He elaborated on this by saying that Hawke 'was after leaders who mattered in countries that mattered', and that 'he worked hard to grab their attention and win their trust'.<sup>50</sup> Further, he had the knack of reading the people he was dealing with, and this skill became central to his style abroad.<sup>51</sup> *Financial Review* journalist Kitney, who travelled with Hawke on his Asian trip, commented that it was clear from observing Hawke in the company of the political leaders in the four countries he visited that he had developed a real passion for international affairs and a conviction that he could play a significant role as one of the longer standing leaders, who had developed excellent personal relations with most of the key players on the global stage. Kitney added that:

You get the feeling that Mr. Hawke sees himself as an emerging statesman who can have influence beyond that which a leader of a middle ranking power like Australia would normally have.<sup>52</sup>

Kitney implied that 'statesmanship' was an important source of influence impacting on a country's international standing and reputation.

On his return to Canberra, Hawke wrote personally to each of the regional heads of government outlining his ideas and seeking their reactions. He also announced the appointment of Woolcott, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a former Ambassador to Indonesia and the Philippines and High Commissioner to Singapore and Malaysia, as his personal envoy to visit each of the likely participants to win support at the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Mills, *The Hawke years*, p. 157.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> G Kitney, 'Hawke relishes broader stage', *FR*, 13 February 1989, p. 1.

highest levels for the APEC concept.<sup>53</sup> South Korea, Singapore and Thailand, countries with whose leaders Hawke had established good personal relations and/or had discussed his idea, were the most enthusiastic and prompt in their responses.<sup>54</sup> However, at the other end of the scale, New Zealand, Indonesia and Malaysia, countries with whose leaders Hawke had no great personal rapport, were either slow to react or cautious, indicating the limitations in relying on personal relations at the head of government level alone for influence in the conduct of international relations. The New Zealand Government had been 'miffed' that a proposal of such far-reaching implications for it and the region and for New Zealand's relations with Australia had been announced without any prior consultations with them, but nevertheless agreed to welcome the proposal and be supportive. Suharto was attracted to the proposal but was cautious, while Mahathir 'took note' of the proposal. Mahathir feared that ASEAN would disappear in a larger and more powerful APEC group, and that the US would dominate any APEC mechanism that might be established. He also questioned the concept of an emerging community of the Asia-Pacific, both as an homogenous community and because the 'abrasiveness of those of European origin is incompatible with Asians'.<sup>55</sup> Mahathir included Australia in the countries that were of largely European origin, having thereby an affinity with the US and the European colonialists, and association with their dominance.

Hawke did not mention the US as a possible participant in the new regional body proposed in his Seoul speech and, much to the chagrin of the US Administration, he did not consult them beforehand about the initiative. The Hawke initiative raised concerns in the US Administration on two main grounds. First, the new Bush Government was in the process of thinking strategically about Asia's role in the global context, both economically and

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<sup>53</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 234.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-239; Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>55</sup> Mahathir bin Mohamad, 'Regional groupings in the Pacific Rim: an East Asian perspective' in BK Bundy, SD Burns & KV Weichel (eds), *Future of the Pacific Rim: scenarios for regional cooperation*, Praeger, Westpoint Connecticut, 1994, pp. 94-99.

strategically in the immediate post-Cold War era, and the Hawke idea of regional institution-building was out in front of where they were at the time. Second, the US was generally supportive of the idea of APEC (provided it did not develop into a regional trading bloc), but the initial Hawke proposal did not have the US involved 'so we had enough influence to see that it didn't evolve very far that way'.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, Japan supported US involvement in a new Asia-Pacific regional body, and made its views known in the region. For example, during Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita's visit to Thailand in April, Takeshita told the Thai Premier that the United States and Canada should participate in the proposed regional body.<sup>57</sup>

In his memoirs, Hawke claimed that while there had been some suggestions that he had been so incensed with US attitudes on bilateral trade with Australia that he was inclined to leave the US out of the new regional body, this was never in his mind.<sup>58</sup> The issue was finally resolved during Hawke's visit to Washington in June, when Hawke declared a moratorium on Australian criticism of the US for failing to acknowledge that its trade subsidies were hurting Australia. At the same time, he received an assurance that the US was willing to join the proposed Asia-Pacific economic group.<sup>59</sup> In a speech to the Asia Society in New York City on 26 June, attended by Japanese Foreign Minister Mitsuzuka, Secretary of State James Baker stated that the need for a new mechanism for multilateral cooperation among the nations of the Pacific Rim was 'an idea whose time had come'. He paid tribute to the suggestions by 'many distinguished statesmen and influential organisations', mentioning specifically both Hawke and MITI (during the time Mitsuzuka headed it). Stating that US involvement in the creation of a new institution would signal US full and ongoing relationship in the region, he said

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<sup>56</sup> Richard H. Solomon, former Assistant-secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. State Department: Personal interview, Washington, DC, 9 July 2008.

<sup>57</sup> 'Japan: US, Canada vital to regional bloc', *Bangkok Post*, 2 May 1989, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Hawke, *The Hawke memoirs*, p. 431.

<sup>59</sup> G Kitney, 'Hawke's last word on trade policy', *FR*, 27 June 1989, p. 3.

he would explore the possibilities of such a mechanism during his forthcoming visit to Asia, and with Hawke later that week.<sup>60</sup>

### *Japan*

Well before Woolcott began his visit to Asia on 3 April to gain support for the Hawke initiative, Japan was already active in the field. In February, MITI's Director for International Economy visited senior officials in trade and industry departments in each ASEAN country to sound out their reactions to the Hawke initiative and to explain MITI's ideas. MITI officials felt at the time that Australia would not be able to sway some cautious South-East Asian policy-makers, and therefore, MITI could make a real difference.<sup>61</sup> This round of visits was a prelude to a higher level visit of MITI Vice-Minister Muraoka the following month. A particular purpose of Muraoka's discussions was to sound out and seek to convince his counterparts of the importance of including the United States – which had not been included in Australia's original list of likely participants – in any proposed new regional body. While most officials that Muraoka met (particularly in ASEAN) expressed hesitancy about US membership, Muraoka responded that it would be better to combat and contain US unilateral actions by including the United States in the forum, and claimed that ASEAN nations accepted this rationale.<sup>62</sup>

Since the word 'APEC', which first appeared on Hawke's formal invitation to the members, had yet to be coined, Muraoka, according to Funabashi, explained the MITI proposal in his meetings with top officials, while Woolcott in the following month described the Australian one. It was not until April when Muraoka and Woolcott met in Tokyo, that the two versions were finally merged.<sup>63</sup> While Evans later described Australia's role in the establishment of APEC as a 'useful study of Australian leadership in coalition-building', he

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<sup>60</sup> JA Baker 111, 'A new Pacific partnership: framework for the future', *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 89, no. 2149 (August 1989), pp 64-66, p. 65.

<sup>61</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

also acknowledged that: 'Japan has been - while not taking a leadership role - strongly supportive of the development of the APEC process'.<sup>64</sup> However, when regional leaders met in 1989 to discuss the idea of the institutionalisation of regional cooperation, they inevitably referred to 'the Australian plan' in their discussions.<sup>65</sup>

### ***The Woolcott visits***

While both Japan and Australian senior officials were involved in consensus-building on the issue of regional cooperation (sparked by Hawke's initiative), and Japan's efforts could be seen as lending support to the Australian initiative, Woolcott's mandate as the Prime Minister's special envoy was more results-orientated: he sought to win support at the highest levels for the APEC concept. His specific tasks were to visit each of the likely participants to elaborate on the proposal; to dispel concerns, particularly among ASEAN countries that APEC would usurp ASEAN's leading role on regional economic issues in Southeast Asia and result in a new large and costly regional bureaucracy; to obtain regional agreement on an initial ministerial meeting later in the same year and an ongoing process to sustain momentum; and to reach a consensus on the desirability of including the United States, Canada and the Three Chinas.<sup>66</sup>

Woolcott argues in his memoirs that his role (and that of his Minister and Department) in taking 'the raw concept advanced by Bob Hawke in January 1989', and 'developing the concept of a forum for Asia-Pacific economic cooperation and in bringing it to life', demonstrated an Australian capacity, and hence reputation, for innovative and constructive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region:

The building of support for the APEC concept offers a practical example of effective diplomacy. It involved identifying all the possible obstacles in the

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<sup>64</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, pp. 128, 230.

<sup>65</sup> For example, 'Takeshita and PM to discuss Australian plan', *Bangkok Post*, 22 April 1989, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, pp. 234, 238.

countries concerned, especially in Japan, China, the United States and Malaysia, each of which had different reservations. It was then necessary to devise persuasive strategies in order to negotiate a way through these obstacles.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from his own deft footwork in finding a path through obstacles and his capacity to sell ideas, Woolcott's account of his first visit (to ASEAN countries) illustrates the importance of the diplomatic reputational capital he commanded, in terms of respect and trust of his enormous web of regional friendships and contact.<sup>68</sup> He was able to draw on this reputation to achieve Australian objectives. For example, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas had been helpful to Woolcott in pointing out some political constraints in Indonesia's position, and Mahathir, with whom Woolcott had discussed Antarctica in 1986, made time to meet with him even though he had only just returned to work after a serious illness.<sup>69</sup> Woolcott's task of selling the APEC idea was also made easier by the previous consensus-building activities at the non-government level, by the activities of regional intellectuals, businessmen and non-government organisations with unofficial links (as in the case of PECC) with policy makers. Nevertheless, Woolcott was unsuccessful in his attempts to seek a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita, owing to ongoing rivalry between MITI and the Gaimusho, with the latter suspected of intervening to prevent Woolcott from meeting the Japanese Prime Minister.<sup>70</sup>

On the third leg of his personal envoy mission in May, Woolcott visited China, Hong Kong, Washington and Canada. Despite some progress made in his discussion with Chinese leaders on the modalities of including the Three Chinas in the regional organisation, Woolcott's visit and its outcomes were overshadowed by student demonstrations, China's declaration of martial law, and subsequent international outrage over the Tiananmen Square

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>68</sup> Evans, quoted in Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 244.

<sup>69</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, pp. 236, 237.

<sup>70</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, p. 57.

massacres, which put the question of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong membership on hold until the third APEC ministerial meeting in Seoul in 1991. In Washington, Woolcott claimed that Secretary Baker 'accepted' his arguments that an APEC forum would have more chance of success if it was 'promoted by a country like Australia, which was neither a major power nor economically dominant'<sup>71</sup> (i.e., neither the US nor Japan). This seems to suggest US endorsement of Australia's role as a middle power in the creation of APEC. However, while both Japan and the US were willing to let Australia have the credit of having the carriage of the initiative, both Japan and the US had their own 'major power' interests in supporting the initiative which related to their own rethinking of their regional and global sources of influence and their relations with each other. Each, in Krauss's analysis, perceived the other as a 'Gulliver'<sup>72</sup> needing to be tied down more firmly in a regional arrangement to mitigate current and future trade friction and to promote regional responsibilities.

### ***Foreign Minister***

The ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Brunei in July was the penultimate stage in the development of the APEC initiative in 1989. The Australian proposal was on the agenda of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, 3-4 July 1989, where ASEAN Ministers were expected to give a formal response to Hawke's proposal.<sup>73</sup> However, the ASEAN meeting had weightier issues of its own to consider, such as maintaining solidarity on the ASEAN position on the Cambodian peace process to take to the forthcoming Paris International Conference on Cambodia, and supporting the consensus on the problem of Indo-Chinese asylum seekers (reached at the recent International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees in Geneva) convened at ASEAN's initiative. The joint communiqué of the meeting simply 'noted the recent trends and

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<sup>71</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 241.

<sup>72</sup> Krauss, 'Japan, the US, and the emergence of multilateralism in Asia', p. 483.

<sup>73</sup> S Sargent, 'ASEAN Ministers to discuss the Hawke plan for trade', *FR*, 30 June 1989, p. 15.



developments in the Asia-Pacific region and in particular the proposals made by some of the Dialogue Countries for enhanced economic cooperation'.<sup>74</sup>

However, at the post-ministerial meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the US and the European Union held on 6-8 July, the ASEAN states agreed to attend an initial exploratory meeting in Canberra in November to discuss the proposal. Woolcott claimed that Evans sealed the arrangement with participating Ministers,<sup>75</sup> however, Japan also played an important role at the meeting, which officials described as being 'supportive, constructive and not at all aggressive'<sup>76</sup> Evans' understanding of, and support for, the ASEAN search for a comprehensive, just and durable solution to the Cambodia conflict, and his forthright and compassionate position on Indo-Chinese refugees at the Geneva Conference, indicated that Australia could be a reliable and trusted partner for ASEAN; that it did not wish to see ASEAN's leadership role on joint regional issues of concern undermined; and that Australia could be relied upon to work closely with ASEAN in the realisation of the APEC initiative.

### ***The first APEC Ministerial Meeting, Canberra***

Australia's hosted the first APEC Ministerial Meeting in Canberra on 6-7 November 1989. The meeting aimed to discuss ways to advance the process of economic cooperation in the region and enabled Australia to take diplomatic credit for the initiative, highlighting Australia's role in nurturing the initiative. Hawke used the occasion of his speech at a welcoming dinner for delegates<sup>77</sup> to revisit the origins and strategic intent of his proposal and to underline the support the initiative had received at head of government level.

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<sup>74</sup> 'Joint Communiqué of The 22nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Bandar Seri Begawan, 3 - 4 July 1989', para. 81, retrieved 30 August 2010, (<http://www.aseansec.org/3670.htm>).

<sup>75</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 241.

<sup>76</sup> S Aznam, 'Asean warily agrees to discuss Australian trade proposal: Pacific possibilities', *FEER*, 20 July 1989, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Speech by the Prime Minister, Welcome Dinner for Delegates to the Ministerial Meeting on Asia Pacific Cooperation, Canberra, 5 November 1989', retrieved 8 July 2010, The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, <<http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/bhpml/>>.

He emphasised that he did not want to see the meeting ‘impinge on the enormous contribution that has been made over the years to regional political cooperation and consultation by ASEAN’ and he urged delegates to think through the issues related to the potential participation of the People's Republic of China, and the economies of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Hawke also used the occasion of hosting this most important and historic meeting to carry a vital message to his fellow Australians that ‘the transformation underway in the Asia Pacific region is of critical importance to the way we go about life in this country and to the expectations Australians can entertain for the future’. He further noted that the fact that eight of Australia’s top ten export markets the previous year were in the Asia Pacific provided as good an example of Australia’s regional interdependence as any economy in the region.<sup>78</sup>

At their first meeting, Ministers rejected the idea that APEC should be directed to the formation of a trading bloc, and expressed their support for an open multilateral trading system. They reaffirmed their commitment to open markets and to expand trade, and agreed to consult together to promote a positive conclusion of the Uruguay Round. They also agreed a statement of principles of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, which was included in the Chairman’s (Evans’) concluding statement from the Chair. However, they failed to reach agreement on APEC’s future structure or on a detailed work program. They asked senior officials to begin work on a number of possible topics for regional economic cooperation, and agree to two further meetings.<sup>79</sup>

A former New Zealand diplomat to Australia recounts his impressions of the dramatic turnaround in Australia’s standing in the region, which the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> APEC, ‘First APEC Ministerial Meeting, Canberra, Australia, 6-7 November: Joint Statement’, retrieved 30 August 2010, <[http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial\\_statements/annual\\_ministerial/1989.1st.apec.mini](http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/1989.1st.apec.mini)>

government's initiative on APEC, and other regional initiatives, helped to bring about:

I arrived there in April 1986 and it was literally the week if not the day that Keating made his banana republic speech. And so it was like a sort of a wake-up call to Australia; if we don't watch out, we're going to be sliding down a slippery slope and so on and so forth. At the end of it, the very end of my time, which was basically effectively the end of 1989, was when the first APEC meeting was held in pouring rain in Canberra. [it was] a really striking testimony, I still think, to the vigour of Australian diplomacy. ... there was a sort of, my goodness, where are we going? And then a sense ... well, let's pick ourselves up and make sure that we are helping shape events. And APEC, the Cambodia stuff, and the chemical weapons - which was another initiative around that time - were three very remarkable efforts by Australia, not just to be in the world but to actually shape it. And I think they were successful.<sup>80</sup>

For its first two years, APEC made moderate progress. Funabashi described the Canberra, and the subsequent July 1990 Singapore Ministerial meetings, as APEC's 'warm-up' phase, where the events were scarcely noticed and accomplished little substantively.<sup>81</sup> Yet, he conceded, these meetings marked the first time official representatives from around the Asia Pacific sat down in a single forum, albeit a 'non-forum forum', as participants described it at the time. According to a senior DFAT official, drawing on ASEAN and PECC precedents, APEC (at the ministerial and officials level) developed a workable process of consultation and cooperation aimed at building a sense of trust and shared perceptions at the political level which could lead to an increasing sense of cohesion and consonance in decision-making.<sup>82</sup> By the time of the Seoul meeting in 1991, persistent Korean diplomacy, particularly by Korean Minister for Foreign Affairs Lee See-Young, had been rewarded with the inclusion of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong at the meeting; and for

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<sup>80</sup> Key informant interview # 13, 25 July 2008.

<sup>81</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, p. 67. Also, M Vatikiotis, 'Little to show at APEC's first major meeting: faltering first steps', *FEER*, 9 August 1990, pp. 9-10.

<sup>82</sup> A Elek, 'Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC)', *Southeast Asian Affairs*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1991, pp. 33-48, p. 41.

the first time APEC began to catch real attention around the globe.<sup>83</sup> The Seoul Declaration also outlined three principal tasks for APEC: strengthening the open multilateral trading system; achieving free and open trade and investment in the Asia Pacific by a process of facilitation and liberalisation; and intensifying development cooperation in the region. These subsequently became known as 'the three pillars' of APEC.<sup>84</sup>

### **Keating and the APEC Leaders' Meetings**

The APEC leaders' meetings have been heralded as an important development in providing leadership of APEC,<sup>85</sup> the most significant development in accelerating APEC's development,<sup>86</sup> and marking a 'significant structural change - and power shift in the process of Australian policy making in the 1990's'.<sup>87</sup> In terms of the impacts of their summitry, the APEC leaders' meetings were considered to have had a symbolic role in focusing attention on the Asia-Pacific as a region, both for foreign policy priority setting purposes and for increased public awareness. For the first few years at least, they demonstrated substantive outcomes.<sup>88</sup>

The idea of regular meetings of Asia-Pacific leaders, as Gyngell and Wesley point out, originated in the Australian bureaucracy.<sup>89</sup> The head of the international division in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), Allan Gyngell, suggested the idea on two principal grounds. First, he raised the idea of regional leaders' meetings as a way of addressing the growing concern in Australia in the early 1990's that the United States was

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<sup>83</sup> Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, p. 73.

<sup>84</sup> APEC, 'Third APEC Ministerial Meeting, Seoul, Korea, 12-14 November 1991: Joint Statement', retrieved 3 September 2010,

<[http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial\\_statements/annual\\_ministerial/1991\\_3th\\_apec\\_minis](http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/1991_3th_apec_minis)>.

<sup>85</sup> J Ravenhill, *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 168.

<sup>86</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, p. 133.

<sup>87</sup> Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, p. 100.

<sup>88</sup> J Ravenhill, *APEC and the construction of Pacific Rim regionalism*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>89</sup> Case Study, 'Developing regional architecture: The APEC leaders' meetings', in Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, pp. 100-106.

losing interest in East Asia, and that there was no formal mechanism in the region, as distinct from other regions, through which leaders of the region, including the United States, could meet together on a regular basis to discuss matters of mutual concern. Second, Gyngell was attracted to the idea that the meetings would provide a corrective to the program of the Prime Minister's commitments to attend heads of government meetings - focused at the time on the Commonwealth and South Pacific Forum meetings - by serving to focus the Prime Minister's energy and time on the region concerned with Australia's main foreign policy and trade priorities.<sup>90</sup> In its first iteration, the idea of a meeting of Asia-Pacific leaders was not exclusively linked with APEC and could just as easily been built on the ASEAN post-ministerial committee meetings framework. PM&C incorporated the suggestion in Hawke's brief for President Bush's visit to Australia in December 1991; but before Bush's arrival, Paul Keating has replaced Hawke as Prime Minister.

Keating's ideas on foreign economic policy were similar to those of his predecessor. He continued to emphasise the linkages between Australia's domestic and foreign economic policies, the importance of pursuing greater integration of the Australian economy in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region, indicated support for the GATT international trading system and for multilateral institutional structures, and sought to improve Australia's trade performance by making Australian business more competitive, export-orientated and less reliant on protection.<sup>91</sup> However, within this broad consensus, there were important differences, which were reflected in Hawke and Keating's respective approaches towards APEC. Keating placed more emphasis than Hawke on the 'big picture' strategic factors. He saw a need to avert US isolationist tendencies and secure US ongoing strategic

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Gyngell, 10 September 2010.

<sup>91</sup> S Bates, 'The foreign economic policies of the Hawke and Keating Governments' in D Lee & C Waters (eds), *Evatt to Evans: The Labor tradition in Australian foreign policy*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Department of International Relations, ANU, Canberra, 1997, pp. 234-253.

engagement in the region. He sought regular dialogue between APEC leaders, which in time would include political as well as economic dialogue, and he stressed the importance of recognising Indonesia's (and particularly President Suharto's) role in promoting regional stability. By the time Keating became Prime Minister, APEC, in his view, had become 'a familiar, useful, but not yet particularly high-profile, part of the regional scene. Its principal virtue was that it had defined its own constituency. But, in its present form, it would not have been able to fulfil the hopes I had for it'.<sup>92</sup>

After he became Prime Minister, APEC became somewhat of a grand obsession for Keating.<sup>93</sup> There were a number of reasons for this. In terms of pursuing Australia's national interests, Keating was convinced that APEC would help to underwrite Australia's future by setting the region on the path of liberalised trade and regional security; failure on Australia's part to take full advantage of this historic opportunity would be a dereliction of duty, by both government and business. Australian involvement in APEC was also important for Australia's international standing and national identity formation. In his first foreign policy speech, Keating referred to 'our destiny as a nation in Asia and the Pacific' and Australia's 'rightful presence in the region'.<sup>94</sup> Australian international standing was linked in his mind with Australian republicanism, Aboriginal reconciliation and multiculturalism. In terms of Australian foreign policy making, APEC provided the opportunity for Australia to become an architect of policy in the region and an opportunity to define its own trade and strategic environment.<sup>95</sup> Keating's speech writer, Don Watson, commented that the possibility of engineering a new set of relationships for Australia and a whole new regional environment for the Twenty-first Century constituted an irresistible challenge for Keating and that

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<sup>92</sup> P Keating, *Engagement: Australia faces the Asia-Pacific*, Macmillan, Sydney, 2000, p. 81.

<sup>93</sup> D Watson, *Recollections of a bleeding heart: a portrait of Paul Keating PM*, Vintage, Sydney, 2003, p. 175.

<sup>94</sup> P Keating, 'Australia and Asia: Knowing who we are', Address to the Asia-Australia Institute, Sydney, 7 April 1992, retrieved 22 July 2010, (<http://www.keating.org.au/cfm/details.cfm>).

<sup>95</sup> Watson, *Recollections of a bleeding heart*, p. 502.

it promised adventure of a kind that he could no longer find in domestic politics.<sup>96</sup> However, for it to achieve Keating's vision and attain its full potential, APEC needed to change into a more political and powerful organisation, represented at head-of-government level.

Keating held the view that only the involvement of heads of government would provide the locomotive to drive a more ambitious APEC agenda. There were compelling strategic reasons for such a gathering and that, left to its own devices, the official machinery of APEC 'would not move beyond agreements based on the lowest common denominator'.<sup>97</sup> His principal adviser on international relations added:

His concept of the role of a political leader was that you were there to get things done and change things, you weren't there to manage the world, if you wanted someone to manage the world, officials were better at it than politicians.<sup>98</sup>

Keating floated the idea of restructuring APEC with President Bush during the latter's official visit to Australia in December 1991.<sup>99</sup> Bush listened with interest to the proposal and while, non-committal, did not rule it out; but he made it clear that it was up to Australia to deliver on the idea if it wished to pursue it.<sup>100</sup> Keating felt sufficiently emboldened by the discussion to write to the leaders of Japan, Korea, China and Korea to sound them out on the idea. Following this first round of consultations, he floated the idea publicly in his first foreign policy speech on 1 April 1992:

Another way of promoting cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region would be to establish a process of periodic heads-of-government meetings, say every two or three years.

The absence of such a process is conspicuous in a region whose weight in global affairs is steadily increasing.

Various formulas for participation are possible, but I personally would find

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

<sup>97</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 102.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Gyngell, 10 September 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 81.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

most attractive a mechanism based on APEC membership, because it embraces the most important economic linkages throughout East Asia and across the Pacific.

I discussed this general idea with President Bush when he visited Australia. I hope to pursue it as opportunity allows with other Asia-Pacific leaders.<sup>101</sup>

In his 1992 foreign policy speech, Keating mentioned several factors relating to Australia's international standing and credibility which would influence Australia's ability to contribute to regional political affairs, generally, and which would be important for taking APEC to its next stage.<sup>102</sup> These included: Australia's economic weight (Australia's GNP was the third in the West Pacific and equal to the combined GNP of all the ASEAN countries); Australia's growing engagement in, and interdependence with, the region (which was increasing each year in proportion with the rest of the world); Australia's advantageous political position of having no historical or fundamental conflict with any country in the region; Australia's well-developed foreign policy expertise in government and academia; Australia's recent involvement in finding solutions to regional issues, such as Cambodia and through the regional security dialogue; and Australia's successful experiment in multiculturalism, which, combined with increasing immigration from Asia, had stimulated Australian awareness of Asian societies and improved standing in the region. In addition, the fact that Australia had taken a leading role in the establishment of APEC at the ministerial level in 1989 'meant that we had standing to develop it further'.<sup>103</sup>

In 1992, in a sudden burst of diplomacy, Australia set out to sell the idea to its fellow APEC members. The initial replies were positive but guarded.<sup>104</sup> In the end, little came of these efforts in the absence of a firm US commitment. This situation changed dramatically in November that year when Clinton was elected US President on the campaign theme, 'it's the economy stupid'. The

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<sup>101</sup> Keating, 'Australia and Asia: knowing who we are'.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Gyngell, 10 September 2010.

<sup>104</sup> Gyngell & Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy*, p. 117.



US was scheduled to have the Chair of the APEC Ministerial Meeting in 1993 and Clinton was keen to emphasise the links between foreign and trade policies. Keating seized on this opportunity. He wrote a congratulatory letter to Clinton, suggesting that he take up the idea of an APEC leaders' meeting, and hold the inaugural leaders' meeting in the US in conjunction with the planned APEC Ministerial Meeting in 1993.<sup>105</sup> The fact that Bush had not signed onto Keating's earlier suggestion for an APEC leaders' meeting turned out to be fortuitous, because it meant that it was an initiative which Clinton could develop as his own.<sup>106</sup> US officials took their own soundings on the likely reactions to the proposal and, in June 1993, Clinton wrote to Keating advising him that he intended to invite APEC members to an informal leaders meeting in Seattle in November that year following the planned APEC ministerial meeting. Keating replied on 1 July, expressing his personal support, recounting his conversations with regional leaders and offering to push as hard as he could.<sup>107</sup> He was happy to let Clinton have ownership of the process in order to launch the idea, since an invitation from the US President to attend an informal Asia-Pacific leaders meeting would be hard to refuse.

Keating saw his own role in promoting the APEC leaders' meeting as one of providing leadership from within the region, with all the risks that this entailed. His own account of his involvement in the building of APEC in *Engagement* is replete with the words or phrases normally associated with leadership, such as 'ambitious', 'drive', 'determination', 'seizing opportunities' 'pushing hard', and 'getting the politics right'. From July to November 1993, Keating engaged in a series of high-level representations to encourage his APEC colleagues to attend the first leaders' meeting and to make it a success. He wrote to Suharto to urge him to respond positively to Clinton's invitation and expressed his support for Indonesia as hosts for the second

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Gyngell, 10 September 2010.

<sup>107</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 88.

leaders' meeting in Jakarta the following year. In a visit to Washington in September, Keating urged Clinton to recognise the importance of Indonesia in the face of Congressional pressures on matters of preferential trade arrangements and human rights issues, including East Timor. He sought an assurance from Clinton that, if the leaders agreed to meet in Jakarta in the next year, he would attend. In October, on his return to Australia from the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Cyprus, Keating stopped over in Indonesia to reinforce his representations to Suharto. Australian journalist Sheridan described this series of meetings as:

... one of the few occasions in Australian diplomatic history when an Australian prime minister has engaged in effective shuttle diplomacy with the leaders of the world's largest and fourth largest nations.<sup>108</sup>

Gyngell claimed that the APEC leaders' meetings would not have been realised without Keating's personal drive and influence:

No, it could only have happened with Keating. He had two things going for him: he had drive and he was the most persuasive advocate I've ever come across among Australian political leaders. When he was in full flight he was awfully difficult to resist: he charmed and cajoled and argued, he was a brilliant advocate when he was personally committed ...He had a very clear strategic goal.<sup>109</sup>

### ***The Seattle Leaders' Meeting***

Regional and Australian press reports on the 1993 APEC meeting ranged from describing the meeting itself as a 'resounding success' to being a 'modest summit'.<sup>110</sup> In contemporary assessments, the grounds for claiming it a success were four-fold. First, symbolically, the summit meeting attended by 18 Asia-Pacific leaders carried the message, particularly to Europe, of Asia-Pacific solidarity and showed its determination to see that the Uruguay Round of trade talks was brought to a successful conclusion by its current

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<sup>108</sup> Sheridan, *Tigers*, p. 113.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> F Ching, 'At Apec Summit, everyone won', *FEER*, 9 December 1993, p. 48; S Awanochara, 'Loose-Knit Family', *FEER*, 2 December 1993, p. 12; P Gill, 'APEC; a bold new bloc is born', *FR*, 22 November 1993, p. 1; editorial, 'APEC's modest summit', *FR*, 15 November 1993, p. 18; Funabashi, *Asia Pacific fusion*, p. 79.

December 1993 deadline.<sup>111</sup> Also, for many Asia-Pacific leaders, the Seattle meeting provided a reassurance of America's continued commitment to the region and to open regionalism in trade, coming as it did the day after the US Congress approved NAFTA. Second, the meeting produced a range of important outcomes including an economic vision statement for the region, a number of specific decisions relating to future meetings of finance ministers to discuss macroeconomic and monetary issues and the development of an investment code.<sup>112</sup> Third, the meeting engendered personal rapport between the leaders and a strong sense of regional interdependence;<sup>113</sup> and fourth, the leaders agreed to meet again, with Indonesia offering to host a follow up meeting in 1994.

Clinton was able to use the occasion of the Seattle summit to present himself to the American public as world statesman, and his proposal to hold the meeting was described as a stroke of genius.<sup>114</sup> For his efforts, Keating earned the reputation from his peers of having played a pivotal role in the formation of APEC. Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa welcomed the Australian initiative as very significant and described it as Keating's 'baby'.<sup>115</sup> In his letter of invitation to Keating to attend the Seattle meeting, Clinton said he wanted to give Keating credit for his idea of holding an informal meeting of APEC leaders, and stated:

Australia deserves great credit for its contributions to the emerging structures that will chart the future of the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> S Awanohara, 'Loose-knit family', *FEER*, 2 December 1993, p. 13.

<sup>112</sup> FC Bergsten, 'APEC and world trade: a force for worldwide liberalization', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no.3, 1994.

<sup>113</sup> 'Chemistry of APEC is key to summit success, says Keating', *Agence-France-Press*, 24 November 1993, retrieved 14 September 2010, <<http://global.factiva.com.ezproxy-m.deakin.edu.au/hp/printsavews.aspx?ppstype=Article>>.

<sup>114</sup> F Ching, 'At Apec Summit, everyone won', *FEER*, 9 December 1993, p. 48.

<sup>115</sup> 'Miyazawa Backs Regular Meetings of APEC Leaders', *Jiji Press English News Service*, 21 September 1992, retrieved 22 July 2010, <<http://global.factiva.com.ezproxy-f.deakin.edu.au/hp/printsavews.aspx7ppstypesArticle>> Keating, *Engagement*, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>116</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 90.

Keating was also instrumental in influencing the style of the leaders' meetings, which he considered was one of the most important aspects of the meetings. APEC leaders' meetings fall into Reynolds' category of *personal* summits, in which the emphasis is on the encounters between leaders, as distinct from *plenary* summits, in which the personal encounters are balanced, and complemented, by the presence of advisers, and attempts are made to resolve substantive issues.<sup>117</sup> Keating claimed that:

One of the things I had tried to insist on was a genuinely discursive meeting without officials. I wanted to keep any APEC leaders' structure away from the pre-cooked approach of the G7 or OECD countries. Each of us was to have one assistant on the island who could listen in to the conversation but could not see it. This proposal at first appalled a number of officials in the region. What would become of the world if political leaders were left to their own devices? But the format went to the essence of what the meeting was about. APEC's formal work was the responsibility of the preceding ministerial meeting. This left the leaders without formal agendas and free to focus on APEC's goals and longer-term strategic issues. It was easily the most valuable thing about the meeting.<sup>118</sup>

In his replies to questions without notice in Parliament on the APEC leaders' meeting before leaving Australia on 17 November and after his return on 23 November, Keating described the meeting as 'historic', bringing together the leaders of the Asia-Pacific at a time when the region, already representing a half of the world's production, was experiencing substantive growth. Even greater growth and the increasing velocity of trade in the area, and increasing Australian integration in the area, would mean more jobs, and more interesting jobs, for Australians. While congratulating Clinton for extending invitations and hosting the meeting, Keating also reminded Parliament that APEC was a Labor Government initiative in 1989, and that the meeting followed from a proposal he made the previous year, and discussed with his regional colleagues. APEC also represented the kind of multilateral organisational structure that Australia could more naturally be a part of than it had been to date:

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<sup>117</sup> Reynolds, *Summits*, p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 94-95.

At various times Australia has thought that it could perhaps become a member of the G10 or the G7 and then found itself locked out of those forums, or participated in the OECD, which has become more eurocentric over time. For Australia to be participating in a body such as this - a body which Australian diplomacy has been very instrumental in setting up - is something which will stand it in great stead.<sup>119</sup>

However, respect for Keating's for his role in making the Seattle summit a success was overshadowed by the attention given in the Australian and regional press to his attack on Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir for being a 'recalcitrant'. In response to persistent media questions in a door stop interview in Seattle about Mahathir's boycott of the meeting, Keating said that he 'couldn't care less, frankly', whether Mahathir attended and that 'APEC is bigger than all of us – Australia, the US and Malaysia and any other recalcitrants.'<sup>120</sup> Dr Mahathir responded on the same day, saying he regretted Mr. Keating's remarks, and added that Australia's claim that it was part of Asia was meaningless, because Australians did not have the values and manners that Asians do.<sup>121</sup> Mahathir's party officials and Ministers escalated the row by publicly calling for a downgrading of diplomatic relations and trade relations with Australia if the Australian Prime Minister refused to apologise. Keating, in response, claimed that Malaysian anger was feigned, that such rifts were part of the rough and tumble of national and international life and that, in any case, 'recalcitrant' was hardly the most offensive word in the English language. However, Keating was persuaded to send a letter of explanation to Mahathir on 2 December. This did not stop the rift, which continued for some time, resulting in the cancelling of scheduled talks in Malaysia with the Australian Trade Minister in December, the cancelling of Keating's earlier proposed visit to Malaysia in January 1994 and the withdrawal of an Australian Tourist Commission advertising campaign.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Questions without Notice – APEC Meeting, *CPD*, H of R, vol. 37, 23 November 1993, p. 3380. See also Questions without Notice – APEC Meeting, *CPD*, *H of R*, vol. 37, 17 November 1993, p. 3007.

<sup>120</sup> M Millett, 'Keating attacks APEC boycott', *SMH*, 23 November 1993, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> 'Keating given 7 days to apologise', *FR*, 25 November 1993, p. 14.

<sup>122</sup> J Rees & M Vatikiotis, 'Megaphone Diplomacy: No sign of an end to Malaysia-Australia row', *FEER*, 16 December 1993, p. 13.

There were, of course, deeper reasons for the rift between Keating and Mahathir than a tussle between two strong minded political leaders and an argument over manners. These related to a more serious dispute between Malaysia and Australia over the role of APEC, the role of the US in APEC and over Mahathir's counter proposal for an East-Asian Economic Caucus, which would exclude 'dominating countries' such as the US, Australia and New Zealand. In an interview with the *Australian Financial Review* in the week before the Seattle meeting, Mahathir claimed that the US had highjacked APEC and had misled the region about the real motives of the body. In an indirect reference to the consensus reached at the first APEC Ministerial meeting in Australia in 1989 on how APEC would progress, Mahathir claimed:

You know [the Seattle summit] is what we feared from the very beginning. We were told, 'No, we are not going to [make APEC into a formalised body], we're just going to talk'. But as you know, they didn't keep their word. Now they have made it into a formal body, with a secretariat, and now they are even talking about an APEC community - at this point he screwed his face - which is ridiculous.<sup>123</sup>

Before the Seattle incident, Mahathir stated in the same interview that, with respect to Australia's wish to be regarded as part of the region, Australia would have to 'stop talking down to Asians and imposing its point of view'. He added:

I think if slowly, Australia becomes Asianised culturally, then I think there is room for Australia in the region. But if you keep on trying to impose your values on others - if you keep on being discriminatory in some way ... in other words if you are not culturally Asian even if you say you *want* to be Asian - it's not easy.<sup>124</sup>

Before Seattle, Australian relations with Malaysia were described on both sides as being business-like and proper, without the personal warmth at the head of government level that Australia enjoyed with some other countries in the region, such as Indonesia and Singapore. Keating's outburst in Seattle

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<sup>123</sup> 'Mahathir sticks to guns on trade talks', *FR*, 19 November 1993, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

highlighted some of the dangers of summitry for a leader's reputation. While acknowledging that behind Keating's remark there was a more serious dispute over the role of APEC, an editorial in the *Financial Review* on 29 November commented:

Obviously it was a mistake for Mr. Keating to describe the Malaysian as a recalcitrant. It reflects Mr. Keating's lack of experience in foreign affairs as well as a more general lack of self-discipline that he should lay into the Malaysian Prime Minister as if he were the Premier of Western Australia.<sup>125</sup>

### ***The road to Bogor***

From an Australian perspective, a one-off meeting of Asia-Pacific leaders would have had little benefit in encouraging ongoing rapport between leaders and in countering the threat of US isolationism. For the purpose of building regional architecture, the Seattle meeting had to be followed by at least two more successful meetings in order to establish the practice of regular contact between leaders, involve the US in the region and engage the Australian Prime Minister in regional dialogue on a regular basis.

Keating's main efforts in relation to APEC after the Seattle meeting, therefore, were aimed at keeping the momentum going and having an ambitious agenda for the Bogor meeting. According to his own comprehensive account of his APEC diplomacy during this period in *Engagement*, he instigated thirty-six meetings or telephone calls with other APEC leaders, focusing on the November meeting, and offered every support for Suharto in pursuing an ambitious agenda. In June 1994, he visited Indonesia where Suharto and he agreed that APEC would set a goal at the Bogor meeting of free trade within the region within a fifteen to twenty-year time-frame, taking into account the differences between developed and developing countries. This goal became clarified in subsequent discussions as a commitment, agreed at the Bogor meeting, to achieve free and open trade and investment in the region no later than 2020, with industrialised countries achieving the goal by 2010 and developing countries by 2020, but

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<sup>125</sup> 'Malaysia: let the line go dead', *FR*, editorial, 29 November 1993, p. 20.

with all leaving their starting blocks at the same time in 2000. Suharto wrote in a letter of appreciation to Keating after their meeting in Jakarta in June 1994, saying 'Australia, which played a leading role in the birth of APEC, now also plays a pivotal role in the common endeavour to strengthen economic cooperation in the region'. Keating commented: 'This pleased me because I was investing a lot of effort in that common endeavour'.<sup>126</sup>

### ***Australia's standing in the region***

In his statement to Parliament on the outcome of the Bogor meeting, Keating spoke of Australia's new standing in the region, asserting that the Bogor meeting and its Declaration of Common Resolve had changed the nature of the region, and the future of Australia and its role in the region:

For nearly 40 years, Australians have spoken loosely about what we have called 'our region' of the world. We have regularly talked about our 'northern neighbours'. But until now these phrases have been statements of aspiration - hollow cliches - rather than descriptions of reality and real national intent. What our region was, where it extended, who was in it, whether the others we claimed as partners accepted that role, was always uncertain - indeed unknowable.

With Bogor, however, Australians can say for the first time that the region around us is truly our region. We know its shape; we have an agreed institutional structure; we share with its other members a common agenda for change.<sup>127</sup>

However, as the ensuing parliamentary debate showed, Australia was still not in a position to maximise the potential gains as a nation from APEC trade liberalisation and be accepted in the region as a strong competitive member of the region. Australia's export to GDP ratio remained one of the lowest among OECD countries, and virtually all APEC members had higher export growth than Australia. In addition, Australian exports had been losing market share in almost every APEC country despite the fact that total exports were growing significantly. Australian National University Professor Helen Hughes was quoted in the debates as saying that the reasons for this decline in

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>127</sup> P Keating, 'Ministerial Statement – APEC Meeting', *CPD*, H of R, Weekly Hansard, no.18, 6 December 1994, p. 3979.



Australia's share of regional markets was weak macro-economic management, labour market inflexibility and high infrastructure charges.<sup>128</sup> She reportedly claimed that the pace of micro-economic reform in Australia was so narrow and so slow that Australia was less internationally competitive than it was 10 years ago.

In *Engagement*, Keating claimed:

I knew we had long way to go before the Bogor declaration could be implemented, but it had already served a useful purpose in acknowledging the interdependence of the countries in this part of the world and establishing a collective commitment to free trade. It had given us a much clearer notion of an Asia-Pacific community. It gave Australia a seat at the largest table we had ever sat at.<sup>129</sup>

Keating also claimed that his period in office was a period in which 'we punched well above our weight', and used the building of APEC infrastructure as an example:

I helped put the APEC Leaders' meeting in place, and for our trouble we got a permanent seat at the table. It remains the most important table we sit at; certainly at head of government level.<sup>130</sup>

He stated that:

As a middle power, I saw Australia as having the opportunity of helping to reshape the political architecture of East Asia and the Asia Pacific in general, thereby adjusting power in the world to better suit Australia's interests.<sup>131</sup>

## Summary

The international developments in the Asia-Pacific region in the late 1980s and the early 1990s attest to the importance of economic factors in foreign

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<sup>128</sup> See, 'Australia's Asian Challenge', The proceedings of the Autumn Public Policy Forum in the 1994 Bert Kelly lecture series Sydney, 24 February 1994, The Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney, 1994.

<sup>129</sup> Keating, *Engagement*, p. 117.

<sup>130</sup> P Keating, 'APEC; Australia's biggest seat at its biggest table', Address to the Evatt Foundation, Sydney, 23 August 2007, retrieved 17 March 2008, <<http://evatt.labor.net.au/publications/papers/197.html>>.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

policy at the end of the Cold War.<sup>132</sup> International relations between the states of the region were greatly influenced by changes in the world economy, particularly in relation to globalisation and international trade, and by the economic circumstances in the individual countries. As a corollary, international standing for a country like Australia was assessed largely in economic terms. The principal notion of international standing that can be deduced from the study is that of a 'well-regarded' economic power, either as a partner or a competitor. The properties of 'well-regarded' include a diversified, productive, efficient and open and competitive economy, and a high ratio of exports to GNP and an export culture. Within this context, Australia, animated by the prospects of participation in growth in the region, began to shed its hitherto protectionist and isolationist reputation for the reputation of a competitive economy that was increasingly regarded as being an integral part of the region. Mahathir provided a dissenting voice in the region to this assessment of Australia's regional standing by seeking to subordinate economic criteria to historical, cultural, ethnic and attitudinal factors in the region's evaluation of Australia.

Australia's role in developing APEC to become the pre-eminent economic forum in the region had the effect of enhancing Australia's standing and influence in the region.<sup>133</sup> Even allowing for the important contribution of others, Australia was given due credit by its regional partners for the catalyst role it played in the formation of APEC in 1989; for the inauguration of the leaders' meetings; and for its contributions to regional institutional and community building through participation in ministerial and senior official meetings, expert advisory groups, and the APEC working groups. Given its recent history, Japan, with divisions within its bureaucracy and an uncertainty about its potential leadership role in the region, preferred not to take the lead on regional regime formation and institutional building, and appeared happy

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<sup>132</sup> The point was made by Lee Poh Ping, 'Southeast Asia in 1990: a year of challenges', *Southeast Asian Affairs*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991, pp. 3-17.

<sup>133</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 242.

to play a secondary role behind Australia. The US was also happy for Australia to take the lead on the APEC leaders' initiative, because they felt that too prominent a US role could be counterproductive.<sup>134</sup>

Oran Young outlines Australia's lack of structural leadership assets and limited capabilities for regime formation and institutional building<sup>135</sup> noting that this made it difficult for Australia to draw on power resources for bargaining leverage. Instead, Australia had to rely on its leaders' drive, persuasion, intellectual and entrepreneurial skills. Both Hawke and Keating were strongly involved in the business of articulating Australia's place and standing in Asia in the post-war world, and while there were differences - indeed rivalry - between them on the value of their respective contributions, both adhered to a common view point about the necessary linkages between Australia's domestic and foreign economic policies, the importance of pursuing greater integration of the Australian economy in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region, support for the GATT international trading system and for multilateral institutional structures, and in improving Australia's trade performance by making Australian business more competitive, export orientated and less reliant on protection. Indeed, it is possible to talk of a Hawke-Keating foreign economic policy towards Asia, which was regarded in the region as a joint effort.

Both Hawke and Keating engaged in personal diplomacy in relation to APEC. They both regarded foreign policy with respect to APEC as being intricately linked with domestic economic reform and the internationalisation of the Australian economy, and hence the primary responsibility of the Prime Minister. However, the focus of their efforts on the regional and world stage tended, out of necessity, to be concentrated on the countries and the leaders that mattered to them in order to achieve their objectives. Consequently,

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<sup>134</sup> P Keating, 'APEC: Australia's biggest seat at its biggest table', Address to the Evatt Foundation, 23 August 2007, retrieved 17 March 2010, <<http://evatt.labor.net.au/publications/papers/197.html>>.

<sup>135</sup> OR Young, 'Political leadership and regime formation: on the development of institutions in international society', *International Organization*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1991, pp. 281-308.

Hawke's standing and personal reputation as statesman in the region was highest with the Presidents or Prime Ministers of South Korea, Singapore and Thailand, while Keating's standing was highest with Presidents Suharto and Clinton and Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, relationships which in his view stood to benefit from the high-level involvement of political leaders.

The first APEC leaders' meeting in Seattle demonstrated both the reputational highs and lows of summitry. As Reynolds has pointed out,<sup>136</sup> summits have their own dynamics and are occasions for leaders to leave the foothills of domestic affairs behind and a chance to make or break reputations on the world stage. Clinton used the Seattle leaders' meeting to demonstrate his role as world statesman. Keating contributed much to the concept, format and agenda of the leaders' meetings, but his outburst against Mahathir for boycotting the Seattle meeting undermined his reputation as statesman with the Australian public and in the region. Nevertheless, Keating was able to use his close personal relationship with Suharto to bring about a successful outcome of the Bogor meeting in Indonesia the following year, which changed the nature of the region, and the future of Australia and its role in the region.<sup>137</sup> Other Australian regional initiatives in the 1980s - such as the Australian peace initiative on Cambodia and the ASEAN Regional Forum - also made significant contributions to Australia's good standing in the region.

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<sup>136</sup> Reynolds, *Summits*.

<sup>137</sup> P Keating, 'Ministerial Statement – APEC Meeting', 6 December 1994.

## **CHAPTER 5. CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA'S FAILED BID IN 1996 FOR A UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT**

### **Introduction**

This case study examines how 'international standing' and 'international reputation' are understood and assessed in the United Nations context and the influence they exert, by taking Australia's (unsuccessful) bid in 1996 for one of the five rotating non-permanent member vacancies on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the years 1997-98. In that campaign, Australia was pitted against Sweden and Portugal in the Western European and Other States electoral group (WEOG)<sup>1</sup> for one of the two available seats on the Council. The case study examines the importance of international standing and reputation as an object of the Australian campaign, in the conduct of the campaign and for its outcome.

The case study posits that, alongside rational and strategic factors such as the power politics, campaign objectives and campaign strategies, reputation (understood as the evolving beliefs of other member nations about a member government's commitment to the peace and developmental purposes of the United Nations) provides a necessary, if not a sufficient, reason for explaining Sweden's and Portugal's victory and Australia's loss. To examine these issues, the study draws on reputation theory in relation to international cooperation.<sup>2</sup> It also assesses the counter-claims by writers who have looked at reputation and dismissed it as a sufficient explanation<sup>3</sup> and at alternative explanations, such as the Australian Government's own initial assessment of

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<sup>1</sup> The WEOG comprises members of the European Union, a number of small European non EU nations (1996), and a number of 'others', such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*.

<sup>3</sup> For example, DM Malone, 'Eyes on the prize: the quest for nonpermanent seats on the UN Security Council', *Global Governance*, vol. 6, 2000, pp. 3-23. Malone was a former director-general of global issues and international organizations in the Canadian Foreign Ministry. From September 1997 to October 1998, he oversaw Canada's (successful) campaign for a UN Security Council seat.

the loss based on an examination of power politics, voting intentions and campaign strategy issues.

The case study uses triangulation research methodology, comprising an analysis of public documents, press reports and articles by contemporary scholars; confidential background interviews by the author with DFAT officials involved in the 1996 campaign both in Canberra and New York; and confidential interviews and correspondence by the author with a number of other country representatives (n=12), who were either directly involved in the 1996 elections or were familiar with its circumstances. The number of other country informants (described in the study as 'key informants' but not identified by name) is not large and is a convenience sample - not a representative sample (comprising respondents who were able to be contacted and willing to be involved in the research during the author's overseas field research in 2008). The analysis is, nevertheless, informed by the views of a range of West European, Asian, African, South Pacific, Middle East and non-aligned country UN representatives.

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It consists of five permanent members (The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France) and ten non-permanent members who are elected for two-year terms. Article 23 of the United Nations Charter provides that the General Assembly shall elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council with due regard being specifically paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.<sup>4</sup> While a seat on the Security Council has always

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<sup>4</sup> B Conforti, *The Law and practice of the United Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (revised), Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden, 2005. Until 1965, the year when Article 23 was amended, there were only 11 members of the Security Council, six of whom were non-permanent members. According to the 1965 amendment, the Assembly 'further decides that the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council shall be elected according to the following pattern: (a) Five from African and Asian States; (b)

been considered a prize<sup>5</sup> and jockeying for seats had always been intense in the WEOG, as a consequence of Council activism immediately after the end of the Cold War and a stalled UN reform process, a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in the mid-1990s was considered to be a bigger prize than ever.<sup>6</sup>

### **Australia's previous experience in UNSC elections**

Australia had had a good record in Council elections, having maintained a pattern of election and service on the Council at roughly thirteen-yearly intervals since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. While Australia's previous elections to the Council do not provide a good guide for assessing Australia's prospects for election in 1996, they nevertheless indicate the importance for electoral success - in contested elections - of a positive image of commitment to, and involvement in, the United Nations, and to the role of the Australian Permanent Representative.

In its first ever election to the Council in 1945, a system of 'agreed slates' operated to nominate the then six non-permanent members. Australia secured election by challenging a 'gentleman's agreement', proposed by Britain, that Canada be included on the western 'agreed slate' as the senior Commonwealth Dominion candidate.<sup>7</sup> In 1955, Australia was elected as the British Commonwealth nominated candidate for the period 1956-57 after Canada, India, Pakistan and New Zealand had each served their terms on the Council. However, in 1965, amendments to the UN Charter provisions related to membership of the Security Council came into effect and the Council was expanded to include ten non-permanent members. In the same

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one from Eastern European States; (c) two from Latin American States; (d) two from Western European and other States' (p. 62).

<sup>5</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize'.

<sup>6</sup> The *New York Times* commented in 1996: 'Because most of the action in the United Nations after the end of the cold war has revolved around the Council, and demands to expand the body to make room for more voices have largely bogged down in disputes over who should receive any additional seats, the places that are available have become bigger prizes than ever'. B Crossette, '5 seated in Security Council after intensive manoeuvring', *New York Times*, 22 October 1996, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> P Hasluck, *Workshop of security*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1948, p. 24.

amendments, Australia was placed in the WEOG electoral group. Australia did not contest election to the Council again until 1972, after some years of avoiding its turn. The decision to seek the seat, and the successful lobbying effort, was taken by the McMahon government, and reflected the Coalition Government's more flexible approach to the United Nations.<sup>8</sup> However, by the time Australia's term on the Council began on 1 January 1973, the Whitlam Government had taken over in Australia. On the last occasion (1984) Australia received 146 votes out of a possible 157 members present and voting. According to Woolcott,<sup>9</sup> Australia polled especially well in the African group, a fact he attributed to his previous African diplomatic experience as head of mission in Ghana. African support for Australia could also be attributed to the salience of Australia's anti-racial and anti-apartheid policies at the time and their appeal to African and Caribbean members of the Commonwealth. Australia's election was no doubt also helped by the fact that Australia successfully persuaded both Italy and Austria not to stand against Australia, although both had previously announced their candidatures. This left Australia and Denmark as the two remaining candidates for the two WEOG vacancies. Senator Evans used the outcome to state that Australia's election to the Security Council was 'a fitting recognition of the standing that Australia once again enjoys in the international community',<sup>10</sup>

In the 1996 elections, Sweden was elected with 153 votes on the first ballot and Portugal defeated Australia in the second ballot with 124 votes to Australia's 57.<sup>11</sup> After the defeat, Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander

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<sup>8</sup> C Clark, 'The United Nations' in WJ Hudson (ed.), *Australia in world affairs, 1971-1975*, George Allen & Unwin and the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, 1980, p. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p 87.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, 'Questions without Notice – United Nations Security Council', *CPD*, Senate, 23 October 1984, retrieved 24 September 2008,

<<http://parliinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=;db=;group=;holding>>.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Official Records*, A/51/PV.39, 21 October 1996.



Downer said: 'I do not believe that we could have done more'.<sup>12</sup> Having suffered its first ever defeat in Security Council elections, Australia did not seek re-election for another 14 years. However, soon after the Rudd Labor Government came into power in 2007, it announced that Australia would seek election to the Council again in 2012, for the period 2013-14.

### **The question of prestige**

Malone, the coordinator of the Canadian 1998 UNSC campaign, asserted that 'the dominant view at the UN is that countries aim for membership in the Council to underscore their international prestige'.<sup>13</sup> He added that: 'International prestige should almost certainly not be measured through the outcome of such contests, but to a considerable extent it is so assessed in New York'.<sup>14</sup>

However, Malone went on to use the phrases in a broad sense in terms of the recognition a country receives by making a contribution to the UN's peace and security functions and a willingness to 'stand up and be counted' on international citizenship matters.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, the use of the term 'international prestige' is synonymous with 'international reputation'. Australia's original aims in seeking Council membership fit into this notion of prestige seeking, stating that membership would enable Australia to actively participate in the Council's central role in developing an effective system for cooperative security, at a time when the Security Council faced significant challenges.

There is another notion of prestige, which became part of the discourse, and was used mainly by detractors of those seeking Council membership. This usage reflects an older (and original) use of the term based on the word's Latin origin, *praestringere*, which has connotations of magic, an illusion,

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<sup>12</sup> A Downer, 'United Nations Security Council elections', *Media Release*, 22 October 1996, retrieved 8 May 2007, <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/media/releases/foreign/1996/fal>>.

<sup>13</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize', p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

glamour and a conjuring trick or a deception.<sup>16</sup> For example, Thakur stated that:

Not one major foreign policy goal would have been greatly advanced by Australia being elected to the Council. It would have added glamour to the curriculum vitae of Australia's Ambassador there, and might have provided the world stage for a Foreign Minister or two to strut on for brief moments of glory.<sup>17</sup>

Downer's comment on the ABC's *7.30 Report* on 1 April 2008 also appears to subscribe to this use of the term:

The greatest thing you get out of it is the prestige of being on the Security Council, although, remember you're only on it for a two year period, that's it. You get on, you stay there for two years and then you're off for another, whatever it would be, until you get re- elected.<sup>18</sup>

The Australian press took a lively interest in the Australian campaign, perhaps reflecting the Australian public's love of sporting contests, particularly when Australia was competing for high stakes on the world stage.<sup>19</sup> After the loss, the Australian press raised questions relating to Australia's prestige in the United Nations and whether Australia had misunderstood its importance on the world stage. *The Canberra Times* on 23 October 1996 described the outcome as 'a blow' to Australia'. *The Australian* commented that, whatever the real story that might emerge one day to explain Australia's loss, in the final analysis, Australia had overestimated its importance and clout in the UN,<sup>20</sup> while *The Canberra Times* commented: It was not just a defeat, it was an absolute drubbing before the nations of the

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<sup>16</sup> OED, Second Edition, vol. X11, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 426

<sup>17</sup> R Thakur, 'Australia's unsuccessful bid for the UN Security Council', *Pacific Research*, November 1996, pp, 48-49, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 'Rudd vies for a place on the UN Security Council', *7.30 Report*, transcript, retrieved 2 April 2008, <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2007/s2205224.htm>>.

<sup>19</sup> For example, four of the main Australian daily newspapers together devoted approximately 70 column inches to the campaign in the month leading up to the election and over 590 column inches to reporting on and analysing the results, a total of approximately 660 column inches. These calculations are based on articles identified by means of a search of the Factiva database via the Deakin University Library portal. The newspapers included in the count were *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *The Canberra Times* and the *Financial Review*. The calculation of column inches was based on an average of 30 words per square inch in an eight column broadsheet.

<sup>20</sup> C Stewart, '40pc lie factor stumps envoys', *The Australian*, 23 October 1996, p. 8.

world and unless we face up to that it will not be possible to draw lessons from it'.<sup>21</sup>

*The Australian's* editorial, 23 October 1996, commented:

Australia's failure to win a seat on the United Nations Security Council is disappointing, but it would perhaps have been less embarrassing if it weren't for the fact that most people involved were reasonably sure of success.

At a Senate Committee meeting on 22 October 1996 on the day of the vote (AEST), Senator Hill stated:

I don't think this will have any effect on Australia's standing internationally. I think we are very well respected in the international forum. It is just that you can't win every time...I would say that this has not affected our prestige as a nation internationally. It is a disappointment for us, but the high standing that we hold in international fora I am sure is not affected at all by this.<sup>22</sup>

Key informants contacted for this study generally supported this view.

Opposition Senators referred to the contest as a major international contest in which national prestige was on the line<sup>23</sup> and asked a number of policy and tactical questions as to why the vote 'was pretty overwhelming against us', but cautioned against 'bagging' the public servant (UN Representative Butler) for the Government's loss.

Australian academics did not show a great deal of interest in the election at the time. In part, this could be attributed to their professional preoccupation with the politico-strategic and economic dimensions of Australia's international relations,<sup>24</sup> according to which the United Nations is a useful adjunct to Australian foreign policy, but not the centerpiece.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the view that UN elections, while riveting for those directly involved in them, are for others esoteric, unpredictable and not susceptible to foreign policy

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<sup>21</sup> 'Australia's UN humiliation', *CT*, 24 October 1996, editorial, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Australian Parliament, Senate Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 22 October 1996, pp. 730-746, pp. 735 & 736.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 738.

<sup>24</sup> R Higgott & J George, 'Tradition and change in the study of International relations in Australia', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1990, pp. 423-438.

<sup>25</sup> Thakur, 'Australia's unsuccessful bid for the UN Security Council'.

analysis. However, important contributions to the debate were made by Dalrymple,<sup>26</sup> Thakur<sup>27</sup> and Makinda.<sup>28</sup> The latter noted that any thorough post-mortem of Australia's unsuccessful bid needed to take into account other states' perceptions of Australia's international behaviour and that a proper appraisal of this issue needed to be viewed in the contexts of history, theory and policy.<sup>29</sup>

### **The candidates and their reputations**

'Reputation' in the context of this study is taken to mean the judgements of member nations of the United Nations of a candidate's commitment to the goals of the United Nations, based on facts which are considered relevant to the international community.<sup>30</sup> The approach used is based on the model advocated by Tomz, which in turn makes a number of assumptions. The first is that the beliefs of other members, which constitute a country's reputation, evolve as they interpret a country's behaviour in context. The second is that, in the absence of complete information, members form views about another country's type, based on its commitment to the organisation. These reputation types, according to Tomz, and for the purposes of analysis, are described as 'stalwarts', 'fair-weather', and 'lemons'.<sup>31</sup> Each type has distinct preferences about a country's commitment to the UN that are reflected in different patterns of behaviour. 'Stalwarts' have the strongest commitment and the commitment tends to transcend changes in government. 'Fair-weather', in contrast, have intermediate preferences. The value they attach to the UN is sufficient to motivate them when it suits them, but not at all times. 'Lemons' show the least commitment and sometimes break faith, in good times as well as in bad. The third assumption is that

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<sup>26</sup> R Dalrymple, 'Perspectives on Australian foreign policy, 1996', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1997, pp. 243-253.

<sup>27</sup> Thakur, 'Australia's Unsuccessful Bid for the UN Security Council'.

<sup>28</sup> SM Makinda, 'Why 'Good Citizen' Australia lost the global power play', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol. 73, no.4, December/January 1996/1997, pp. 22-26.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> See Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*; McNamara, *Reputation and defamation*.

<sup>31</sup> Tomz, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

reputations shift when a government acts contrary to its perceived type. Reputations are not immutable and it is possible for a country to rise or fall on the reputational ladder.

The classification of member countries as 'stalwarts', 'fair-weather' and 'lemons' is useful when distinguishing between candidates from the WEOG group, since as one informant commented:

In the Western European Group, which is the one that we (and) Australia have to operate with, basically you're competing with like against like. All the countries ... in the Western European Group would regard themselves as internationally respectable and reputable.<sup>32</sup>

### **Sweden**

Sweden decided to seek election in late 1994. Sweden's candidature, as Sweden Foreign Minister Hjelm-Wallén informed the UN General Assembly, was 'an expression of our strong commitment to the United Nations and to international peace and security', and 'a matter of highest priority for the Swedish Government and the Swedish people'. It also reflected Sweden's reputation of consistent and strong support for the United Nations and for multilateralism generally:

As a member of the Council, we will make a constructive contribution to its work. Our dedication will be consistent with our record as a United Nations Member. Our support for United Nations ideals and activities is concrete, substantial and unwavering.<sup>33</sup>

Sweden was considered by others in 1996 to be the archetypal 'stalwart' candidate. Sweden had impeccable credentials,<sup>34</sup> and had stood before and surprisingly failed.<sup>35</sup> Sweden campaigned on its superior aid levels and its campaign was helped by its membership of the European Union in 1996. After joining the EU, Sweden was able to argue from within the EU that the EU had failed developing countries in implementing the Lomé Convention, a

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<sup>32</sup> Key informant interview # 13, 25 July 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Lena Hjelm-Wallén, General Assembly, fiftieth session, 28 September 1995, *Official Records*, A/50/PV.10, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Key informant interview # 13, 25 July 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Key Informant # 27, facsimile correspondence, 5 January 2009.

trade and aid agreement between the European Union (EU) and 71 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, and to urge a better deal for them.<sup>36</sup> Sweden also attracted a sympathy vote for having narrowly lost its bid in 1992.

## **Portugal**

Portugal announced its candidature well before Australia and Sweden, and was considered to have had an 'early bird' advantage over the other two candidates.<sup>37</sup> Portugal, according to Malone, was 'not noted for its international credentials and lumbered with a reputation as an appalling colonial power until the 1974 revolution'.<sup>38</sup> This perception of Portugal's reputation, which Australia and Sweden shared, seems to have led to complacency on Australia's (and Sweden's) part about treating Portugal as a serious contender until late in the campaign. DFAT stated in a post-election assessment that it had assumed that Portugal would be discredited by its past policies in Africa. However, this did not prove to be the case. The change of government in Portugal in 1974 had been a revolution, not simply a change of government, and since then Portugal had embarked on a slow process of democratic reform, combined with support for independence of its former colonies in Africa and elsewhere, including East Timor, and had graduated to membership of the European Union. In its representations to Portugal's former colonies, DFAT found that they still valued the attractiveness of the continuing ties with their former colonial power through language, culture and aid; and, rather than vote against Portugal because of its 'appalling colonial past', they preferred to stay with 'the devil we know'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Key informant interview # 10, 19 May 2008.

<sup>37</sup> One informant stated, as a reason for Portugal's success over Australia, that 'Portugal had made contact early'. Key informant # 27, facsimile correspondence, 5 January 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize', p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Key informant interview # 7, 27 June 2008.

The Swedish campaign strategist also conceded, 'we all underestimated Portugal'.<sup>40</sup>

Portugal provides an example of how reputations can change. Portugal had made a painful transition to democracy from almost half a century of dictatorship, and undertook decolonisation not only in response to a national imperative, but also because they were required to do so by the Charter of the United Nations and numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.<sup>41</sup> In other words, it had moved from being a 'lemon' in terms of commitment to UN principles before 1974, to something approaching a 'stalwart'.

In the campaign, Portugal portrayed an image of itself as a nation open to exchanges with diverse cultures and peoples resulting from its 500 year history as a seafaring nation. As a consequence, it was not difficult for Portugal to respect, understand and have friendly feelings towards the most varied countries in the world. Portugal therefore had developed a 'universal outlook' and had grown accustomed to taking a global view of world problems, of life and mankind.<sup>42</sup> Portugal was seen to be on the side of the weak and the underdog. It also received support and campaign guidance from the Italian Ambassador, who was regarded in the UN as a great campaigner and who had sided with Portugal 'because we come from the same part of the world'. Portugal also gained good support in Latin America (which had also given good support to Australia in previous Council elections),<sup>43</sup> particularly support and assistance from Brazil.

Portugal had served on the Council on only one previous occasion before 1996, whereas Australia had served on four previous occasions. Portugal's

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<sup>40</sup> Key informant interview #10, 19 May 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Statement by the President of the General Assembly, Freitas do Amaral, Annex F, DFAT, *United Nations General Assembly: Report of the Australian Delegation, Fiftieth Session, 1995*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Australian Parliament, Senate Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade portfolios, 22 October 1996, p. 732.

use of the rotational justice argument carried weight and sympathy with the 79 smaller and mid-sized states who had never served on the Council, and the further 43 who had served only once.<sup>44</sup>

### **Australia**

On 27 June 1994, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Gareth Evans announced that Australia would seek election to the Security Council at the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly (October 1996) for a two-year term, (1997-1998). The decision reflected the Government's commitment to the principles of the United Nations; the fact that it had been a founding member of the UN and had served on the Council on four occasions; and, the intent that membership would enable Australia to actively participate in the Council's central role in developing an effective system for cooperative security, at a time when the Security Council faced significant challenges.<sup>45</sup>

While noting the potential drawback that 'membership will mean that Australia will have to take a position on a range of international disputes and conflicts', Evans stated that membership would also bring two kinds of benefits to Australia:

There is no doubt that the gains in terms of our international profile and influence will be considerable. We will also be able to advance our own initiatives relating to preventive diplomacy and enhanced multilateral cooperation to promote regional and international security.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Italian Mission to the United Nations, 'Statement by Ambassador Francesco Paolo Fulci, Permanent Representative of Italy, to the General Assembly on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council', 13 November 1995, reproduced in Global Policy Forum, retrieved 4 March 2008, <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/italy.htm?>>. Key informant interview # 23, 6 November 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'Australia to seek election to the Security Council', Press Release, 27 June 1994.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



## Regional and international security

Evans' announcement that Australia would use the opportunity of its time on the Security Council 'to advance our own initiatives relating to preventive diplomacy and enhanced multilateral cooperation to promote regional and international security' was the centre piece of Australia's bid, and was seen to be so by others. The aim was to push the arms control and disarmament agenda forward.<sup>47</sup> It reflects Evans' views in the preface to his *Cooperating for peace* (1993), which he stated provided an Australian response and further contribution to the debate initiated by the Secretary General's own reform proposals in *An agenda for peace*:

The present need, as we see it, is to take stock in a systematic, balanced and above all realistic way of the nature of the security problems confronting the international community and appropriate responses to them. In our own contribution to this effort, we have sought to do three things in particular: bring some conceptual clarity, to the extent this is presently lacking, into the definition of problems, responses and the relationship between them; spell out some of the criteria which might guide decision makers in responding to problems; and make some specific proposals for improving structures and processes, particularly in the UN system.<sup>48</sup>

As examples of demonstrated experience in building a reputation through contribution to cooperative security, Australia could point during the campaign to the fact that it had recently achieved, with others, the adoption of the *Chemical Weapons Convention*, an indefinite extension of the *Nuclear Proliferation Treaty*, acceptance of the need for a comprehensive *Nuclear Test Ban Treaty*, major reviews of the conventions on landmines and biological weapons, and the introduction of a *UN Conventional Arms Transfer Register*. Australia had also contributed significantly to the peace settlement in Cambodia and been a persistent voice for United Nations reform, arguing in particular (through the book *Cooperating for peace*, launched at the

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<sup>47</sup> For example, *Le Monde* reported that Australia, according to a large number of delegates, pursued a 'constructive and energetic' antinuclear campaign. AB Pour, 'Le renouvellement des membres non permanents a fortement réduit le poids des pays non alignés au Conseil de sécurité de L'ONU', *Le Monde*, 23 October 1996, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> G Evans, *Cooperating for peace: the global agenda for the 1990s and beyond*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1993, preface, pp. xi- xii.

General Assembly in 1993) for a fundamental rethink of the UN's peace and security role in the post-Cold War era.<sup>49</sup>

### **UN peace-keeping**

Australia's participation in current UN peacekeeping operations (in Cyprus, the Middle East, Mozambique and Somalia) was the only specific (discretionary behavioural) 'good international citizen' activity mentioned in the Senator Evans' press release of 27 June 1994. Of course, other activities such as Australia's human rights diplomacy, environment issues, international law and economic and social issues also figured prominently in Australia's campaign literature. Australia's record with respect to UN peacekeeping was acknowledged at the time and welcomed, particularly by other major UN peacekeeping-force contributing countries, with whom Australia had established a reputation for being reliable. O'Neill observed:

While it would not be a matter for any public comment, the governments of Western Europe see Australia as one of a very small number of outside states that can be relied upon to play a useful part in peacekeeping forces ... They can be expected to sustain their efforts to keep Australia actively committed to the support of the United Nations.<sup>50</sup>

Australia's claim (based on its contribution to UN international peace keeping) carried some weight with the countries involved in the more than 20 peacekeeping operations that Australia had participated in until 1995, including Cambodia, and, of course, also carried some particular weight with other contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping force.

### **Development assistance**

Senator Evans' statement did not mention Australia's support for the United Nations' role in economic and social development (though admittedly, there is a limit to the matters that can be included in a press statement). Evans' concept of cooperative security was multi-dimensional in character and

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<sup>49</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, preface, p. xv.

<sup>50</sup> R O'Neill, 'Australia and Asia: a view from Europe', p. 53. The notion of being able to be relied upon suggests itself as one of international reputation's main properties as a concept.

encompassed threats to a country's economic well-being, political stability and social harmony and the health of its citizens and the environment.<sup>51</sup> Australia was however, not well-placed in the campaign (particularly in relation to Sweden) to argue a case based on a reputation for the provision of development assistance. With respect to Official Development Assistance (ODA) the *DFAT Annual Report for 1996-97* noted that, while ODA from all donors who are members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee declined by 4 per cent in real terms from 1995 to 1996, Australia's ODA declined by 10 per cent in real terms in 1996-97 on the previous year which reflected Australia's reduced capacity to provide assistance because of the urgent need to address Australia's budget deficit problem.<sup>52</sup>

With respect to development assistance and its impact on a campaign, Malone stated that Canada did not seem to have been penalised in its 1998 campaign by its recent drop in aid performance resulting from sharp budget reductions. He went on to argue that attractive platforms such as foreign development assistance do not, on their own, seem to be critical to success.<sup>53</sup> However, Tomz argued that a country's circumstances and their willingness as well as capacity to pay, are taken into account when assessing reputations<sup>54</sup> and in the case of the drop in Australian aid, Commonwealth African and small countries considered that Australia was mean in its aid giving.<sup>55</sup>

### **UN reform**

On UN reform and organisational matters, the Australian campaign placed emphasis on conservative concerns, such as Australia's good reputation for paying its dues in full and on time (a mandatory requirement) and its (discretionary behavioural) role in promoting the concept of an impartial,

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<sup>51</sup> G Evans, *Cooperating for peace*, pp. 5-8.

<sup>52</sup> DFAT, *1996-97 Annual Report*, AGPS, Canberra, 1997, pp. 14-15.

<sup>53</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize', p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Tomz, *Reputation and international cooperation*, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Key Informant interview # 3, 30 May, 2008.

competent secretariat operating under modern management principles on a more sound financial structure. Its position on United Nations Security Council reform (as did Sweden's) supported Japan and Germany as new permanent members and an increased non-permanent membership of twenty-five members. These actions and proposals, while commendable in themselves, had reputational appeal mainly for the older rather than the new members of the organisation. For example, the Australian delegation to the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly (1996) cited the maintenance of continuing zero nominal growth for the UN regular budget as one of the particularly noteworthy objectives Australia managed to achieve - in concert with other like-minded richer countries - in the session.<sup>56</sup> Portugal, on the other hand, argued that, 'without questioning the desirability of cutting costs and achieving productivity gains', it needed to be kept in mind, from a realistic perspective, that the United Nations was not as expensive as some people claimed, and that the total current budget of the UN was only a quarter of the current budget of Portugal's Ministry of Education, in a country whose total population was only 10 million.<sup>57</sup>

### **The mutual support agreement between Sweden and Australia**

After the announcement of Sweden's candidature, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs approached the Australian Ambassador in Stockholm with a proposal that Sweden and Australia mutually agree to support each other's election to the Council for the 1997-98 term. At the time, according to the coordinator of Sweden's campaign in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, three ideas underpinned the Swedish proposal for a mutual support agreement with Australia, all of which related to Australia's international reputation and image. First, the idea that Australia had a tremendous contribution to make in the United Nations and multilaterally 'when they are not shy'. Second, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Evans,

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<sup>56</sup> DFAT, *Report of the Australian Delegation, Fifty First Session*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> 'Statement by the President of the General Assembly, 1995, p. 35.

had a huge UN profile at the time on UN reform including ideas he proposed in his book *Cooperating for Peace*, which had been well received in UN circles. Third, Sweden thought it would be 'very easy to sell Australia'. In return, Sweden believed its Nordic appeal and contacts in Europe and with third world countries could help Australia's case.<sup>58</sup> When it proposed the mutual support agreement with Australia in 1994, Sweden considered Australia to be the front runner.<sup>59</sup>

On 1 November 1994, Stockholm and Canberra simultaneously issued a media statement announcing that Australia and Sweden had agreed to support each other's election to the Security Council.<sup>60</sup> In addition to their individual lobbying efforts, Australia and Sweden would closely and actively coordinate their electoral campaigns with the aim of gaining broad international support for each other's election in 1996. The media release also stated:

Australia and Sweden will form a strong and effective team of candidates from two opposite geographical points of the globe, but united in a strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Both countries have made significant contributions to UN peace keeping and peaceful settlement of disputes. They strongly support the United Nations' role in economic and social development.<sup>61</sup>

According to a senior DFAT official, the agreement seemed the natural thing to do, given that Australia and Sweden already cooperated closely within the likeminded group within the United Nations, and each would gain from the other's perceived strengths in their respective regions of influence - the Asia-Pacific and the South-Pacific for Australia and Europe and Africa for Sweden. It was also seen, by DFAT officials, as a means of countering European voting solidarity. After the vote, one senior DFAT official claimed that the original decision to run a joint campaign with Sweden had been a tactical

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<sup>58</sup> Key informant interview, # 10, 21 May 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'Australia and Sweden to support each other's election to the United Nations Security Council', Press release, 1 November 1994, retrieved 27 October 2008, Parlinfo database.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

mistake by the former government, and that: 'It would have been better to have campaigned singularly for an Australian vote'.<sup>62</sup> Another DFAT official closely involved in the campaign countered this view, stating that the agreement worked very well and 'we got a lot out of it at the time'.<sup>63</sup>

### **Australia and Africa**

According to *The Australian*, confidential assessments by DFAT in early July 1996 indicated that Australia had probably obtained enough backing to win a seat on the Council, and Africa was the only part of the globe where support for Australia remained doubtful and needed to be locked in to secure victory.<sup>64</sup> Australia's representations in Africa had been based on Australia's reputational attributes, such as its good record in the UN and on Australia being a good international citizen, and particularly its role in the 1980s in helping to bring about a change of government in South Africa through the imposition of sanctions and through negotiations. A DFAT post-election secret assessment, for example, stated that Australia failed to win votes in Africa despite Australia's good credentials in playing a leading role in the successful international campaign against apartheid, an important and legitimate touchstone of moral credibility in most of the developing world.<sup>65</sup> According to one of Australia's special envoys to Africa, African governments listened to representations based on these arguments, but were non-committal, stating in many cases that the decision on how their country would vote would be made in New York. The only negative vibe he recalled receiving was that Australia needed to have a higher profile in Africa, through aid, to secure African votes.<sup>66</sup>

Downer's strategy of locking in the African vote was to appoint former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who was well known in Africa for his significant

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<sup>62</sup> M Dwyer & B Hale, 'Witch-hunt begins after UN poll defeat', *FR*, 23 October 1996, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Key informant interview, # 17, 8 May 2008.

<sup>64</sup> C Stewart, 'Our UN countdown', *The Australian*, 8 July 1996, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Evans & Grant, *Australia's foreign relations: in the world in the 1990s*, p. 37.

<sup>66</sup> Key informant interview # 18, 18 December 2007.

contributions to the region, to build on and win support for Australia's candidacy among African nations,<sup>67</sup> and to send a high-level mission, including Downer, Fraser, Butler, the Australian High Commissioner in Nairobi, Trotter (who was also accredited to the OAU), and a small team of senior officials to lobby for Australia at the Organisation of African Unity Meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 8-10 July. The OAU Meeting was also attended by both the Swedish and Portuguese Foreign Ministers, and so quickly became a kind of 'meet the local candidates' meeting. Shortly before the meeting, Downer announced funding commitments to three African peace initiatives totaling \$A350,000.

After the OAU meeting, Downer was hopeful about Australia's prospects of winning African votes. However, the last minute effort put into lobbying in Yaoundé does not appear to have been a success. In an interview with the author, an Australian senior official who attended the meeting described the Australian lobbying exercise in Yaoundé as 'chaotic and a disaster'. Australia did not have accreditation at the meeting, and it was impossible to arrange appointments at short notice. The only effective lobbying was done on one occasion when the delegation was able to access the plenary room and buttonhole African leaders and their foreign ministers. Downer, as the relatively new Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, did not know his African colleagues and therefore was not very effective in lobbying them. Further, the last minute gestures that Australia made before the meeting showed that Australia did not have much to offer, and the last minute courting of African votes could not make up for years of Australian foreign policy neglect of Africa.<sup>68</sup> *The Australian's* New York correspondent, who also travelled to Yaoundé to cover the OAU Meeting, quoted one cynical Australian official as saying: 'Never has our interest in African politics been so great'. To

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<sup>67</sup> DFAT, *Media Release*, 'Appointment of Mr Malcolm Fraser as Special Envoy to Africa', 28 June 1996, retrieved 20 November 2006, <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/media/releases/foreign/1996/fa54.html>>.

<sup>68</sup> Key informant interview, # 3, 30 May 2008.

paraphrase former US President Kennedy, he reported, 'Australia is asking not what it can do for Africa, but what Africa can do for it'.<sup>69</sup>

Reflecting on the lobbying exercise in Africa, the Australian special envoy quoted above said that Australia's lack of a high profile in Africa hindered Australia's cause. To be successful in winning African votes, the campaign would have needed to begin much earlier, even seven years earlier, and be part of a sustained effort, including the provision of development aid. According to the Swedish campaign strategist, Australia had good support in Africa at the beginning of the campaign. However, he noticed a change in African attitudes towards Australia in the month or weeks before the election. He was not sure why the situation changed.<sup>70</sup> DFAT's own post-election assessment conceded that Australia had lost the election in Africa, and that Australia's poor diplomatic representation and its limited aid to Africa, were negative factors.

### **The change of government in Australia in March 1996**

In March 1996, a new Coalition Government came into power in Australia with the *leit-motif* of pragmatism in foreign policy. In order to differentiate itself from the 'big picture' foreign policy positions of its predecessor, the Howard Government, while maintaining that Asia would remain Australia's foreign policy priority, slowed the pace of Australian enmeshment with Asia, sought to strengthen ties with the United States and other major powers, and had a different philosophical viewpoint about multilateralism and Australia's capacity to exert influence in the world as a good international citizen.

The difference in philosophical commitment between the Labor and Coalition Governments towards the United Nations can be seen in their respective appeals to voters at the UN. In his Australian General Debate Statement (1995) *The UN at fifty: looking back and looking forward*, Evans expressed

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<sup>69</sup> Stewart, 'Our UN countdown', p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Key informant interview # 10, 19 May 2008.



his belief in the existence of a community of nations, comprising 'sovereign, self-determined, independent states working together on the basis of equality in a framework of international law', which was born at San Francisco and had passed the test of fifty years of life.<sup>71</sup> It was a concept that Evans personally identified with as he did with the mixture of idealism and pragmatism on which the United Nations was founded.<sup>72</sup> By way of contrast, the Coalition's commitment was more pragmatic. In his General Debate Statement to the General Assembly on 30 September 1996 (less than a month before the Council elections), Downer stated:

Australia's particular commitment to the United Nations is founded on the belief, articulated as far back as the 1950s by the then Foreign Minister, Richard Casey, that the United Nations represents the practical effort of the governments and peoples of the world to attain the high goals to which they are pledged through the UN Charter - international peace and security, and the economic and social advancement of all peoples.<sup>73</sup>

The change of Government did not appear to have dented Australia's prospects of winning a Council seat. Australia's Council bid (as with previous Australian bids) had bipartisan support and the new Government, though with a different philosophical commitment to the United Nations and multilateralism, was no less arduous than its predecessor in pursuing the bid. None of the informants for this study mentioned the change in Government in Australia *per se* as the sole reason for Australia's loss, although Swedish sources did mention that Australia's 'attractiveness' did alter with the change of Government.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Statement to the Fiftieth General Assembly of The United Nations, on 2 October 1995, by Senator Evans, Minister For Foreign Affairs, New York, Annex D, in DFAT, *United Nations General Assembly: Report of the Australian Delegation, Fiftieth Session, 1995*, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. On the eve of the Council elections in 1996, Portugal claimed that Australia was not really committed to multilateralism, a claim that it would not have been able to make if the Labor Government had retained power in the general elections in March 1996. C Stewart, 'Diplomatic intrigues in our UN race', *The Australian*, 21 October 1996, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> 'Australia's General Debate Statement: "The United Nations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"'. Address to the Fifty-First General Assembly of the United Nations by the Honourable Alexander Downer, MP, Minister For Foreign Affairs of Australia, New York, 30 September 1996, Annex C, *United Nations General Assembly: Report of the Australian Delegation, Fifty First Session, 1996*.

<sup>74</sup> Key informant interview, # 10, 19 May 2008.

## **A reputation for independence**

The new Coalition Government's firm intention to reinvigorate the US alliance was pursued at the annual AusMin talks in Sydney in July 1996 resulting in the *Sydney Statement* on the Australia-United States strategic partnership for the Twentieth Century, which announced agreement on an extension of the lease of the Pine Gap Joint Defence facility in Australia and an agreement on closer military training. The communiqué also noted that Australia and the United States shared the goal of effective multilateral cooperation in arms control and non-proliferation and their joint resolve to continue to work towards the signing of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at the outset of the fifty-first session of the UN General Assembly in September.<sup>75</sup> US Secretary of Defence William Perry, in a well-meaning remark that would cause the Australian Government some discomfort when professing its independent credentials at the UN, went so far as to describe Japan and Australia as the 'anchors' of the US military presence in the region.<sup>76</sup>

In the first week of September 1996, President Clinton ordered cruise missile strikes against targets in southern Iraq in retaliation for Iraqi aggression against the Kurds. Prime Minister Howard was fulsome in his support for the US decision, saying that he both understood and supported the action, claiming there had been a clear breach by Iraq of the broad conditions of UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>77</sup> The Security Council, however, was divided over the issue, with France opposed and Britain supporting the strikes, thus

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<sup>75</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations: Sydney Statement: Joint Security Declaration: Australia-United States: A Strategic Partnership for the Twenty-First Century, 26-27 July 1996', retrieved 1 October 2008, <[http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/sydney\\_statement.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/sydney_statement.html)>.

<sup>76</sup> M Roberts, 'Problems in Australian foreign policy: July-December 1996', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1997, pp. 111-121. p. 112.

<sup>77</sup> I McPhedran, 'Howard says US "justified" to use force, *CT*, 5 September 1996, retrieved 11 July 2006, factiva data base. Howard's statement was made at the South Pacific Forum in the Marshall Islands. New Zealand Prime Minister Bolger also issued a statement, saying that the US action was 'appropriate' but Howard's response was considered to be more 'fulsome'. ('PM under fire over revised US attack response', *New Zealand Herald*, 5 September 1996.)

giving the issue a high profile internationally. The British Secretary of State for Defence, who visited Australia the following week, welcomed Australia's strong support for the US missile strikes, and said that he hoped that Australia's stance would not have a negative impact on Australia's bid for a two-year term on the Council.<sup>78</sup>

In his first cable, reporting to DFAT on Australia's lost bid, Butler stated that he had detected 'attitudes and asides' that Australia's relationship with the United States may have harmed its prospects.<sup>79</sup> Makinda argued that a thorough post-mortem of Australia's loss needs to take into account 'other states' perceptions of Australia's international behaviour, and especially its capacity to play an independent role in post-Cold War politics'.<sup>80</sup> Campbell described US support for Australia's efforts to rescue the text of the CTBT nuclear test ban treaty as a 'kiss of death' for Australia's Council campaign: 'The mass of UN members are not interested in seeing the US receive automatic support on the Council'.<sup>81</sup> These comments suggest that a reputation for independence in foreign policy is an important criterion for election to the Council. Interestingly, this is the understanding of reputation in international affairs that the Lowy Institute adopts in its poll of public opinion on Australia in the world; its survey question relates the question of Australia's reputation to perceptions of how much attention Australia pays to US views in its foreign policy.<sup>82</sup>

Having an independent viewpoint on international peace and security issues was an important platform for the Australian bid, as indicated in the following extract from an Australian campaign brochure:

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<sup>78</sup> C Skehan, 'British defence minister cruise missile caution', *SMH*, 10 September 1996, p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> G Barker, 'How Australia was unseated', *Financial Review*, 23 January 1997, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Makinda, 'Why "Good Citizen" Australia lost the global power play', p. 22.

<sup>81</sup> Campbell, 'Clinton gives PM chance to save face', *Weekend Australian*, 26-27 October 1996, p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> Lowy Institute for International Policy, *The Lowy Institute poll 2008; Australia and the world: public opinion and foreign policy*, Fergus Hanson, 2008, p. 3, retrieved 28 January 2009, <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org>>.

Membership of the Security Council would enable Australia to pursue, in cooperation and consultation with member states, initiatives relating to preventive diplomacy, reform of sanctions mechanisms and improved multilateral cooperation to promote regional and international security. Being an independent, middle-sized, non-European power, Australia would be able to bring a greater Asia-Pacific and Southern-Hemisphere perspective to the Security Council and enhance the Council's influence amongst an increasing number of states.<sup>83</sup>

Australia's capacity to influence Council decisions depended, in its view, on the originality of its ideas, the strength of its influence with the Permanent Five (P-5) and its reputation as an impartial middle power, which would enable it occasionally to broker deals which larger powers could not.<sup>84</sup> For developing countries, however, it was critically important that a candidate for membership of the Council was seen to have an independent voice on matters coming before the Council:

It is very important at least on the point of view of developing countries to see the country has an independent voice and an independent stance when it comes to membership of the Council.<sup>85</sup>

Also, one African informant commented that uncertainty about the direction of Australian foreign policy was an important factor for African countries in the vote:

John Howard became Prime Minister in March 1996 and signaled a return of Australia to the position of being an outpost of Western Europe and NATO, and that had some influence on the attitudes of African countries because they were not sure towards the end of 1996 where Australia was heading.<sup>86</sup>

Key informants did not consider that Australia's alliance relations *per se* were an impediment to being elected on the Security Council, suggesting that countries view alliance relationships in perspective:

Everybody is aware that Australia is an ally in good standing with the United States... I certainly don't think that countries voting in the UN are going to expect a U.S. ally to go into the Council and be vociferously anti-American, nor would I imagine they would expect that they would come what may be

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<sup>83</sup> DFAT, *Australia and the Security Council*, DFAT, Canberra, 1995.

<sup>84</sup> C Stewart, 'UN security seat carries global clout', *The Australian*, 22 October, 1996, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Key informant interview # 21, 17 October 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Key informant interview # 22, 3 November 2008.

pro-American. They'd expect them to exercise their own judgment, but they wouldn't have any illusions about where they stand...the diplomats in New York have a very clear idea where countries sit on the spectrum. It's not going to be halted by one particular thing, although it may influence a vote at a particular moment.<sup>87</sup>

The following comments, made to the author in an interview with one Arab nation UN Ambassador, illustrate how reputations in foreign affairs form and how they impact on perceptions of a country's independence at the UN.

When asked about the 1996 change of government in Australia, he replied: 'No, I don't think that the change of government had an impact on the vote'.

When asked about Australian support for the US airstrikes against Iraq, he replied: 'I wouldn't take this as an issue that people would take into consideration when voting if Australia would go to the Security Council or not'. On the question of Australia's voting patterns in the UN General Assembly on Middle East issues generally in the last six months before the council election, he commented:

Ambassador Butler was taking positions, against almost all Arabs, on Arab issues that raised a lot of concern about the membership of Australia in the Security Council...and raised concerns among a wider circle of non-aligned countries about how the issues were going to be perceived if other issues were going to pop up at a later stage.

The informant attributed Australia's lost bid:

... a large extent to the personal behaviour of Ambassador Butler, but more to the positions Australia took at the time on nuclear proliferation issues, both in relation to the NPT and the CTBT.

He describes these positions as being 'too close to the P5 and the Americans in particular'. He claimed that: 'It would have been better for Australia to be the broker for reaching agreement on the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation'.<sup>88</sup>

According to Swedish sources, Australia had support among Middle East countries until about a week before the election, when a number of Arab

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<sup>87</sup> Key informant interview #13, 25 July 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Key informant interview # 21, 17 October 2008.

countries, that had earlier indicated their support for Australia, decided to switch their support to Portugal. In the event, DFAT believed that Australia received few votes from the twenty or so Middle East countries. A shift in a large number of votes of this order in the last weeks of the campaign would have made a great deal of difference to Australia's and Portugal's respective first ballot results, and if Australia had been placed ahead of Portugal on the first ballot, this may have changed the dynamics of the second ballot.

### **The reputation of the local candidate**

The term, 'the Butler factor', was coined by Malone when he stated:

Evidence of the importance of the personal standing of the New York representative of a candidate country can be found in the case of Australia's Richard Butler. A tough, hard driving, and cerebral veteran of multilateral forums, Butler bruised a number of egos in New York in several negotiating processes in the run-up to the 1996 Security Council elections. Australia's loss in 1996 is widely chalked up to 'the Butler factor', although many other factors were also clearly relevant. Representatives in New York who make up their own mind on their country's vote will frequently vote with their personal friendships in mind.<sup>89</sup>

In contrast, Butler's rival candidate, Portugal's Ambassador Mr Pedro Catarino, was 'an unassuming and well-liked man'.<sup>90</sup> Others commented that, in terms of interpersonal relations, Catarino 'quietly ran rings around Butler in 1996'.<sup>91</sup>

Butler was Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 1992-1996. Woolcott described him as a 'talented diplomat with extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy and a great knowledge of disarmament issues',<sup>92</sup> who was uniquely placed to pursue the Australian Government's aim in seeking Council membership by helping the Council to develop an effective system for cooperative security. According to one of Butler's counterparts at the UN in 1996: 'It was acknowledged in the UN community

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<sup>89</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize', pp. 14-15.

<sup>90</sup> D Jenkins, 'The uppity country: why the UN turned against us', *SMH*, 26 October 1996, p.1.

<sup>91</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Woolcott, *The hot seat*, p. 192.

that he was a man with a strong cerebral grasp of issues who liked to get into the filigree of complex matters like CTBT and to try to break new ground in the way he spoke and thought about them. However, in terms of interpersonal relations with diplomatic colleagues at the UN, Butler lacked the necessary interpersonal skills'.<sup>93</sup>

Many key informants for this study, in unprompted comments, referred to the 'Butler factor' as a major contributing factor in Australia's loss. Sample comments include:

Australia had a dynamic Foreign Minister who was well respected. One could not say the same of Australia's Permanent Representative to the UN!  
(Asian Permanent Representative)

Richard Butler's style of lobbying had not helped because of a perception that he had been trashing the Portuguese case as the other main WEOG candidate and because he sometimes came across as a bit of a bully.  
(WEOG Permanent Representative)

However, others comments were more direct; for example:

The plain fact is that his personality had a lot to do with it ...I'm not saying it was the only factor, and these other things were always at play in the system, but had that campaign been conducted with greater finesse and skill and softness of touch, I think the outcome might've been different.<sup>94</sup>

That personal relationships were important in the vote is evident in the following comment from another Permanent Representative present at the vote in 1996:

While most countries follow the lead of their capitals, a number of small countries take a local decision in New York. Personal relationships between heads of mission are an important contributing factor. Clearly Australia suffered adversely in this regard in terms of the behaviour of its head of mission.<sup>95</sup>

The 'Butler factor' was the most commonly quoted reason (but not the sole reason) in the international press for Australia's loss. For example, *New Straits Times* of Singapore published an article by Ramesh Thakur on the

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<sup>93</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Key informant interview # 13, 25 July 2008.

day after the elections which stated that: ‘Sometimes the reason for a country’s failure to be elected to the Security Council is that its UN Ambassador can rub people the wrong way’.<sup>96</sup> *Le Monde* reported that ‘the personality of its (Australia’s) Ambassador at the United Nations, Richard Butler, judged by many as too arrogant (*trop arrogant*), had perhaps played a role’.<sup>97</sup> The *Financial Times* of London, commented about Butler’s style of diplomacy, and purported to detect an Australian trait in his style:

His in-your-face style – once called Down Under undiplomacy – won no praise while he was his country’s chief UN delegate and may have cost Australia in a race against Portugal two years ago for a key Security Council seat. (Balloting is secret and can easily be influenced by personality and friendship, regardless of government instructions).<sup>98</sup>

DFAT officials claim that the Department only became fully aware of the adverse and possibly damaging aspects of the ‘Butler factor’ when it sought informal feedback after the campaign, some of which was reported back by emails rather than by cables. These reports were to the effect that Butler had a lot of hubris; he was known to throw his weight around, was overbearing and may have been damaging to Australia - all other things being equal - when permanent representatives who had been given a great deal of discretion by their Governments, decided to use it to Australia’s disadvantage in the Council votes. The feedback came from all parts of the world, but not all respondents said that Butler was the problem. Indeed, from the Department’s point of view, Butler had done ‘some really good things’ in pushing Australian interests in relation to the Non Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.<sup>99</sup>

In the above comments, it is possible to draw a distinction between Butler’s combative negotiation style and his representational manners. The

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<sup>96</sup> ‘Why Canberra’s UN hopes were dashed’, *The New Straits Times*, Comment/Analysis, 23 October 1996..

<sup>97</sup> *Le Monde*, 23 October 1996, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> ‘The Iraqi crisis – Butler denies being a creature of Washington’, *Financial Times*, 19 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Key informant interview # 17, 8 May 2008.



descriptors 'tough', 'hard driving', 'bruising a number of people in the negotiating process' and 'rubbing people up the wrong way' reflect his blunt, straight-forward, hard-nosed negotiating style, focused on aggressively pursuing Australian interests as he saw them and winning at all costs. In some negotiating situations, these attributes would be regarded as assets. The irony in Butler's case is that if Australia has been successful in the 1996 elections, and if he had been given an opportunity push through Australia's disarmament, preventive diplomacy and UN reform agenda, he, like the former External Affairs Minister Evatt, who also had a combative style, would have been remembered for his achievements and contributions to the UN, rather than the methods he used to achieve the results.

The other set of comments referring to his being 'arrogant', a 'bruiser', a 'bully' and not being well-respected in New York relate to his manners and interpersonal skills, or lack thereof. In her book, *Why manners matter: the case for civilised behaviour in a barbarous world*,<sup>100</sup> Lucinda Holdforth argued that manners matter in international relations, as in society, not because manners are an absolute good in themselves but because they enable communities and societies to achieve their mutual objectives. In diplomatic discourse, manners reflect the values enshrined in the 1961 *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* which, downloaded to the personal level of diplomatic representatives, include the values of mutual respect and the promotion of friendly relations. As well as enabling the system to function efficiently, these values provide some protection for small status countries and their representatives to operate in a world also inhabited by state predators.

While DFAT may not have become fully aware of the 'Butler factor' problem until after the campaign, the Australian Foreign Minister was made aware earlier. New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon recalled in an interview

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<sup>100</sup> L Holdforth, *Why manners matter: the case for civilised behaviour in a barbarous world*, Random House, Sydney, 2007.

with the author that his Australian counterpart, Alexander Downer, rang him after the Australian elections in March 1996 to seek his advice on UNSC campaign strategy. McKinnon told him the best thing he could do was to 'get rid of Butler'. According to McKinnon, Downer was reluctant to follow his advice because Butler had all the contacts in New York.<sup>101</sup> However, if Downer had taken McKinnon's advice, would the outcome of the vote have been dramatically different? According to one non-aligned Permanent Representative, the 'Butler factor' comprised three integrated components:

The personality of the Ambassador; his positions at the time on disarmament issues; and the perception that he was too close to P5 and Americans in particular.<sup>102</sup>

In other words, it is not possible to completely separate out the representative from the Government foreign policy positions he was representing.

### **The UNGA vote on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

The Australian campaign appeared to receive a boost six weeks before the vote. This followed Australia's successful initiative in September 1996 to break the deadlock on the stalled Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) disarmament talks in Geneva. Butler gained support for using the device of forwarding the disputed CTBT text as a 'national paper' for adoption by the General Assembly. As a result, on 10 September (11 September AEST) the General Assembly adopted the Treaty with 158 countries voting in favour.<sup>103</sup> Foreign Minister Downer welcomed the vote as an historic vote for which he said Australia could be proud, since it had led international action to save the CTBT.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with McKinnon, London, 4 July 2008.

<sup>102</sup> Key informant interview # 21, 17 October 2008.

<sup>103</sup> 'Downer lobbies hard for UN seat', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1996, p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> A Downer, 'Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty', Media Release, 11 September 1996, retrieved 2 August 2007, <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/media/releases/foreign/1996/fa92.html>>.

The report of the Australian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly Fifty-first session (1996) described the securing and opening for signature of the CTBT as 'a milestone in international efforts to combat nuclear weapons proliferation, and a major impediment to the development of new generations of nuclear weapons'.<sup>105</sup> The report stated that a number of heads of delegation, including President Clinton, praised Australia's leading role in bringing this about - though a former Australian UN diplomat described the US President's support for Australia's role in taking the leading role on the CTBT as a 'kiss of death' in Australia's campaign for the Security Council.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, Australian officials believed that success in signing the Treaty would boost Australia's campaign<sup>107</sup> and, according to Butler, the Australian Mission in New York, aware of the danger of overkill, especially after Australia's high profile on the comprehensive test ban treaty, did ease up on its lobbying, trying a 'softer, warmer style' in the weeks leading up to the vote.<sup>108</sup>

However, writing about Australia's prospects in the Council elections a week before the vote on 21 October, the *International Documents Review*, a weekly newsletter on the United Nations, stated that Australia was said to be riding high because it successfully marshalled the votes in support of the CTBT:

But it remains to be seen whether the CTBT manoeuvres it executed will translate into electoral support, for many countries felt that the treaty was being thrust down their throats.<sup>109</sup>

Non-aligned and developing countries decried the 'forced consensus' procedures utilised by Australia and criticised the Treaty for defending the

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<sup>105</sup> DFAT, *United Nations General Assembly: Report of the Australian Delegation, Fifty Second Session*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 1996.

<sup>106</sup> D Campbell, 'Clinton gives PM chance to save face' *Weekend Australian*, 26-27 October 1996, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> 'Downer lobbies hard for UN seat, *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1996, p. 14.

<sup>108</sup> A Attwood, 'UNseated: How Australia missed out at the United Nations', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 October 1996, News Review, p. 35.

<sup>109</sup> 'UN Notes', *International Documents Review*, vol. 7, no. 37, 21 October 1996, p. 4.

power of the nuclear weapon states; for not including computer simulation of tests (which give major industrial states, particularly the US an edge); and, for not including a specific timeframe for nuclear disarmament. According to one Asian Permanent Representative, the 'public spat' between Australia and India (which did not subscribe to the Treaty, and without whose signature the Treaty could not enter into force) 'must have affected Australia's chances'.<sup>110</sup> Thakur added:

If Canberra had not led the CTBT charge at the UN, Australia and India could have helped each other's Security Council campaigns. As it is, they may have effectively sabotaged each other's efforts.<sup>111</sup>

### **Small states**

Canada's UN Ambassador Fowler, in relation to Canada's 1988 campaign, commented to the press on the importance of paying regard to small states:

The UN is an association of little guys...Some 150 members of the UN are smaller than we are in population. I think it's sometimes hard for Canadians to see themselves as the big guy, but in this context we are.<sup>112</sup>

On the 1996 campaign, the *Toronto Star* commented:

Australia, widely regarded as a shoe-in for a seat, lost badly to Portugal after a campaign that didn't pay enough attention to the smaller players.<sup>113</sup>

One small nation state informant who nominated UN reform as a key issue when he/she commented:

Popular wisdom attributes the loss to a somewhat injudicious lack of humility in Australia's general approach....I think Australia's campaign was insufficiently sensitive to particular susceptibilities or concerns.<sup>114</sup>

Further, fueled by a confidence that Australia already had enough votes to win, Ambassador Butler let it be known that some votes, particularly those of smaller states, did not matter:

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<sup>110</sup> Key informant # 26, email correspondence, 4 August 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Thakur, 'Australia's unsuccessful bid for the UN Security Council', p. 48.

<sup>112</sup> A Thompson, 'Envoy pounds the campaign trail. Canada stages bid for seat on Security Council', *Toronto Star*, 2 August 1998, retrieved 13 June 2007, Factiva database.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Key Informant # 27, facsimile correspondence, 5 January 2009.

I understand that the Australian Permanent Representative took the view and let it be known that, the South Pacific support was of course valuable to Australia but not strictly necessary ... it would be nice to have - and welcome - but not absolutely necessary...I wasn't there when it was said but it was told by somebody who was present and, if that's the case, then it was an example of overconfidence, and unwise.<sup>115</sup>

In UN Security Council elections in the 1990s, Malone attributed the success of small states like New Zealand and Portugal largely to the 'AVIS factor' (of having to try harder),<sup>116</sup> and, in the case of New Zealand, 'its dogged persistence and its appealing determination to make clear that all votes mattered keenly' and in having a strong second ballot strategy.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, Malone observed 'Australia, which not unnaturally, cast itself as a middle power campaigned mostly on its (excellent) credentials but found this ineffective'.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, in Malone's view, Australia's 'excessively complacent view' of its own standing within the UN may have contributed to its defeat in 1996.

### **Reputation and public diplomacy**

Public diplomacy was considered important in an era marked by the end of the Cold War, the rise of global communications, the influence of global non-government organisations in which nation states, both large and small, became increasingly aware of the importance of their image and reputation as an essential part of a state's 'strategic equity' in global affairs.<sup>119</sup>

Reputation is thought to influence and be influenced by other factors involved in promoting a positive image by a psychological process known in marketing as the 'halo effect'.<sup>120</sup> Two issues, both having a negative 'halo effect' for Australia, appeared on the radar in the last weeks of the campaign.

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<sup>115</sup> Key Informant Interview # 23, 6 November 2007.

<sup>116</sup> DM Malone, 'Eyes on the prize', p. 19, note 9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, note 17.

<sup>119</sup> P Van Ham, 'The rise of the brand state: the postmodern politics of image and reputation', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 5, 2001, pp. 2-10.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter One: Introduction.

## The 'Hanson debate'

It is one of the ironies of recent Australian UN diplomatic and Australian cultural history that on the same day (10 September 1996) that Australia took action in New York to secure the passage of the CTBT in the UN General Assembly and to bask in the prospect of securing a seat on the Security Council, an Independent Australian MP, Pauline Hanson, in her maiden speech to the Federal Parliament, unleashed a 'raw debate about Australian identity'.<sup>121</sup> The speech evoked community - albeit isolated community - expressions of racial prejudice and discrimination, threatening to undermine Australia's international image as a vibrant and peaceful society (as presented in the Australian UNSC campaign promotion literature).<sup>122</sup> In her wide-ranging and rambling maiden speech, Hanson inveighed against positive discrimination in favour of Australia's Aboriginals to the disadvantage of other Australians, immigration ('I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians'), Australian foreign aid ('corruption and mismanagement in many of the recipient countries are legend'), and said that Australia must 'stop kow-towing' to international organisations, review its membership and funding of the UN (with its 'huge tax-free American dollar salaries, duty-free luxury cars and diplomatic status').<sup>123</sup>

While the Minister for Immigration responded that Ms Hanson's comments were misconceived and unacceptable to the Government, the Prime Minister's refusal to show leadership by publicly condemning her views about Australian society became an issue in Australia and in Australia's region. While the Prime Minister took the view that to do so would only give

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<sup>121</sup> M Roberts, 'Problems in Australian foreign policy: July-December 1996', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1997, pp. 111-121, p. 111.

<sup>122</sup> In the foreword to a 1995 campaign brochure, Prime Minister Keating wrote: 'Like the United Nations, Australia is rich in linguistic, racial, religious and cultural diversity. ... In seeking election for the 1997-1998 term, Australia would bring to the Security Council the strength of its cultural diversity... We hope that our achievements in building a vibrant, pluralistic and peaceful society may suggest to others ways of seeing cultural difference as less of a violent and destructive force and more of a means to realising a true sense of international community'. DFAT, 'Australia and the Security Council'.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

prominence to her views, others saw this as indicating either a sympathy with the circumstances that gave rise to her radical views, or a 'concern not to alienate what seemed to be a significant part of the electorate that would have voted for the Coalition in the March election'.<sup>124</sup> The Government eventually agreed to sponsor a motion in Parliament, confirming Parliament's commitment to equal rights for all Australians and demonstrating strong bipartisan support for racial tolerance, in the Prime Minister's words:

At a time when it is appropriate and in the national interest to send a clear and unambiguous signal, particularly to the nations of our region but not only to the nations of our region, of the kind of society we are.<sup>125</sup>

However, a decision on tabling the motion had to wait until the results of the by-election on 19 October 1996 (three days before the Security Council vote) in the Federal seat of Lindsay.<sup>126</sup>

The Hanson issue was noted by delegates in New York, but informants for this study did not recall this being an issue in the vote. The 'Pauline Hanson-type thing' was considered to be 'the sort of thing that pops up and will pop up in lots of countries and does...even here or...in other countries as well'.<sup>127</sup> However, the issue was not helpful for the Australian candidature.

## **East Timor**

Just days before the vote, *The New York Times* carried an article on the award of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Belo of East Timor and Ramos-Horta which reported the Bishop's statement that the award also 'honors all those who work for peace, for reconciliation, for openness and the defense of human rights', criticised Indonesia on human rights and

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<sup>124</sup> R Dalrymple, 'Perspectives on Australian foreign policy 1996', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1997, p. 246.

<sup>125</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *CPD*, H of R, vol. 89, 30 October 1996, p. 6156.

<sup>126</sup> The by-election in the 'Australian battlers' heartland was the first test of the Coalition's support since the March elections and the first test of the support for anti-immigration forces at the federal level since Hanson's speech. The Liberal candidate, Kelly, was swept back into power, and the anti-immigration candidate received just fewer than 6% of the vote.

<sup>127</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

highlighted Portugal's call for self-determination for the East Timorese.<sup>128</sup> One informant commented: 'My recollection...is that it didn't count, actually ...in terms of shifting votes on the day. It didn't. Nevertheless, it would've done no harm to the Portuguese at that point'.<sup>129</sup>

Ramos-Horta claimed the day after the vote that the East Timor issue was an important, but not decisive factor in Australia's failure to win a seat on the Council.<sup>130</sup> He considered that most important factors in Australia's failure at the election were its overt pro-American stance since the March elections, the race debate sparked by Hanson, and cuts in foreign aid. On the Hanson issue, he claimed: 'The whole xenophobic debate in Australia, without a strong response from the [Federal) Government, raised serious concerns in African and Asian countries about Australia.'<sup>131</sup>

## **DFAT reactions**

### **UN New York**

Documents obtained by the *Financial Review* in January 1997 under Freedom of Information provisions, revealed that Ambassador Butler sent a secret cable to the Department on Friday 18 October 1996, predicting that Australia would win a seat on the United Nations Security Council with 125 first ballot votes in the ballot scheduled for the following Monday.<sup>132</sup> Butler said that his estimate took account of what he called the 'RLB' or 'rotten lying bastard' factor, and 'other justified sources of scepticism'. While he expressed a note of caution that the Mission was 'not sanguine' and had planned strategies for second and other ballots, the core message from the cable was that Australia would win.

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<sup>128</sup> 'Timorese Bishop and Exile Given Nobel Peace Prize', *New York Times*, 12 October 1996,

<sup>129</sup> Key informant interview # 2, 28 May 2008.

<sup>130</sup> T Hyland, 'Timor not decisive in Australia's UN debacle', AAP, retrieved 4 March 2008, <<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/24/106.html> >.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Geoffrey Barker's article, 'How Australia was Unseated', *Financial Review*, 23 January 1997, provides a blow-by-blow account of the 'heavily censored' diplomatic cable traffic between the Department and the Australian UN Mission seeking explanations.



In his first cable reporting on the adverse vote, Butler noted: 'There is a widespread feeling that these results were idiosyncratic, to say the least'.<sup>133</sup> In a second cable on the same day, he stated that the results provided a clear indication that 'extra-systematic factors' may have kicked in. He offered a number of reasons for Portugal's success, including Portugal portraying the agreement by Australia and Sweden to support each other's candidatures as an exclusionary 'ticket'; Portugal's offer to use its good offices to help African and eastern and central European countries in their relations with the European Union; Italy's championship of Portugal's candidature; and the fact that Portugal may have paid the bills of some member states. He added that he had detected 'attitudes and asides' that Australia's relationship with the United States may have harmed its prospects.<sup>134</sup>

As reported in the *Financial Review*, this analysis failed to satisfy the Department in Canberra, and in a 'curt cable' to Butler, it demanded 'further detailed analysis' focusing on 'where, when and why our support shifted (assuming that we had anything like our estimated support in the first place – and if we didn't, how could we have so misread the situation?)'.<sup>135</sup> In his reply, Butler sought to shift the blame by saying that 'the central phenomenon' in the voting 'was lying on an unprecedented scale' and that 'it

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<sup>133</sup> The Barker articles in the *Financial Review* in December 1996 and January 1997, which were based on DFAT documents released under Freedom of Information provisions, are the source of these references. DFAT officers who were responsible for 'sanitising' the documents before release confirmed that Barker's reporting on the documents was accurate. Key informant interview # 17, 8 May 2008. The author inquired about obtaining a copy of the assessment and related documents from DFAT also under Freedom of Information provisions, but was informed that the documents were unlikely to be released for the purpose of this study since the content of the documents 'is historical, likely to be personal and provides detailed analysis of government strategy'. On the latter point the department wrote:

The release of these documents would potentially reveal details about Australia's approach to the candidature including election strategy, confidential assessments on other countries, their strategies and their delegates following the election, as well as personal assessments of diplomatic personnel and other countries' strategies and delegates. (Letter from Ms Katrina Cooper, Assistant Secretary, Domestic Legal Branch, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 27 June 2007.)

This correspondence in itself is revealing of the nature and scope of the department's approach in its assessment of Australia's loss, which focused on rational and strategic reasons for the defeat.

<sup>134</sup> G Barker, 'How Australia was Unseated'. *Financial Review*, 23 January 1997.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

will not be easy to identify in any great detail who lied to us and nor will we be able to obtain this within a few days'.<sup>136</sup>

In a follow-up cable to Butler's earlier cable, another Australian diplomat in New York offered the further observation that Australia's poor diplomatic representation in Africa and its limited aid to Africa were negative factors. The diplomat added that 'we were not prepared to do whatever it took to get elected, however dirty or expensive'.<sup>137</sup> In a final overview on 24 October, Butler again noted that Australia had lost the election in Africa, complained again about 'the magnitude of lying that took place' and added: 'When the media or others ask 'Why didn't we know?' unsatisfactory though it is, the only rational answer is because neither we nor anyone else could have known'.<sup>138</sup>

Geoffrey Barker of the *Financial Review* commented that eventually the Department embraced Butler's unpredictability thesis and took this line in a possible answer to a parliamentary question prepared by the Department for its Minister. Without seeking to allocate responsibility for the failure to correctly predict the outcome, the Department recommended the need for more critical assessments of voting intentions in the future. Barker added (correctly in the author's view):

The difficulty with the unpredictability thesis is that many factors cited for Australia's defeat were apparent before the vote. These included its weak diplomatic representation in Africa compared with Sweden and Portugal; the power of Portugal's and Sweden's EU connections; the unpopularity in the Middle East of Australia's strong support for US action against Iraq; Sweden's superior aid levels and the similarity of Swedish and Australian views on UN reform; the doubtful benefit of Australia's mutual support agreement with Sweden; and the likelihood of sympathy votes for Sweden, which had failed to win in 1992 and had to withdraw in 1994; and Portugal, which pushed its status as a small country that had made a painful transition to democracy.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

### **DFAT explanations**

According to the *Financial Review*, DFAT subsequently prepared an assessment for Cabinet after Australia's defeat, but this has not been made public. The *Financial Review*, however, managed to obtain a leaked DFAT analysis, which it described as 'a watered-down version' of an assessment prepared for Cabinet that was provided to the Joint Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 4 December 1996.<sup>139</sup> According to the *Review's* Barker, the assessment repeated the earlier Department line that Australia went into the ballot 'cautiously optimistic of election', but that the loss was a surprise 'not only to us but to our supporters and a wide range of other countries'.<sup>140</sup> It revealed that the Department suspected, going into the vote, that around 40 countries had made commitments to all three candidates, but it believed that all would suffer 'a roughly equal diminution in votes as a result'.<sup>141</sup>

DFAT was surprised that the bulk of these countries chose to dishonour their commitments to Australia. It attributed this drop in support for Australia to the superior bilateral bargaining position of its competitors: 'Clearly, more bilateral dividends offered by other candidates swayed their votes on the day'.<sup>142</sup> Also, Australia ran a classic campaign, with a budget of about \$500,000, and was not able to entertain on the same scale as Sweden or Portugal, particularly in the last weeks of the campaign: 'We ran a cut-price campaign compared to others, which cost us votes'.<sup>143</sup> The analysis claimed that Australia's mutual support agreement with Sweden 'was one of the central failures of our campaign strategy'. It conceded that Australia's foreign policy, focused as it was on the Asia-Pacific region, was not sufficiently global for these multilateral elections, especially since Australia lacked a

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<sup>139</sup> G Barker, 'Confidential report shows hope of UN win misguided', *Financial Review*, 13 December 1996, p. 5.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

strong presence in Africa.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, according to the analysis, Australia did not sufficiently woo the various UN permanent representatives in New York and found itself off-side with Italy, which the analysis noted is:

Outstandingly successful in winning UN elections and sees Australia as home (sic) of the prime opponents to Security Council reform which seek to stop Germany from becoming a permanent member.

Looking to the future, the analysis suggested that Australia should consider changing its policy on Security Council reform:

While we need to maintain our support for permanent seats for Japan and Germany, our national interests would be best served by the Italian proposal for rotating seats, which would give us better opportunities for more frequent membership.<sup>145</sup>

## Summary

Australia's bid in 1996 for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 1997-1998 became a high profile international contest between Sweden, Australia and Portugal for one of the two seats available for the WEOG electoral group. All aspects of Australia's international standing and reputation and image were put under the spotlight during the two-year campaign, and will be in any future campaigns. Australia's international prestige in contests such as this was important to the Australian public, as was evident in the amount of coverage devoted to the issue in the Australian press.

Australia's unsuccessful bid resulted from a failure by Australia to properly assess its comparative standing and reputation in the UN context and to address shortcomings. In this contest, the reputation of the Australian UN Permanent Representative was a significant, but not the only, factor contributing to Australia's defeat. Australia also failed to accurately assess the reputation and standing of its competitors, Sweden and Portugal, both of

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<sup>144</sup> Barker's reporting on these aspects of the leaked document is contained in a companion article, 'Price of a diplomatic bungle', *Financial Review*, 17 December 1996.

<sup>145</sup> G Barker, 'Confidential report shows hope of UN win misguided', *Financial Review*, 13 December 1996, p. 5.

whom presented as 'small' countries in an organisation that has a majority of small country members.

The notion of broad national reputation – which Malone<sup>146</sup> asserted was a poor guide to the likely success of Security Council member candidates – was broken down into its component parts in this study by asking the questions: 'reputation for what?' and 'reputation with whom?' This resulted in the identification of various component reputations, such as a commitment to the principles of the United Nations, a good record in peace-keeping and development assistance, and independence in foreign policy. Tomz's model of how reputations are formed was useful in distinguishing types of reputation, and for distinguishing between the contending candidates, according to whether they were regarded as 'stalwarts', 'fair-weather' or 'lemons'. One of Australia's problems in the campaign was that it was considered, particularly after the March 1996 elections, as a 'fair-weather' on most counts, but it was competing against the longstanding 'stalwart' Sweden. In addition, Portugal had made considerable efforts to shake off its old image before the 1974 revolution and presented itself as an aspiring 'stalwart'. Both Sweden and Australia underestimated Portugal, both in terms of its changed reputation and for its skilled campaign, assisted by Italy.

Since the vote in the elections is by a secret ballot of UN permanent representatives, it is well-nigh impossible to know which countries voted for or against Australia in 1996, and the reasons why they voted in one way or another. DFAT attempts at finding an answer for Australia's loss, including a re-examination of campaign strategy, proved inconclusive. This account of the international standing and international reputation factors that played a role in the Australian campaign offers a necessary but not sufficient reason for the outcome of the Australian campaign. However, they are matters that were generally overlooked or given scant attention in the campaign and, in a tight election contest, they are ignored at a country's peril.

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<sup>146</sup> Malone, 'Eyes on the prize'. op. cit.

## CONCLUSIONS

The thesis has demonstrated the salience of the dual concepts of international standing and international reputation in the formulation of Australian foreign policy goals, and for the implementation of these goals at various times during the post-Second World War period. The four case studies examined the concepts and their influence in some depth. The findings in respect to each case study are summarised at the end of each study, and a brief précis for each follows:

*Australia and the Colombo Plan:* Within the overall context of attaining the foreign policy objective of Commonwealth solidarity and, in the 1950's, to meet the perceived threat of communist expansion in the South and South-East Asian region by encouraging the United States to pay a more active role, Australia had concerns about its 'in-between-empires' status<sup>1</sup> and its standing with the new independent states in the South and South-East Asian region. A key Australian diplomatic objective in relation to the Colombo Plan was to break down the wealth of misunderstanding between Australia and the Asian countries,<sup>2</sup> for which it was deemed necessary to turn around a reputation for insularity, exclusion and lack of concern for the poverty and economic under-development in the region in favour of being regarded as a good neighbour.

*Australia and the Cambodian conflict:* During the 1980s, the ongoing conflict in Cambodia and its resolution presented Australia with strategic, economic and humanitarian challenges. Australia sought to improve its standing as a concerned and engaged partner with South-East Asian countries, seeking a regional resolution of the conflict. At

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<sup>1</sup> D Lowe, *Australia between empires: the life of Percy Spender*, Pickering & Chatto, London, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Paper by Tange, 'Political objectives of the Colombo Plan', Canberra, 19 March 1952, A1838, 3004/11, part 1, NAA.

times, this pitted Australia against major power interests. Since 1983, Australia's reputation for independence in foreign policy towards Indo-China, its reputation as a generous provider of humanitarian aid and its reputation as a major settler country since 1975 for Indo-Chinese refugees (despite some vocal domestic political opposition) were important factors in ensuring that Australia would have credibility, be given a voice and be taken seriously on both regional and world stages.

*Australia and the formation of APEC:* When Australia launched its regional economic consultation and cooperation initiative in 1989, the nation's future standing in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region and threats to the international trading system were matters of great concern. Australia's reputation as a free trader and its efforts to build an internationally competitive economy were critical for its role in the establishment of APEC and the building of regional architecture. The APEC leaders' meeting provided the vehicle to establish personal relations between leaders and especially to develop the attributes of openness and trust, which were important for the consolidation of APEC as a pre-eminent regional economic forum.

*Australia and the United Nations Security Council:* By way of contrast, it is argued that Australia's unsuccessful bid for the United Nations Security Council seat in 1996 resulted from a failure by Australia to properly assess its standing and reputation in the UN. Australia also failed to accurately assess the international standing reputation and of its competitors (Sweden and Portugal) both of whom presented themselves as 'small' countries in an organisation with a majority of small country members. In this contest, the reputation of the Australian UN Permanent Representative was a significant factor contributing to Australia's defeat.

The thesis highlights an ongoing concern in Australian foreign policy since the Second World War for Australia to move from being regarded as a nation on the periphery of international events to being regarded as a central player on issues which impact on its national interests. Major developments in the international context impinging on Australia, such as the end of the British Empire, the Cold War and the shift in geopolitical gravity from Europe to Asia in the 1950s and 1960s, decolonisation and anti-racism, and changing patterns in Australian trade from Empire to region, necessitated a revolution in Australia's thinking about its place in the world.<sup>3</sup> Australian activism in respect of the Colombo Plan, Cambodia and APEC can be seen as attempts by Australia to be 'policy makers' rather than 'policy takers' in response to international events when its vital interests are at stake.

Spender, Evans and Keating sought to make their marks on history. They were makers of history in the dual sense of the term - as activists and chroniclers of their own time and contributions. The *multi-country perspectives approach* used in the thesis has enabled their contributions and their reputations to be assessed in a wider context. By examining the contributions of other actors and countries, the thesis has been able to construct an historical reality of which Australian participants at the time may not have been fully aware (since they relied on their own interpretations of events and could not see the cards in others' hands).<sup>4</sup> The *multi-country perspectives approach* has also demonstrated the relativity of national power and influence.

This thesis is the first attempt to unravel the dual concepts of international standing and international reputation as they apply to Australian diplomacy, and to examine their influence in particular historical circumstances. One of the major problems encountered in analysing the concepts is the problem of vocabulary and associated fields of meaning. By focusing on the use of

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<sup>3</sup> D Reynolds, 'Empire, region, world: the international context of Australian foreign policy since 1939', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2005, pp. 346-358.

<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, *Summits*, p. 9.



words in diplomatic and academic discourses, rather than dictionary meanings, this thesis has been able to identify various meanings and establish a typology for the domains of strategic policy, international cooperation and public diplomacy. Within these domains, the thesis has been able to separate out various strands of meanings. Through application to four case studies and by drawing on the theories and definitions of reputation in other disciplines, the thesis has produced a toolbox of analytical tools, which prove useful for comparison of Australia's reputation with those of other countries and for gaining a better understanding of Australia's position. *Table 2* below provides a summary of the tools and their main use for Australia in planning, positioning, executing and reviewing foreign policy. The key questions and suppositions in the toolbox have been validated in this thesis focusing on international cooperation, but the tools can be used in other domains, such as strategic and economic policy and public diplomacy.

**Table 2: Toolbox for taking international standing and international reputation into account when developing or reviewing existing foreign policy**

<b>Key questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reputation for and international standing in respect of what?</li> <li>2. Reputation and international standing with whom?</li> <li>3. Do/did international standing and reputation matter?</li> <li>4. How are results assessed?</li> </ol>
<b>Suppositions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The international community is a normatively ranked hierarchy of nations with a rough consensus of rankings and a rough consensus of criteria which determine rank.</li> <li>2. A country's international standing comprises both 'hard' and 'soft' power.</li> <li>3. Because broad national reputations are difficult to identify and to analyse, it is preferable to begin by examining the various components and assessing which reputation is relevant to a community or a group of countries in a particular circumstance.</li> <li>4. Reputations are not fixed for all time, and are continually being revised.</li> <li>5. Reputations take time to develop, but change when a country acts contrary to its perceived type.</li> <li>6. Communities or groups of countries assess a country's reputation according to whether it is perceived to be a 'stalwart', 'fairweather' or a 'lemon'.</li> </ol>
<b>Working definition of a reputation</b>	A reputation is a judgement of a country's behaviour in international relations, based on facts that are considered relevant by a community.

The most commonly used key words accompanying the use of international standing and reputation in this thesis were 'weight' and 'credibility'. Australia was described as a nation of 'substantial but limited weight' but without the capacity to secure objectives by the exercise of national power. Its economic weight was relative to countries in the region, 'whose weight in global affairs was steadily increasing'. However, through foreign policy innovation and activism and contribution to joint endeavours, Australia was able to 'punch above its weight', but to be fully functional in the region, Australia had to shed the 'dead weight of its protectionist past' and the legacy of the White Australia policy. 'Weight' was also used in the sense of having one's views noticed and taken into account, as in; 'Our views at this time were not necessarily welcomed by all the parties, but they were given weight and taken into account'.

'Credibility' was the key word more likely to be associated with the term reputation. In the Cambodian case study it was the term dominating policy discourse and the term used by Australian policy makers to characterise Australian policy on Indo-China. Credibility comprised a reputation for, or perception of, capability, interest, independence and commitment. Credibility was also used to describe a necessary congruence between domestic and foreign policy, as, for example, with respect to the promotion of human rights abroad.

The case study on Australia's failed bid for a Security Council seat in 1996 calls into question whether Australia (and other states) possess a single international reputation, such as being regarded as a good international citizen. International cooperation in the UN context implies that states can be relied on to play their full part in every aspect of good international citizenship, including development aid, peacekeeping, refugee programs, human rights promotion, international health issues and environmental protection. The thesis suggests that states compartmentalise these issues into single issues of concern or into pairs and groups of related issues that

are important to them; and that beliefs about the value and reliability of the contributions of others to their own and the general good are considered within this compartmentalised model. Consequently, states receive a number of reputations from a number of sources - often separate - which are sometimes difficult to recognise as a composite entity, or to reconcile under the *chapeau* of good international citizenship.

This is not to say that reputations established in one field do not flow on and prove helpful and matter in other fields. For example, Australia's good reputation in the provision of humanitarian assistance to refugees in Cambodia and refugee camps in Thailand, and above all, its reputation as a recipient country for Indo-Chinese refugees after 1979, proved helpful when Australia was being considered as a participant to the 1989 Paris International Conference on Cambodia. This resulted in Australia being given a substantial role at the Conference, which flowed on to the Australian peace initiative on Cambodia.

I argue that reputations take time to develop, especially when policy-makers seek to overturn long-standing perceptions of a country's standing or behaviour. In the case of the Cambodian peace initiative, it took Australia the best part of six years to build up a reputation as a concerned and informed partner in the region. With respect to the APEC initiative, a similar time frame was required to demonstrate Australian seriousness about its policy of enmeshment in the region. The thesis also demonstrates that reputations are not immutable. A country like Australia, with a poor reputation of engagement in the region in the 1950's, and a country like Portugal with a poor reputation as a former colonial power in Africa, can signal their willingness to change. As a result they may have their reputations altered after a probationary period. But changes do not happen overnight, or as a result of political rhetoric.

I show that reputation matters at all levels of diplomacy from the head of government and ministerial levels to the actual day to day conduct of

international diplomacy. The Cambodia and APEC case studies show that, in diplomatic negotiations, the efforts made by Australian diplomats in the region well before the introduction of the initiatives established cooperation and personal relations that greatly facilitated trust and reduced the transactional costs of negotiations. Openness and trust were also important aspects of personal relations between leaders, especially in the APEC and Cambodian examples. On the other hand, British and especially Canadian mistrust of Spender as Chair at the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee meeting in Sydney (1950) made the Australian task of selling its proposals on technical assistance extremely difficult. Likewise, Butler's manner and diplomatic style were considered to have lost Australia votes in the UNSC elections in 1996.

Finally, Australian Ministers and Prime Ministers in their reporting to Parliament claimed that the outcomes related to the Colombo Plan, APEC and Australia's peace initiative in Cambodia enhanced Australia's international standing and esteem, and stated that this should be a source of national pride. The opinion of others is an indispensable part of personal development and self-worth; and an individual's sense of self-worth is intimately related to how other people see them, and that means reputation matters.<sup>5</sup> Translated to the level of Australia's international relations, the judgement of significant others, as reflected in their views on Australia's international standing and in relation to the country's various reputations, can contribute to Australian national identity formation. In this sense, for national cultural reasons also, international reputations can be said to matter.

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<sup>5</sup> McNamara, *Reputation and defamation*, p. 46.

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