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The Consanguinity of Ideas: Race and Anti-communism in the U.S. - Australian Relationship, 1933 - 1953

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Travis J. Hardy entitled "The Consanguinity of Ideas: Race and Anti-communism in the U.S. - Australian Relationship, 1933 - 1953." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

G. Kurt Piehler, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

George White, Ernest Freeberg, Janice Harper

Accepted for the Council:

<u>Carolyn R. Hodges</u>

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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A Dissertation Presented for
the Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Travis J. Hardy
May 2010

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful wife Amy Lynn Wilson Hardy whose patience and support has made this work possible and to my father and mother, Wayne and Connie Hardy, whose sacrifices have allowed me opportunities they never had.

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

Abstract

American diplomatic historian's consideration of the role of ideology in the formation of American foreign policy has only recently begun to receive more attention. Traditional focuses on economics and relations among great nation-states have predominated the historical literature. This work examines the powerful effect that ideology, particularly race and anti-communism, played in developing the U.S.'s relationship with a small power nation-state, Australia, between 1933 and 1953. This work is comparative in nature, relying on archival research in both American and Australian archives and examines the attitudes of both elite policymakers as well as common individuals in shaping the alliance between the two states. Theoretically, this work draws upon theories about whiteness that historians such as Theodore Allen and Matthew Frye Jacobson have formulated over the past twenty years. This dissertation concludes that a commitment to an ideology of race and anticommunism played a central role in the development of the American – Australian alliance contrary to standard historical interpretations that have placed economics or pragmatic national security interests at the center of the bond between the two states. The outcomes of this study offer new insights into the nature of alliance building by the U.S. in the twentieth century as well as a how ideology effects coalition warfare.

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Chapter 1: Old Friends and New Strangers

On Thursday, August 1, 1950, Australian Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies looked out over the assembled members of the United States House of Representatives from the speaker's rostrum. Menzies had come to Washington to consult with President Harry Truman in the early, dark days of the Korean War, a time when once again American and Australian soldiers found themselves engaged in a war against another common enemy in Asia. The Prime Minister had come to remind Congress, and the American people, of the shared sacrifice being made by Australians in Korea, the speed with which Australia had answered America's call for aid and of the long-standing ties between the two countries. Early in his speech Menzies remarked with great earnestness, "The truth is that when we Australians think about the other people of the world we think of some as foreigners and some of them as not. I want to tell you that except in the jaundiced eyes of the law, Americans are not foreigners in Australia."[1] In this brief moment Menzies articulated an accepted and often stated fact of American and Australian diplomacy, that the United States and Australia were bound together inextricably by bonds of culture and shared experience. The relationship between the United States and Australia has been considered by historians, primarily Australian, but few Americans have scrutinized the bond between both parties as well as the important issues that are raised in considering the American – Australian alliance.

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[1] U.S. Congress, House, Australian Prime Minister Robert G, Menzies address to the House of Representatives, 81st Congress, 2nd sess. *Congressional Record* 151, vol. 96 (August 1, 1950): 11656 – 11657. Menzies also had come to attempt to get a commitment from the Truman White House for an American – Australian security agreement in the Pacific, a longstanding objective of Australian foreign policy stretching back to the 1930s.

This dissertation will examine the development of American – Australian relations in the twenty-year period between 1933 and 1953, a period of momentous change in a relationship that until 1952 had never been formalized or codified by treaty. The traditional interpretation of the U.S. – Australian relationship has stressed the centrality of economics and a cultural affinity between the two nations as the primary pillars upon which this partnership was founded. The importance of economics in the American – Australian relationship has been overemphasized while cultural affinities have often been vaguely defined. However, the ideological underpinnings of this bond have been less explored despite the central role that ideology has played in this relationship. This work will demonstrate that there were two primary ideological factors that cemented this bond: a shared commitment to a racial ideal and to anti-communism during the early Cold War period. However, unlike earlier traditional interpretations, which focused on World War II, it will be argued that it was the early Cold War period (1947 – 1953) that truly brought Australia and the United States into a structured association that has continued as an enduring hallmark of both nations' foreign policies in the latter half of the twentieth century. An examination of the American – Australian alliance can also broaden our understanding of American foreign policy towards "middle" powers and to gain a better understanding of how American policymakers constructed alliances in the twentieth century. It also seeks to demonstrate the important role that ideology has played in American foreign policy in this century and how ideology served to both strengthen American foreign policy but also to blind American leaders to the complexities of a rapidly changing world after 1945 as well as demonstrate

differences with the very partners with whom they were working.[2] Specifically the role of race, or more precisely "whiteness," as an ideology in American foreign policy forms the cornerstone of this inquiry.[3]

Over the past thirty-five years, the historical profession's numerous sub-fields have undergone drastic changes as each has incorporated new methodologies and theories from fields outside of history. This infusion of theory has led to new approaches in numerous historical fields, in particular leading to new research in the fields of gender, social and world history. While historians have debated the applicability of these new methodologies, a general consensus has emerged which looks on these changes as positive. However, diplomatic historians have been engaged in strenuous debate over the role theory should play in the field. Mark Stoler commented in a brief piece written to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Society of Historians of American Foreign

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[2] American small power diplomacy can be defined as American foreign policy, primarily culturally and economically based, towards nations that came to be regarded as important corollaries to American national security policy. Many of these nations gained importance in the eyes of American policy makers due to the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s. Some works to consult which can give a general impression of traditional American small power diplomacy include John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens, GA, 1994), David Schoenbaum, *The United States and the State of Israel* (New York, 1993), W. Dirk Raat, *Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas* (Athens, GA, 1992), Gerald Haines, *The Americanization of Brazil: A Study of U.S. Cold War Diplomacy in the Third World, 1945 – 1954* (Wilmington, DL, 1989), James Bill, *The Eagles and the Lion: The Tragedy of American – Iranian Relations* (New Haven, CT, 1988), M. Srinivas Chary, *The Eagle and the Peacock: U.S. Foreign Policy Towards India Since Independence* (Westport, CT, 1985) and Robert Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York, 1968). Works to consult on the role of culture in American foreign policy include Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* Vol. III *The Globalizing of America, 1913 – 1945* (Cambridge, 1993), Cecil Crabb, *American Diplomacy and the Pragmatic Tradition* (Baton Rouge, 1989), Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, 1987), Robert Dallek, *The American Style in Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York, 1983) and Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938 – 1950*, (New York, 1981).

[3] Works to consult on race in American foreign policy include Rubin F. Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism: The Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy* (Columbia, SC, 1972), Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), and Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston, 1992).

Relations (SHAFR) stating diplomatic history had become "marginalized by the social and cultural historians who came to dominate the profession for our supposedly dated methodologies as well as politically incorrect focus on dead white males."[4]

This debate reached a crescendo with a testy public exchange of views on this subject between John Lewis Gaddis, Bruce Cummings and Melvyn Leffler. In his 1991 presidential address to SHAFR, Gaddis came out strongly against the influence exerted on the field by William Appleman Williams. Gaddis openly criticized Williams and his supporters for what he perceived as their tendency towards self-criticism and infatuation with theory that in Gaddis's estimation served only to draw attention away from the horrors committed by Stalin's regime, while focusing attention on the perceived shortcomings of American foreign policy.[5]

In response to Gaddis's attack on the methodological model and theory applied by Williams to American diplomatic history, Bruce Cummings published an article in *Diplomatic History* which lambasted Gaddis and others, including Melvyn Leffler, for their perceived lack of theory in their work. Cummings argued that traditional approaches to diplomatic history had been staid for some time and that the old guard of diplomatic historians, chief among them Gaddis and Leffler, continued to resist the changes necessary to bring the field in line with modern historical practice and increase its relevance to the larger discipline.[6]

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[4] Mark A. Stoler, "'What A Long Strange Trip It's Been,'," *Diplomatic History* 31 (June 2007): 430.
[5] John Lewis Gaddis, "The Tragedy of Cold War History," *Diplomatic History* 17 (January 1993): 1 – 16.
[6] Bruce Cumings, "'Revising Postrevisionism,' or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 17 (October 1993): 539 – 570.

While this debate could be seen as nothing more than a tempest in a teacup, it provides an important example of how self-aware diplomatic historians have become about the state of their discipline in relation to its cousin fields. And as is true with many things, the best answer lies somewhere between the supposed orthodoxy of Gaddis and the theoretical work of Cummings. Diplomatic historians over the past twenty-five years have demonstrated that the field has moved beyond its traditional focus on white male elites while still tackling the major questions that have always provided the underpinnings of diplomatic history.[7]

But even with this new movement incorporating more theory into diplomatic history, the trend remains to compartmentalize works on American foreign policy, especially when examining a traditional topic such as state to state relations, by focusing solely on economic or political relations. The story of American – Australian relations is one example of this compartmentalization by historians. The vast majority of the histories have been interpretations based primarily on the diplomatic and political record groups found in the national archives of the American and Australian governments. These works generally ignore the social or cultural aspect of the diplomatic relationship taking form between the two countries. Social histories that have dealt with the experiences of American soldiers in Australia, and Australians' reactions to the American

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[7] Important works to consult include those of Michael J. Hogan, *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941* (Cambridge, 1995), Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign* Policy (New Haven, CT, 1987), Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890- 1945* (New York, 1982), Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* Vol. III *The Globalizing of America, 1913 – 1945* (Cambridge, 1993) Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900*, (Chicago, 1999 and Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945 – 1949* (New Haven, CT, 2003).

G.I.s, have conversely not considered the important role that government decisions played in directing these interactions between common Americans and Australians.

Methodologically, this work will seek to combine traditional diplomatic history with a cultural approach. The story of American – Australian relations cannot be fully told from either a top down or from a bottom up perspective. Rather a combination of the two is necessary in order to fully understand this story. Diplomatic historians have made important strides in incorporating social or cultural perspectives into their discussions on the formation of American foreign policy. One recent work that has contributed to this process is Petra Goedde's study on the American occupation of West Germany from 1945 to 1949. In her introduction Goedde specifically states her intent to broaden "the definition of foreign relations to mean not only the interactions among politicians and diplomats but the relationships among ordinary Americans and Germans, more specifically the interactions between U.S. occupation soldiers and the civilian population in Germany."[8] The blueprint that Goedde lays out provides an excellent theoretical framework for historians to explore in more detail traditional nation-state relationships.

This work will draw on Goedde's ideas on the interplay between low-level interaction and high-level decision-making. I argue that the governments of the United States and Australia drew on perceptions held by their citizens in order to cement a bond which did not always come about naturally, contrary to older historical interpretations of the alliance. The use of American technology as a means of cultural diplomacy, or soft power, also informed how the relationship between the two nations developed. Cinema

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[8] Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945 – 1949*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), xiv.

in the twentieth century has been one of America's greatest diplomatic tools and in Australia the effect of American popular culture went a long way towards establishing Australian perceptions of America.[9] Often these perceptions proved to be a great hindrance in the American – Australian bond because movies provided Australians with many false images of the United States and its inhabitants.

Akira Iriye, who has written extensively on the formation of American cultural diplomacy, has argued that the automobile, motion pictures and radio linked together the various parts of the United States into a cohesive whole as well as linking the world to the United States, leading to what Iriye refers to as the "cultural Americanization of the world during the 1920s."[10] In Australia, the effects of American cinema were especially strong. In fact, that the Australian government felt that steps should be undertaken to lessen the influence that they exerted on Australian society. In an undated report prepared by the Intelligence Division of the Australian Army, this concern can be plainly seen when the authors of the report wrote, "Further to that, Australia came under the influence of America's propaganda to an extent not previously experienced, and this propaganda had its effect. This influence was most strongly felt through the Cinema."[11]

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[9] See Diane Collins, *Hollywood Down Under: Australians at the Movies, 1896 to the Present Day* (North Ryde, NSW, 1987). Collins works still stands as the most comprehensive treatment of the effect of American cinema on Australia and Australian perceptions of the United States.

[10] Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* Vol. III *The Globalizing of America, 1913 – 1945*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 113. Other important works to consult on the use of technology as an American diplomatic tool include Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream* (New York, 1982), John Morton Blum *V Was For Victory* (New York, 1976) and Charles Frankel, *The Neglected Aspect of Foreign Affairs: American Educational and Cultural Policy Abroad* (Washington D.C, 1965). These works are in addition to those listed in footnote #2.

[11] "Some Thoughts on British – Australian Relations," File #124 4/464, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia. Records from this archive hereafter cited as AWM.

Even before the 1940s, Australian government and social leaders voiced concern over the effect of American "talkies" on Australian society and morals. Joy Damousi articulated those concerns in a recent article on the influx of American film into Australia in the 1920s and 1930s when she wrote, "Critics deemed the American 'sound' offensive, coarse, and harsh, with a consensus that the American accent was not considered appropriate for Australian audiences. They felt that the American 'twang' was undermining the foundation on which the Australian sound was based, which was English, proper, formal, and precise."[12] To what degree the American government took advantage of the inroads created by motion pictures is debatable but the perceived effect on the bond between the two states is an important to demonstrate how cultural forces helped to mold political decisions. Such concerns highlight another important, and oftentimes overlooked, aspect of the rapport: the presence of Great Britain. The presence of Great Britain exerted an opposite pull on Australia, who faced the decision of forgoing to old imperial relationship in favor on the untested one with the U.S.

This relationship between the two nations has often been simplified as the basic axiom that the United States and Australia are, similar to the United States and Great Britain, kith and kin for whom it is natural to look to for support in the international arena. This standard interpretation of American – Australian relations has dominated the small amount of historical writing on this topic for decades. There are two principal parts to this interpretation: first, that both nations share a common bond based primarily on the shared culture of Great Britain, which includes language, political institutions and

[12] Joy Damousi, "'The Filthy American Twang': Elocution, the Advent of American 'Talkies', and Australian Cultural Identity," *The American Historical Review* 112 (April 2007): 410.

historical development and second, World War II provided the catalyst for cementing the

natural bonds between both countries. Sir Richard G. Casey, the first Australian

ambassador appointed to Washington in 1940, provided evidence of this first principle in

a speech he gave to the National Press Club in Washington D.C. on March 12, 1940.

Casey told the assembled reporters:

> There are many points of similarity between our two countries. We both occupy
> countries of great size. We are both barely through the pioneering stage. We
> have great variations of climate and terrain and productivity. We have both
> adopted the device of a Federal form of government to bind together a number of
> pre-existing states. Actually our Federal system is largely based on yours.
> Neither of us have any neighbors whose hostility gives us any concern – and, in
> consequence, we have been able to avoid growing up as military countries with
> great standing armies. One could draw many striking comparisons between our
> countries.[13]

Historians have for the most part agreed with Casey's statement and used it as the

primary paradigm through which relations between the two countries has been viewed

with little consideration for differences between the two parties and how those

differences were overcome.[14]

The second point, concerning the role of World War II in the development of

relations between these two nations, is evident in an examination of the historiography.

Australian historians have focused much of their attention on that brief period between

1941 and 1945 when American servicemen met with Australian servicemen and civilians

and the governments of both countries seemingly melded together to combat Imperial

Japan in the Pacific. American historians have not delved into this topic in any great

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[13] Richard G. Casey, "Text of Speech to National Press Club," Speech given to the National Press Club of Washington D.C. on March 12, 1940, R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File #419/18/6, AWM.
[14] See Roger Bell, *Unequal Allies: Australian – American Relations and the Pacific War* (Clayton, Victoria, 1977), Norman Harper, *Pacific Orbit: Australian – American Relations Since 1942* (Melbourne, 1968) and Raymond Esthus, *From Enmity to Alliance: U.S. – Australian Relations, 1931 – 1941* (Seattle, 1964).

detail and the majority of U.S. histories that do touch on American – Australian relations

present a picture of the United States suddenly "discovering" Australia in 1942 and just

as quickly forgetting about it as the Allied offensives in the Pacific shifted away from the

Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) further north. By 1945, as the last American soldiers

and seamen departed from Australia, many historians have made it seem that the relations

between the two countries simply came to a halt.[15]

But as is true with many perceived historical truths, the story of American and

Australian relations is a far more complex and, in many ways, less triumphant story than

has been thought. This bond has not been a simple and harmonious relationship that came

about of its own volition but rather was constructed and cultivated by a generation of

leaders in both countries to satisfy national security concerns and to meet the dangers that

swept over the globe in the middle of the twentieth century.

A reexamination of the U.S. – Australian relationship has been long overdue. An

in depth inquiry into this topic reveals that the governments of both the United States and

Australia continuously molded and shaped a relationship based on the most pragmatic of

reasons, national security, but also that both sides continuously used the idea of a special

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[15] Works to examine which detail this predominant historiographical view include David Day, *Reluctant Nation: Australia and the Defeat of Japan 1942 – 1945* (Melbourne, 1992),Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy* (Oxford, 1988), T.B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War* (New York, 1978), Roger Bell, *Unequal Allies: Australian – American Relations and the Pacific War* (Clayton, Victoria, 1977)*,* Norman Harper, *Pacific Orbit: Australian – American Relations Since 1942* (Melbourne, 1968) and Raymond Esthus, *From Enmity to Alliance: U.S. – Australian Relations, 1931 – 1941* (Seattle, 1964). Each of these works places World War II in the center of developing American – Australian relations. Other historians have also placed great emphasis on the importance of World War II as a means of developing cultural or social bonds between America and Australia. Prime examples here include Anthony Barker and Lisa Jackson, *Fleeting Attractions: A Social History of American Servicemen in Western Australia During World War II* (Nedlands, Western Australia, 1996), Kate Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front: Melbourne in Wartime 1939 – 1945* (New York, 1990), E. Daniel and Annette Potts, *Yanks Down Under 1941 – 45* (Oxford, 1985) and John Hammond Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid and Over Here: Americans in Australia, 1941 – 1945* (St. Lucia, Queensland, 1981).

bond to rationalize what was a sometimes stormy relationship to both their citizens and to themselves.

The ties between the two nations were never as serene as has been presented to the public. The picture presented often is one of the United States leading and Australia following lockstep behind. This work will demonstrate this was not the case. The relationship between these two nations has been punctuated by periods of strong disagreement over a number of issues. Some of the most important have been the conduct of the Pacific War on the part of the United States and Great Britain, the peace settlement with Japan in 1945 and the subsequent treaty of peace signed in 1951, the issue of international wool markets in 1947 and the long standing issue of Douglas MacArthur and his role as Allied commander in the SWPA during World War II and his subsequent handling of United Nations forces in Korea from 1950 until his relief in late 1951.

The peace settlement with Japan was perhaps the greatest point of contention between Australia and the United States. Australians felt they had been left out in the cold when the Big Three issued the Cairo Declaration in 1943 outlining the conditions for Allied victory in the Pacific and the Potsdam Declaration of 1945 in which the Allies hinted at the possibility of the Emperor Hirohito being allowed to retain the Japanese throne. In a broadcast to the United States, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, stated:

> Australia is not a party to, and cannot subscribe to, the terms of surrender offered Japan in the Potsdam ultimatum. The recent Potsdam ultimatum to Japan is published without prior reference to the Australian Government. The ultimatum was of fundamental importance to the Australian Government. Yet the Government's first knowledge of it came from the press. Steps had been taken to secure Chinese concurrence to the ultimatum but Australian interests and

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concurrence were no less significant. While Australia fully recognizes the right of initiative of the main belligerents, nations like Australia which have been most active in the war were entitled to participate in all relevant conferences before final decisions were taken. This principle had been conceded, yet in the present case a departure had been made from it.[16]

The issue of how large a role Australia should be accorded in international affairs would become a longstanding sticking point in the relations between both nations and would not be resolved until the signing of the ANZUS Treaty in 1951. And even then, observers in Australia and the U.S. would recognize that ANZUS was a flawed settlement that left some of the longstanding issues between the U.S. and Australia unresolved.

When examined, though, all of the contentious issues which arose between Canberra, Washington and London all boiled down to one concern: Australia's perceived lack of input on major allied and British Commonwealth decisions. For a nation whose very idea of self- identity was built on the notion of misuse by more powerful nations, usually by their former colonial masters in London, it is not surprising that Australians and their government would want to make sure that the past did not repeat itself. This sense of abuse by London became prevalent after the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. The failure of the Australian forces at Gallipoli was blamed wholly by Australian politicians and the general populace on the British planners and commanders of the invasion. The long standing bitterness that Australians felt about Gallipoli colored many of their perceptions about their treatment in the international sphere.

As stated previously, there have been two main precepts in the historical writings on this topic. The first, that the United States and Australia are culturally bound is an

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[16] Military cable from Colonel Bowen to Captain Vardaman, July 19, 1945, SMOF: Naval Aides File Box 12, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri. Records from this archive hereafter cited as Truman Library.

issue this work will dispute. A close examination of the historical records reveals that while both governments utilized fraternal language, the Australians were quick to point out the vast differences that existed between the two nations. In a speech delivered to the Advertising Club of New York, Sir Richard G. Casey, one of Australia's greatest proponents of close American – Australians relations, told the gathered crowd, "We have grown up under very much the same set of conditions, and we are both free of the restraints and formalities that inhibit the old world. However, I am not going to make the mistake of believing that we are blood brothers. We are not. We are different nationalities."[17] Casey, and others on both sides of the Pacific, made comments like this on many occasions which leads one to ask how accurate has the traditional emphasis on this idea of a special relationship been? A more concrete example of how vast dissimilarities existed between Australians and Americans can be found in the experiences of American servicemen who passed through Australia during World War II. One serviceman recounted how quickly he learned to ask for "servettes" in restaurants in Australia instead of "napkins" – a term Australians used when discussing feminine hygiene products.[18] And while this may seem to be a trivial incident, one is reminded of Winston Churchill's famous quote concerning Americans and the British being a common people separated by a common language. This insight could be equally applied to American – Australian relations. Edward Drea's comment that few Americans who

[17] R.G. Casey, "Text of Speech Given to the Advertising Club of New York," Speech given to the Advertising Club of New York on May 22, 1941, R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File # 419/18/6, AWM.
[18] Anthony Arthur, *Bushmasters: America's Jungle Warriors of World War II*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 182.

encountered Australians during World War II could fully appreciate the cultural gap between the two nations is borne out upon a closer examination of the relationship.

The second point, which posits that World War II was the seminal moment in shaping American – Australian relations, will also be challenged. One of the principal arguments of this work is that the early Cold War period (1947 – 1953) was key in the development of the American – Australian alliance. One glaring problem in the historiography of American – Australian relations is the lack of attention paid by historians to the early Cold War period. The little that has been written about this association has generally argued that in the aftermath of World War II, the United States and Australia reverted to a pre-war relationship, driven by economics. An examination of some major studies of the early Cold War era reveal that few historians have considered the role that Australia played in influencing shifting American conceptions of the post-war Pacific region. Walter LaFeber includes only a fleeting discussion of the formation of the Australia – New Zealand – United States Tripartite Agreement (ANZUS) in 1951. Melvyn Leffler includes only brief mentions of U.S. and Australian confrontations over the peace treaty with Japan and only a terse one-sentence acknowledgment of ANZUS.[19]

This work will demonstrate that the United States and Australia both reached the conclusion that their shared interest in a secure Pacific region, protected from the encroachments of communism spreading from Asia, made it imperative to develop a

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[19] ANZUS stands for the Australian – New Zealand – United States Security Agreement that was signed between the three countries on September 1, 1951 in San Francisco. An examination of some of the major works in American diplomatic history reveal how little attention has been paid to the American relationship with Australia. See Walter Lefeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945 – 2000* (Boston, 2002), Michael Hogan, *America in the World* (Cambridge, 1995), Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power* (Stanford, 1992), Robert Ferrell, *American Diplomacy* (New York, 1988), John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford, 1982) and *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1972) and William Appleman Williams, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy* Vol. 2 (Chicago, 1963).

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strong bond to combat what each saw as the single greatest threat to the world and their own security. In a memorandum prepared by the State Department for President Truman before a meeting with Prime Minster Menzies gives evidence of how aware the United States was of this point, "Australia is very conscious of the dangers of communist expansion in South East Asia. Australian initiation of plans for [British] Commonwealth technical and economic assistance in this area was prompted in the first instance by a desire to ameliorate conditions of poverty and underdevelopment which are conducive to the spread of communism. We, of course, share the Australian interest of maintaining stability in the area."[20]

As stated earlier, the majority of writings on American diplomacy in the early Cold War period have viewed American actions primarily through an economic perspective. Such works can be attributed to the influence of William Appleman Williams on American diplomatic historians.[21] An examination of American – Australian relations reveals that while economics has played a role in determining the tone and direction of the relationship, its importance in this case is more secondary, although it is interesting to note the economic relationship between America and Australia has often been rather testy and again goes against the idea of a relationship free from discord. A prime example of this tempestuous bond can be seen in an October 7, 1936 note in the papers of Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. In this note, Morgenthau reveals that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had denied most-favored-nation trading status to both Nazi Germany and Australia because of the discriminatory practices used

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[20] Background Memoranda on Visit to the United States of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, OF 48d, Truman Papers, Truman Library.
[21] See William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* 2nd Ed. (New York, 1972).

by both countries against American business. It is interesting to consider that a country which five years from this point would be one of America's primary allies in World War II is here being grouped together with Nazi Germany.[22] While economics provides an avenue of insight into the connection formed between America and Australia, the relative unimportance of Australian trade for the United States makes it difficult to accept this as the primary lens to view American – Australian relations.

Much of the historical literature makes it seem as though relations between the two countries has been a recent phenomenon. This is not the case. Americans and Australians have a long, albeit intermittent, history of interaction with one another. In the early 1800s, American whaling ships in the Pacific used ports along the coast of Australia to restock supplies and to rest before setting out on their long journey back to New England. The latter 1800s saw little in the way of official interaction taking place between Australia and the United States as the U.S. focused on internal development and Australia left its foreign policy in the hands of Great Britain. It is true that there were some Americans entering into Australia from San Francisco and vice-versa inspired by the California gold rushes and similar findings occurring in Australia but the numbers were negligible and had little effect on relations between the nations.[23]

One of the first notable points of interaction occurred in August of 1908 when President Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet sailed into the harbors of Melbourne and Sydney as stops along their world tour. The greeting the American ships received

[22] Press Release to Dow Jones, October 7, 1936, Henry J. Morgenthau Diaries: Depression and New Deal, 1933 – 1939, Reel 11, Diary 38, p. 71, (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1995). The above collection is a three part series of Morgenthau's diaries that have been microfilmed.
[23] See Jay Monaghan, *Australians and the Gold Rush: California and Down Under, 1849 – 1854* (Berkeley, CA, 1966).

was overwhelmingly positive as thousands of Australians turned out to see and cheer the American Navy. This reaction was in part due to growing Australian fears over Japanese ambitions in the Pacific in the wake of the latter's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, a fear shared by many American policymakers, including Roosevelt.[24] Important to the future story of American – Australian relations was the clear role that race played in American and Australian concerns over Japan even in 1908. The Japanese, for both Washington and Canberra, became the Other by which both nations could define themselves and their place in the Pacific.

The first occasion where large numbers of Americans and Australians had the best possibility to encounter one another was in the trenches of the Western Front during World War I fighting against Imperial Germany. Many American units were first led into battle under the watchful eyes of Australians. The memories of this period for both nations revolve around the doughboys and the diggers sharing the horrors and burdens of the trenches and their deep respect for the fighting ability of the other. But again the numbers of Americans and Australians who fought side by side were never on the level that both Australians and Americans have claimed. Australia and the United States had the most exposure to each other not on the battlefields of France but in the halls of Versailles during the Paris Peace Conference after the war.

President Woodrow Wilson had come to the peace conference hailed as the savior of western democracy and intent on seeing his idea of a peace without vengeance put into action. Wilson's idealism was roughly greeted by the cold political realism of Australian

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[24] Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners: A History of Australian – American Naval Relations*, (Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), 16 – 18.

Prime Minister William Hughes. They clashed over the issue of German territories in the

Pacific. Hughes demanded that Australia be granted a mandate for the control of these

territories in repayment for the bloody sacrifice of Australian soldiers at places like

Gallipoli. This old-style territory grabbing flew in the face of what Wilson had come to

Paris to see done. Both men, well known for their stubborn natures, had several heated

clashes over the course of the conference.[25] So the first close meeting between Australia

and the United States had been far less than the familial relations that have been

presented by past historians.

The 1920s saw both nations turn their attention to domestic concerns. Americans

enjoyed the spoils of the economic growth engendered by their involvement in World

War I. Mass production techniques were becoming more widespread and allowing the

majority of Americans for the first time to enjoy items that hitherto had been

unaffordable. It truly was a time when, as President Calvin Coolidge is famous for

remarking, "America's business was business." The high point of interaction between

Australia and the U.S. in the 1920s came during 1925 when several ships of the U.S.

Navy paid a call on Sydney. Again the reception to the Americans was overwhelmingly

positive, one that matched in intensity the greeting which had been given to Roosevelt's

Great White Fleet seventeen years earlier.[26]

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[25] The best recent treatment of the conflict between Hughes and Wilson can be found in Margaret Macmillian, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York, 2002). Australian historian T.B. Millar also chronicled the clash between Wilson and Hughes at Versailles in his work *Australia in Peace and War* (New York, 1978). Millar wrote that Wilson saw Hughes and Australia as "almost irrelevant to the international scene with a propensity to initiate out of all proportion to the power to influence," while Hughes saw Wilson as "an impractical idealist who would blindly sacrifice other people's security for a theoretical principle," (120 – 121)
[26] Frame, *Pacific Partners*, 29.

Australia was content to leave its external affairs in the hands of the diplomats in London and secure in the knowledge that the British navy protected their shores. Australians gained a new sense of their place in the world because of their involvement in World War I which began a debate as to whether or not Australia was truly a nation equal to the others of the world, or still an extension of the British Empire. This debate would have implications for the future development of American – Australian relations. The triangular relationship of Australia, Great Britain and the United States forms one of the most crucial aspects of understanding American – Australian relations. This issue is not simply one of historical conjecture. It weighed on the mind of Australians, Americans and British. In a 1947 editorial in the magazine *Pacific Neighbors,* an unnamed author posited that Australia, "Standing as she does midway between the traditionalism of the old world and the more fluid patterns of the new," was well qualified to serve as a bridge between the U.S. and Great Britain.[27] Numerous questions remain unanswered about this triangular relationship. Was American policy towards Australia simply an extension of its policy towards Great Britain? Was Australia able to exert its own independent way between the two great powers? How did anti-British sentiment so prevalent among American policymakers in the 1930s and 1940s influence their views on Australia? This

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[27] "Neighbors Get Together," *Pacific Neighbors* No. 3, June 1947, OF 1054, Truman Library.

work will address these questions, among others, in an attempt to present a holistic

picture of American – Australian relations.[28]

There was little contact, official or unofficial, between Australians and Americans

in the decade leading up to the 1930s. The onset of the Great Depression in some ways

reinforced the isolationist impulses of Americans and Australians. However, the growing

threats posed by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan brought leaders in both countries to

the conclusion that it was now necessary to re-engage with the wider world and with each

other. The primary issue that would face these leaders would be how best to overcome

the differences between them.

This work will show that this relationship was built primarily upon two distinctive

ideologies, in opposition to the traditional emphasis on economics. One was a shared

racial ideology that helped to motivate fears about the spread of Japanese power in the

1930s and helped lead both nations to come together during the Pacific campaigns of

World War II and the early Cold War period. Second was a shared fear of communism

and a subsequent commitment to stop the perceived spread of this ideology in Asia.

Interestingly race and anti-communism have a connection. In the United States in late

1940s and early 1950s, persons and groups who worked to attain better race relations

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[28] Important works that address the question of developing Australian national identity are John Carroll, *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity* (Melbourne, 1982), Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Digger: The Australian Soldier in Two World Wars* (Sydney, 1985) and Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Solders in the Great War* (Canberra, 1974). Each of these works considers the important role assigned to the Australian experience at Gallipoli as a determining factor in the debate over Australian national identity. Works to consult concerning this anti-British feeling of American decision makers such as Admiral Ernest J. King can be found in Justus Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939 –1941* (Lanham, MD, 2000), Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), Ian Cowman, *Dominion or Decline: Anglo – American Naval Relations in the Pacific, 1937 – 1941* (Oxford, 1996), David Day, *Reluctant Nation: Australia and the Allied Defeat of Japan 1942 – 1945* (New York, 1992), Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War Against Japan* (New York, 1985) and John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941 – 1945* (New York, 1981).

were often labeled as communists or communist sympathizers. While evidence of the same phenomenon occurring in Australia is somewhat more difficult to see, it could be argued that the one often informed opinions about the other. What is notable is the use of racial language that was used against Japan in the 1940s made an easy transition to being applied to communist states in Asia after 1945.

The issue of race provides us with an intriguing view into relations between the U.S. and Australia. Both had legalized forms of segregation the American South had Jim Crow laws and in Australia the White Australia Policy existed to maintain the homogeneity of the nation. Most Americans are familiar with the history of Jim Crow and many were cognizant of the apartheid system of South Africa, but are not familiar with White Australia. The White Australia policy operated in a somewhat different manner from Jim Crow and apartheid. As a result of the gold rushes of the mid and late 1800s, many companies in Australia imported a large number of Asian workers to meet growing labor demands. The traditional Anglo-Saxon powerbase in Australia feared that this influx of Asians would overwhelm the once perceived outpost of European civilization in the Pacific and so created an immigration system that sought to keep out persons on the basis of race. A booklet prepared for Australian soldiers serving outside of the country during World War II contained this explanation of the White Australia policy, "To the principle of 'White Australia' all political parties in the British Commonwealth subscribe, for the economic reason that the white man's standard of living would be endangered by the introduction of colored labor. Thus, the flow of English-speaking

investor-settlers is especially encouraged."[29] This was a sentiment many in the United

States, in both the North and the South, could agree with. It is also important to note the

emphasis not just on race but on ethnicity as well. Southern and Eastern Europeans were

often discouraged from immigrating to Australia because they were not considered

"white." The same phenomenon has been well documented in the U.S. through the latter

half of the 19th century and into the mid-twentieth century.[30]

Aside from the distinct political dimension that race played in fostering this

relationship, there was a two-tiered racial fear that helped to animate Americans and

Australians alike. The specific aspect of this racial fear was a fear of Japan. This mindset

supplemented and arose out of a more generalized concern over the threat of the "Yellow

Peril." John Dower's seminal work on the interplay between race and the savagery of the

Pacific War has clearly highlighted this process. As he states in *War Without Mercy*,

"anti-Japanese sentiment in the Anglo-American camp became entangled with larger

fears concerning Asians in general (the Yellow Peril) and 'colored' peoples as a whole."[31]

The specific fear of Japan for both the United States and Australia can be traced

to the early years of the twentieth century. When Japan defeated Russia in the 1905

Russo-Japanese War, it represented the first time that an Asian power had defeated a

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[29] Personnel Booklet for Overseas Service, p. 84, Alan Francis Hackett Papers, PR 09/88, File # 90/0905, Pt. 3 of 3, AWM. It was not until 1975 that racial factors were removed as a reason to deny immigrants' entrance into Australia although starting in the late 1950s the White Australia policies had gradually been relaxed.
[30] Works to consult on "whiteness" in American history include David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London, 1991), Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race* (London, 1994), Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995), Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), Matthew P. Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900 – 1940* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).
[31] John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 173.

Western power in modern history. Western powers with holdings in the Pacific feared that the native populations under their dominion would begin to clamor, or even worse openly revolt. In 1902, Great Britain signed a formal alliance with Japan in order to lessen the threat to its Pacific holdings. Australians viewed this move with horror as they felt that London had betrayed the interests of the European powers by aligning with an Asian people. This move by Great Britain further aggravated Australian nationalists who felt that allegiance to the Empire would only lead to ruin for Australia. Over the next decades, Australians kept a wary eye to the north fearing Japanese territorial aspirations would inevitably lead them south and threaten Australia. In the 1930s, as Japan's war in China intensified, Australian policymakers considered their position. Many feared Great Britain, due to the threat posed by Nazi Germany in Europe, would be unable to come to their aid in the event Japan began southward expansion. Some Australians placed their hope in the British Commonwealth's naval base at Singapore, the "Gibraltar of the East," as a deterrent to Japan. Others began to consider it necessary to look across the Pacific to United States. It is during this time that calls for a formal security alliance with the United States appeared in Australia.

The American relationship with Japan in the twentieth century leading up to the outbreak of war in 1941 was equally rocky. Robert Ferrell outlined the first thirty years of American – Japanese relations in the twentieth century in his work on American diplomacy. He wrote, "ever since the victory of Japan over Russia in 1904 – 1905 and the subsequent refusal of the Japanese to be houseboys for the open door, distrust had existed between the two Pacific nations, Japan and the United States, a distrust which on several

occasions before 1931 had overcome the normal reticences of international discourse."[32] Several of the incidents that Ferrell alludes to include the segregation of Japanese schoolchildren in San Francisco public schools in 1906 and the exclusion of Japanese immigrants from the United States in the Immigration Act of 1924. With the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, American opinion swung decidedly against Japan, much of which was animated by a deep-seated racial animosity.

With the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific in December of 1941 the racial aspect of the war came to the foreground. In a memorandum outlining his general thoughts concerning American policies for the upcoming war in the Pacific, Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations (COMINCH – CNO) and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote, "Australia – and New Zealand – are 'white men's countries' which it is essential that we shall not allow to be overrun by Japan – because of the repercussions among the non-white races of the world."[33] King here articulates both the specific fears related to Japan as well as the more general concerns about the "non-white races" as he terms it. The manner in which the United States executed the war in the Pacific was marked by heavy racial rhetoric fueling the already enflamed passions of the nation in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.[34] Both

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[32] Robert Ferrell, *American Diplomacy: The Twentieth Century*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 196.

[33] Ernest J. King to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 5, 1942, Ernest J. King Papers, Series 1, Reel 1, (Scholarly Resources: Wilmington, DE, 1991). This microfilm collection is of the papers held by the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

[34] Examples of the racial rhetoric used by Americans can be seen in such wartime songs as "We're Gonna Have to Slap the Dirty Little Jap" (1942), "It's Taps for the Japs" (1942) and "You're a Sap Mr. Jap" (1942). American posters of the era also contained numerous stereotyped images of the Japanese often comparing them to monkeys or insects in an attempt to dehumanize the enemy. It should be noted that Japanese propaganda was equally racist in its portrayal of Americans. See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

Americans and Australians found their racial attitudes provided them a with a shared understanding of the nature of the enemy, and the goals of the war.

One interesting corollary to the racial aspect of the relationship this work will address is the ambiguous issue of the introduction of African-American servicemen into Australia during World War II. Blacks were among some of the first American troops to arrive in Australia starting in 1942. They did not come as combat soldiers but mostly as members of construction companies and manual laborers. The Australian government was placed in a precarious position. On the one hand it was the official policy of Australia to deter non-whites from entering the country to perform work that otherwise could be done by a white Australian. On the other hand, the black servicemen arrived as part of the force that many Australians felt were there to save them from an impending Japanese invasion. The treatment many black Americans received in Australia can only be defined as ambiguous. Often they were warmly greeted and welcomed into Australian society, in contrast to the treatment they received from their own white superiors. But many in Australia also worried about the possibility that these black Americans would take advantage of the young daughters of Australia. This issue has not received any in-depth study from historians even though it offers a unique view on the issue of American – Australian relations. It will be the contention of this work that this issue helped to familiarize both Americans and Australians with the others' attitudes towards race and reveals another aspect of the uncertain attitudes Australians had for their American counterparts.[35]

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[35] The best work to consult concerning black G.I.s in Australia is Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under? African American Encounters with White Australia, 1942 – 1945," *Pacific Historical*

The second part of the foundation of American – Australian relationships was a shared commitment to anti-communism. Historians of both countries have produced a sizeable body of work that examines the experiences of their respective countries in dealing with this topic. However few works have attempted to look at anti-communism in the United States in a comparative manner with anti-communism in Australia. An examination of the relationship demonstrates how this issue helped to further bring both governments together.[36]

Among the many allies of the United States during the early Cold War perhaps only Australia matched America's preoccupation with communism in Asia. In the case of Australia this can be attributed to the fact that after World War II, Australians came to think very clearly of themselves as the leader of the free nations of the Pacific, as well as the geographic nearness of the threat. Communist expansion in China in 1949, Communist insurgency in Malaya, the Huk rebellion in the Philippines in 1946, and Ho Chi Minh's independence movement in Indochina made many in Australia take notice that a new peril had appeared on their northern doorstep that appeared every bit as menacing as had the Japanese threat during World War II.

Review 71 (2002): 607 – 632. There has been thus far no single monograph on the subject of African - American servicemen in Australia.

[36] See John Gladchuk, *Hollywood and Anticommunism: HUAC and the Evolution of the Red Menace, 1935 – 1950* (New York, 2007), Tom Wicker, *Shooting Star: The Brief Arc of Joe McCarthy* (Orlando, 2006), George Lewis, *The White South and Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945 – 1965* (Gainesville, FL, 2004), Cynthia Hendershot, *Anticommunism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America* (Jefferson, NC, 2003), Richard Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York, 1995) and M.J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830 – 1970* (Baltimore, 1990). For the Australia see Stuart MacIntyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia From Origins to Illegality* (St. Leonards, NSW, 1999), Joy Damousi *Women Come Rally* (Melbourne, 1994), Tom Sheridan, *Divisions of Labor* (Melbourne, 1989), Robert Manne, *The Petrov Affair* (Melbourne, 1987) and Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia* (Melbourne, 1954).

Sir Richard Casey, writing in 1955, stated "Australia is a link in the world-wide chain of democratic countries that comprise the grand alliance against international Communism. The survival of democracy as a whole depends on all the links of the chain holding good."[37] For Australians, this meant ensuring the support of their nation by the U.S. Anti-communism proved to be as powerful a political tool in Australia as it was in the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Labor Party, which had been in power in Australia since 1942, was defeated in general elections in 1949 by Robert Menzies's Liberal Party primarily because of the strident anti-communist rhetoric used by Menzies and his cohorts In 1951, the Menzies government attempted to pass a national law that would have outlawed the communist party. It must be noted that, as anti-communist as the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were, neither ever attempted such a measure in the United States.[38]

Historians have written volumes on the anti-communist phenomenon in the United States that occurred after World War II. It is difficult for many to understand the drastic effect that American fear of communism had on the implementation of American foreign policy. It was the central dictate of American policymakers and oftentimes other

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[37] R.G. Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State College Press, 1955), vi.
[38] One possible exception to this was the Alien Registration Act or Smith Act of 1940. The bill made it illegal for anyone to knowingly or willingly advocate the overthrow of any state government or the government of the United States by force or to associate with any organization that encouraged its members to do so. The act was used as a legal basis for assaulting the American Communist Party in the late 1940s and early 1950s and resulted by 1957 in the trial of over 140 party members. Eventually the Smith Act was ruled unconstitutional after the 1957 Supreme Court Cases of *Yates v. United States* and *Watkins v. United States*. While the Smith Act was used to target communists in the U.S. it was never envisioned to be as sweeping as the Communist Dissolution Bill proposed by Robert Menzies in Australia in 1951. For a discussion of the Smith Act see Michael Belknap, *Cold War Political Justice: The Smith Act, the Communist Party, and American Civil Liberties* (Westport, CT, 1977)

nations' level of anti-communism was used as a measuring stick by which the United States judged those nations worthiness to receive aid or support from the U.S.

This litmus test was applied to Australia. Many in the American government became deeply interested in the possible strength of communism in Australia or the seeming indifference they perceived among average Australians. American ambassador Pete Jarman revealed this concern in a 1951 letter to Alexander Wiley, a former colleague in Congress, writing, "The Communist situation is interesting and intriguing and difficult to understand. While they are entirely too 'rampant' for your and my way of thinking, this does not seem to greatly disturb the average citizen."[39] In many ways, Americans did not know how much to trust Australia when it came to the issue of communism.

On the one hand Americans recognized Australia had been one of the first countries to answer the UN's call for aid to South Korea in 1950. President Truman was reminded of this in a background briefing report prepared for him before a meeting with Prime Minister Menzies in July 1950. The memorandum stated, "The prompt reaction of Australia to the invasion of Korea and the unanimous vote of approval given by the Australian parliament to the military measure taken by the Government afford a good indication of the close identity of views between the United States and Australia on matters of fundamental importance."[40] The fiscally conservative Truman administration heeded the proposition of NSC 162/2, which argued that the United States could not

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[39] Pete Jarman to Alexander Wiley, Feb. 1, 1951, Pete Jarman Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Papers in this collection will hereafter be cited as ADAH.
[40] Background Memoranda on Visit to the United States of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, OF 48d, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

afford to meet the exorbitant defense costs that the Cold War would bring on without the support of allies like Australia.[41]

But at the same time, fears abounded in Washington over how deeply communists had burrowed into Australian government and society. A 1949 briefing book prepared by the CIA for President Truman reveals how interested the American government was in this question. The findings of the report reveal the U.S. was unsure of how strong communism was in Australia but even this uncertainty did not deter the CIA from maintaining that, "Although the extent of Communist influence within the government is not clear, the Australian Communist Party is undoubtedly a significant factor in the labor movement. Communists occupy key positions in 7 of the 9 most important trade unions. The strength of Communist influence has been demonstrated in a series of large-scale postwar strikes which have followed a common pattern."[42] This strain of distrust colored how close the United States would take Australia into its confidence and would prove to be yet another point of friction between the two.

The continued importance of the Australian relationship for the United States in today's world cannot be undervalued. Australia has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to support the United States in even some of its most ill-advised foreign policy ventures. Few Americans fully understand the nature of the relationship that has been built between the two countries in the twentieth century and the importance that the Australian government attaches to its friendship with the United States. In many ways,

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[41] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 152.
[42] "Communist Influence in Australia," CIA ORE 9-49, April 11, 1949, President's Secretary's Files: Intelligence Files 1946 – 1953, Box 215, Truman Papers, Truman Library. Papers from this collection will hereafter be cited as PSF: Intelligence Files.

Americans are as much in the dark about U.S. – Australian relations now as they were in the 1930s. The same could not be said of Australians, whose history in the past fifty years has often been dominated by the presence of the United States. Some would wonder why expatriate Australian and media mogul Rupert Murdoch, son of Australian newspaper mogul Sir Keith Murdoch, pushed for the creation of a U.S. Studies Center to be housed at the University of Sydney. The answer lies in the continued importance of the U.S. alliance for Australia. In many ways, a relationship forged by the exigencies of war has become institutionalized, with few in either country fully questioning how or why the alliance began.

A study of the bond forged between these two nations reveals an important number of insights into not only American foreign policy making in the twentieth century but also into how crucial cultural tools and perceptions have become in helping to spread American influence in the twentieth century. It is a story that does not have a glamorous or auspicious beginning but it touches on several of the most important issues concerning the spread of American power and influence during this century. The American – Australian story also provides another avenue to explore the centrality of race to the American experience by demonstrating how American interactions with both non-white and white nations were driven by perceptions of race in the twentieth century. This work also provides insight into how the United States consciously constructed foreign alliances, a significant transition in American foreign policy given the previous dominance of unilateralism in American foreign policy thinking. The development of the Australia rapport constitutes one of the few major successes that the U.S. enjoyed in

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cultivating a continuous and friendly relationship with a Pacific nation in the twentieth

century. The story is long and complex and has been misunderstood by both parties and

holds important insights for historians and students of American foreign policy.

Chapter 2: An Acrimonious Time: 1933 - 1940

The inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency of the United States in March 1933 marked for many Americans a brief respite from the bleakness of the economic depression that had gripped their country and the world since 1929. Roosevelt defeated Republican incumbent Hebert Hoover by calling for a new direction to help restore hope to a defeated populace. Historians have primarily remembered Roosevelt's first term for its aggressive and sometimes unorthodox policies to help end the Great Depression.[1] But it was not only in the domestic sphere that his administration sought to break with past policies. In the realm of foreign policy, Roosevelt sough a new path in a world precariously balanced between peace and war.

After World War I, American foreign policy had been marked by isolationism. It should be noted that isolationism in this period did not mean a complete cutting off from all outside contact. Rather, isolationism in the 1920s was characterized by a pronounced withdrawal of governmental guidance in American foreign policy in favor of using private individuals and corporations to act as American proxies.[2] The horrors of World War I, the repudiation of the Versailles Treaty in 1919 by the United States Senate, and the Allies' inability or unwillingness to repay war debts created a dour mood in the country. Many Americans felt that sacrifice made and the lives lost had been worthless.

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[1] For the best accounts of Roosevelt's first term see Anthony Badger, *FDR: The First Hundred* Days (New York, 2008), Paul Conkin, *The New Deal* 2nd Ed. (New York, 1975) and William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932 – 1940* (New York, 1963). For a complete recounting of Roosevelt's life and time in office see James McGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956) and *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (New York, 1970) as well as Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York, 2007).
[2] For a discussion of this phenomenon see George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York, 2008), 436 – 483. There were noted exceptions to the American governmental withdrawal from foreign affairs in the 1920s, notably the Washington Naval Conference of 1921 – 22 and the Kellogg – Briand Pact of 1928.

Other factors also shaped the nation's attitudes about foreign policy. Robert Dallek

argued that an outpouring of nativist thinking in the 1920s played a significant role in the

isolationism that marked American foreign policy between World War I and World War

II. Dallek wrote, "This nativist upsurge, this fear that insidious alien influences were

endangering America's unique institutions, was the central force behind the isolationist

impulse in the country's foreign policy between the wars."[3] It is easy to see the upsurge

Dallek refers to when examining the inter-war period. The revival of the Klu Klux Klan

in 1915 was based as much on fear of immigrants, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism, as

hatred for African-Americans. The Johnson – Reed Act of 1924 imposed quotas on the

number of immigrants who could come to the United States and excluded all immigrants

from Asia. This final point was aimed specifically at Japanese and Chinese immigrants

moving to the West Coast.[4]

The Roosevelt Administration linked its foreign policy to its domestic efforts to

end the Great Depression. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, along with Roosevelt, worked

to end autarky and restrictive barriers to free trade, arguing that the creation of reciprocal

free trade treaties and zones would drastically alleviate the economic woes of the world

and remove many of the impediments to world peace that had arisen since 1929. The

effort to create free trade became one of the hallmarks of Roosevelt's foreign policy

during his time in office, primarily championed by Hull. Robert Ferrell points out,

however, that Roosevelt's policies proved to be no more effective in helping ease either

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[3] Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Policies and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 113.

[4] See Peter Wang, *Legislating "Normalcy": The Immigration Act of 1924* (Saratoga, CA, 1975). The Reed – Johnson Act limited the number of immigrants who could be admitted from any country to 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the United States in 1890.

the economic or political tensions of the 1930s.[5] The reasons for the failure of

Roosevelt's foreign policy in the 1930s are myriad, but historians have often identified

one primary cause, the byzantine nature of the Roosevelt Administration. Jonathan Utley

provided one such critique, "Rather than a smoothly functioning, harmonious machine,

the foreign policy establishment in the Roosevelt Administration was a snake pit of

influential leaders and faceless bureaucrats working at cross-purposes, striking deals, and

not infrequently employing sleight of hand in order to move the nation in the direction

each thought was most appropriate."[6] Roosevelt himself was often seen as the main

reason for the shortcomings of his administration's foreign policy because of his

unwillingness to ever give subordinates clear insight into what he desired from them.[7]

Australia welcomed the seeming reemergence of the United States onto the world

scene. John Hammond Moore contends that American – Australian ties were almost non-

existent prior to World War II because of the insignificance of trade and commercial ties

between the countries, noting that "Australia, among the most loyal of dominions and

generally ruled by conservatives who thought any independence from London was high

treason, found it extremely difficult to develop significant trans-Pacific relations."[8]

Moore's point is partially valid. American – Australian relations in the twenty-year

period between the wars was sporadic at best. Australia continued to rely on the British

Embassy in Washington as its primary contact with the Americans while the American

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[5] Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 185.
[6] Jonathan Utley, *Going to War With Japan 1937 – 1941* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), xii – xiii.
[7] An excellent insight into this phenomenon can be found in Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, 1991).
[8] John Hammond Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here: Americans in Australia, 1941 – 1945* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1981), 1.

consular service in Australia was considered a backwater post among the foreign policy

establishment. But even taking these factors into account, it is wrong to contend that

American – Australian relations in the 1930s stayed in this state.

There were several factors that conspired to bring the United States and Australia

into closer contact as the decade wore on. Roosevelt's appointment of Jay Pierrepont

Moffat as America's consul-general in Australia in 1935 signaled a change in American

interest in Australia. Moffat was one of the bright stars in the State Department who had

previously served in several other important posts abroad. His appointment to Australia

indicated Roosevelt was beginning to take more interest in the Pacific and Australia.[9]

Moffat quickly became an invaluable source of information on the state of American –

Australian relations for Washington as he traced the steady decline in the association

prior to World War II.

Before World War I, Australia had a romanticized vision of the United States

owing mainly to the American fleet visits of 1908 and 1924. George Pearce, Australian

Minister for External Affairs between 1934 and 1937, highlighted this for Consul-

General Moffat during a conversation between the two in 1935. Moffat recorded in his

diary, "Sir George started his recital with the visit of the American Fleet to Australia in

1908 when American influence was at its apex. Popular songs were being sung, 'We have

a big brother in America.' From one end of Australia to the other the visit of the Fleet

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[9] Moffat had previously served in the Netherlands, Poland, Japan, and Switzerland. He would later serve as
Chief of the State Department's Western European Division and as ambassador to Canada during World
War II.

was regarded as a demonstration of white solidarity against the yellow races."[10] Pearce's statement deserves attention because it draws attention to how prominent a role race played in the Australian mind when considering the U.S., even at this early point. In the aftermath of World War I, though, Australian perception of the United States began to sour due to several factors. Raymond Esthus delineated just a few of these in his work on American – Australia relations between 1931 and 1941. He listed America's long delay in entering World War I, the refusal to sign the Versailles Treaty and the subsequent refusal to join the League of Nations and American insistence on the full payment of war debts from its Allies as four of the primary reasons why Australians soon became disillusioned with their Pacific neighbors. He went on to argue, "When world economic depression came in 1929, Australians were quick to hold American economic policies as responsible for the disaster."[11] Moffat added two other possible explanations for the decline in American – Australian relations that occurred over the 1930s. In an unpublished essay written in 1937 Moffat wrote, "First, a conscious drive on the part of British organs of public opinion to diminish our influence, and second, a form of inferiority complex which makes the Australian resent in others the accomplishments he most craves for himself."[12]

      Even while Australian attitudes about America began to change, American cultural power continued to influence the nation's perception down under. The American

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[10] Nancy Harvison Hooker, ed., *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat 1919 – 1943* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 129. For discussion of the Great White Fleet see Robert Hart, *The Great White Fleet: It Voyage Around the World, 1907 – 1909* (Boston, 1965) and James Reckner, *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet* (Annapolis, MD, 1988).
[11] Raymond Esthus, *From Enmity to Alliance: U.S. – Australian Relations, 1931 – 1941* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 6.
[12] Hooker, ed., *The Moffat Papers*, 124 – 125.

cinema in Australian life most strongly contributed to the romanticized image of the

United States. Few other American exports did more to spread an idealized version of

America and its people than the movies. The American sociologist Robert Park wrote the

cinema "may be regarded as the symbol of a new dimension of our international and

racial relations which is neither economic nor political, but cultural."[13] In few countries

were American films as popular as in Australia. By the end of the 1930s, 75 per cent of

all films being shown in Australian cinemas were from Hollywood.[14] The movies offered

an opportunity for Australians to get to know a people and a land that very few of them

would ever have the opportunity to visit in person. But it also helped them to form an

often exaggerated and idealized version of the United States and its citizens. The world

depression contributed to the growth of American cinema both at home and abroad as

people escaped to the movies. Consequently, American films came to be a point of

contention between segments of Australian society and the United States. Some cinemas

insisted on only showing British films that were deemed to be more cultured than their

American counterparts. Ray Aitchison also pointed out that the movies sowed the seeds

of future misunderstandings between the two nations.[15] Australian preconceptions of

Americans, created by the films, often failed to match expectations when the two groups

came together.

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[13] Quoted in Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* Vol. III, 113. Some works to consult on soft power and its uses in international diplomacy include Matthew Fraser, *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire* (New York, 2005), Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York, 2005) and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, 2004).
[14] Damousi, "'The Filthy American Twang'," 415.
[15] Kate Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front: Melbourne in Wartime 1939 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 158.; Ray Aitchison, *Americans in Australia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 52.

This growing cultural chasm was only a minor point in American – Australian relations as more substantive points of division became more common. The American decision to grant independence to the Philippines and withdraw from that area of the Pacific was one such point of contention. In 1932, the Hawes – Cutting Act provided for Filipino independence after a ten-year transitional period and the plan for independence was finalized in the Tydings – McDuffie Act of 1934. Raymond Esthus remarked that the U.S.'s action "was resented by Australians. They interpreted it as an American withdrawal from the Western Pacific and therefore a blow to Australian security."[16] Jay Pierrepont Moffat informed Hull in a letter that "There is an increasing bitterness at our policy of withdrawal from the Philippines as step succeeds step in its realization."[17] Much of the Australian anger was fueled by fear over the ominous threat of imperial Japan to the north. The onset of the Chino – Japanese War that began with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 had brought old fears back to the forefront of Australian's minds. Visions of a vast Asiatic horde sweeping south to topple the only fully white man's country in the Pacific had long been a fear of Australians and with the Americans seeming withdrawal from that region there appeared no impediment standing in Japan's way. The Roosevelt Administration, however, was not aware of how their move would be interpreted by the Australians and saw the movement towards Filipino independence to be consistent with the anti-imperialism component of Roosevelt's foreign policy.

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[16] Esthus, *From Enmity to Alliance*, 10.
[17] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, February 11, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. IV *The Far East* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 51.

A popular work, *Pacific Peril or Menace of Japan's Mandated Islands*, written by Australian E. George Marks in 1933, highlights how pervasive the fear of Japan was for Australians and how strongly this fear was motivated by race.[18] Japan, Marks pointed out, had carved out an empire by military might and the rhetoric emanating from Japan concerning the end of European colonialism in Asia was a direct challenge to Australia. "She [Japan]", Marks wrote, "is looked up to by the colored peoples of the world as the real instrument of their liberation from the domination of the white man – her gigantic fleet is regarded by the colored races as the first means of their emancipation from their white overlords."[19] Because of this, Australia, Marks contended, could look only to one nation for support: the U.S. Both nations were bound by a shared bond of race that made them both targets for Japanese aggression. Marks argued that, "The U.S.A. is vitally interested in the supremacy of a White Pacific; it has barred and bolted its doors against Asiatics; so has Australia. Therein is unison of sentiment. Australia's ideal is White Australia – it is a challenge to Asia!"[20] Calls like Marks's were not rare even in the mid-1930s and would only gain urgency as the shadows of war lengthened over the Pacific.

Australia's deep-seated fear of Japanese encroachment was as prevalent among policymakers as it was among the common populace. In 1935 Australian Prime Minister Joseph Lyons attempted to coax the United States into agreeing to a broad based security pact entailing all nations bordering the Pacific. This, and subsequent efforts by the

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[18] Marks was well known for his strident anti-Japanese writings. In 1924 he published a work entitled *Watch the Pacific!: Defenseless Australia* (1924) that highlighted many of the same arguments put forward in *Pacific Peril*.

[19] E. George Marks, *Pacific Peril or Menace of Japan's Mandated Islands* (Sydney: The Wynnard Book Arcade, 1933), 12, Series # A1336, Control # 23924, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, Australia. Records from this archive hereafter cited as NAA.

[20] Marks, *Pacific Peril*, 27, Series # A1336, Control # 23924, NAA.

Australians, were rebuffed by Washington which wanted to steer clear of any

entanglements which would bring them into even closer conflict with Japan. American

Ambassador to Great Britain Robert W. Bingham informed Lyons of this reality in June

1937. Bingham wrote to Cordell Hull, "I assured him [Lyons] that in my opinion it would

be impossible to secure any form of agreement which would bind our Government in any

way whatever looking towards the protection of Australia from attack by Japan."[21] The

Roosevelt Administration sought to steer a course between condemnations of Japanese

actions in China on the one hand and avoiding open military conflict on the other. Lyons

received a vague promise from Roosevelt in 1937 that "if serious trouble arose in the

Pacific, the U.S. would be prepared to make common cause with the members of the

[British] Commonwealth concerned."[22] This lack of a concrete commitment from the

Americans was unsettling to Australians with the memories of the perceived American

isolationism of the 1920s still fresh in their minds. In 1939, Stanley Bruce, acting on

behalf of the government of Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, emphasized to

Roosevelt Australia's anxiety about a possible Japanese move towards Australia. Bruce

stressed that "everywhere I have been asked as to the attitude of the United States

towards any move southward by Japan."[23] Roosevelt, in his usual fashion, refused to give

Bruce any clear assurances of American intentions.

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[21] Robert W. Bingham to Cordell Hull, June 4, 1937 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1937 Vol. II *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 141.

[22] Quoted in Roger Bell, *Unequal Allies: Australian – American Relations and the Pacific War* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 12.

[23] Notes of Conversation Between Stanley Bruce and Franklin Roosevelt, May 4, 1939, Series # M104, Control # 7/4, NAA.

Also troubling to Australians was the fact that the Roosevelt Administration's commitment to internationalism failed to translate into action. American foreign policy still seemed to follow the seeming do-nothing policies of its predecessors. An examination of the numerous foreign policy crises that arose in the early and mid-1930s revealed to the Australians that the United States remained quite content to stay clear of the volatility that was engulfing the world. The aggressive foreign policy pursuits of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were often met by nothing more then strongly worded protests which did little to provide support for nations like Australia who looked to the new American administration to provide a strong example of leadership in the international realm. Keith Officer, who served as Australian counselor in the British embassy in Washington D.C., wrote to his colleague Alfred Stirling that "This country [United States] is not interested in events outside its own border."[24] Oftentimes, American suspicions of "old Europe" lay at the heart of its inaction. The Sudeten crisis and subsequent Munich agreement between Germany and other European powers to many Americans smacked of old style power politics that many felt had been the prime cause of World War I. Fred Alexander, an Australian observer in the U.S, stated "American suspicions of British policy in the Far East, which had been smoldering since 1931 – 32, were fanned into flame by the 'betrayal' of Czechoslovakia." This division between the United States and Great Britain also affected Australian relations with the Americans as Canberra found itself pulled between traditional loyalties to Empire but also a very real

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[24] Sir Keith Officer to Alfred Stirling, August 2, 1937, Sir Keith Officer Papers, MS2629, Box 1, Correspondence May 1937 – August 1937, National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia. Records from this archive hereafter cited as NLA.

need to form closer ties to the United States to defend against possible Japanese aggression.[25]

While events in Europe had an influence on the course of American – Australian relations, events in the Pacific had a far more significant effect. The single most important event of the early part of the 1930s on American – Australian relations was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the subsequent founding of the puppet state of Manchuko. The Japanese used the supposed attack by Chinese "bandits" on a rail line near Mukden on the night of September 18, 1931, as pretext for launching an invasion of the whole of Manchuria with an eye to incorporating the rich natural resources of the region into the Japanese empire. Japan's use of force was the first open challenge to the mandate of the League of Nations. The member nations of the League had to consider how best to respond to this newest crisis in world affairs. In the United States two distinct approaches come to the fore. First, the Far East specialists in the State Department argued for taking a hard line approach to Japan and the growing spirit of military nationalism that was ascending to primacy in Japan. The second response came from men such as Ambassador Joseph Grew in Tokyo who argued for a far more cautious approach in dealing with Japan in hopes of undercutting the ideological basis for the military nationalists in Japan.[26] Such conflict created the appearance of inaction to observers of

[25] Fred Alexander, *Australia and the United States* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), 27. Alexander was an Australian academic who spent 1941 in the United States on a grant in order to help establish stronger ties between Australian and American academic communities.
[26] An excellent discussion of this can be found in Richard Overy and Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Road to War* (New York, 1999). For a further discussion of the rise of Japanese militarism in the 1930s see R. Storry, *The Double Patriots* (Boston, 1957), Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy* (London, 1972), Shunsuke Tsurumi, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan 1931 – 1945* (London, 1986), Y. Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War 1931 – 1941* (New York, 1993), Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*

the U.S. who hoped for the Americans to take the lead in blunting Japan's growing power.

To the south, the Australian government looked to Great Britain and to the United States in hopes of finding some direction on how best to craft its own response to the Japanese attack on China. The British, unwilling to needlessly sacrifice their commercial interests in China proper and with Japan itself, adopted a cautious approach to the problem, choosing neither to recognize the Japanese gains nor to repudiate them either. The United States responded with the issuance of the Stimson Doctrine that stated that the United States would not recognize any territorial charges brought about by force. While strongly worded, the Stimson Doctrine was a hollow document that failed to bring any American actions against Japan since it provided for no mechanism with which to openly challenge Japanese aggression.[27]

Faced with a perceived weak response from the U.S., Canberra found itself facing renewed fears of Japanese expansion into the south Pacific. Jay Pierrpeont Moffat highlighted this point in a letter to Cordell Hull in which he wrote, "there can be no doubt but that recent Japanese moves in the Orient, coupled with the attitude of her delegation in London, have seriously disturbed the Australian government and to a lesser degree the Australian public."[28] Australians found the middle path adopted by the British and the Americans was really the only option open to them. Australian politicians loathed to

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and Japanese Society 1931 – 33 (London, 2002), Haru Tohmatsu, *A Gathering Darkness* (London, 2004) and Thomas Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations* (Honolulu, 2008).

[27] Named after Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State under President Herbert Hoover. The formal diplomatic note was put forward on January 7, 1932. Stimson would later return to public service as Secretary of War under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[28] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, Feb. 11, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. IV *The Far East* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 50.

antagonize a country that had become an important buyer of Australian raw goods during the 1920s and 1930s. Shipments of Australian wheat and iron regularly made the trip north to the Japanese home islands and all-important hard currency made the reverse trek back to Australia. In the dire economic climate of the Great Depression, Australian policy makers recognized that upsetting this arrangement would hardly be to their benefit. Many also adopted the cynical attitude of "better the Chinese than us."[29] The general feeling was that the longer Japan's attention focused on the Chinese mainland then the more time Australia had to make security arrangements with its partners, especially Great Britain and the United States. But even having adopted a similar attitude to that of Great Britain and the United States, Australians harbored a sense of being left out in the cold by their more powerful benefactors. This was especially true in the case of the United States because of how quickly the Hawes – Cutting and Tydings – McDuffie acts followed the outbreak of the Sino – Japanese conflict.

Australian Fred Alexander observed that the Manchurian incident demonstrated that even as Australia reached out to the Americans a gulf in their understanding of the Pacific region continued to separate them:

> The Manchurian incident is, nevertheless, worth recording in an analysis of the political relations between the United States and Australia, because it emphasized the absence of what the present writer regards as an essential predisposing condition of Australian – American political collaboration on Pacific questions. This condition is the readiness of both parties to base their collaboration not merely on sentiment and goodwill but on a conviction of common interest which will carry both peoples, if necessary, from gestures into action.[30]

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[29] T.B. Millar, "Two New Worlds: The United States and Australia," *Round Table* 263 (1976): 245; Alexander, *Australia and the United States*, 23.
[30] Alexander, *Australia and the United States*, 24.

Part of the problem was a misunderstanding on the part of the United States as to how exactly the British Commonwealth functioned. Many American policymakers insisted on seeing Australia not as an independent actor but as a subservient country to Great Britain. As one Australian governmental reported, Americans held a "widespread belief that the Dominions, being controlled by Empire headquarters, are not real democracies."[31] This gulf would widen as the decade wore on thanks primarily to the actions of the Australians themselves. Political and strategic considerations had dominated Australian – American relations through the first half of the decade but that soon changed as disagreements over trade brought Australia and the United States into a period of open conflict that would set back the development of the association between the two.

While trade had never formed a cornerstone of Australian – American relations in the twentieth century it had been a point of consistent contact for both sides, especially after World War I.[32] But often that trade was a one-way avenue. Between 1918 and 1929 twenty to twenty-five percent of Australia's yearly imports came from the United States. Conversely, however, in that same period American imports of Australian goods fell from eleven to four percent. During the economic boom period of the 1920s this discrepancy in trade was not overly bothersome to the Australians. With the onset of the Great Depression, though, this drastically changed as Australians "turned a jaundiced eye on the statistics of the United States – [British] Commonwealth trade."[33] But even before the economic morass of the 1930s trade issues were a key point of contention between

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[31] "Observation of American Opinion in Texas and Certain Western States," December 14, 1939, Sir Richard Boyer Papers, MS 3181, Box 8, Folder 4, NLA.
[32] Ibid., 44.
[33] Hooker, ed., *The Moffat Papers*, 125.

the two countries. In 1927 Australian Prime Minister Stanley M. Bruce met with American Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg to discuss what Bruce's government saw as the discriminatory practices of the United States in the admittance of Australian businessmen into the United States.

T.B. Millar made reference to this meeting in his study of Australian foreign policy:

> American businessmen were given unrestricted entry into Australia and freedom to operate there. Australian businessmen, on the other hand, had great difficulty in entering the United States. They were required either to enter under the tiny Australian quota for migrants (at that time filled two years in advance), or as temporary visitors, which allowed no freedom to establish and maintain business offices.[34]

In 1933, the British Ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay took the same issue up again with the new Roosevelt Administration on behalf of the Australian government. Lindsay met with the new Secretary of State Cordell Hull to point out the perceived inequity in the treatment of Australian businessmen by the American government. Lindsay noted that businessmen from Great Britain, Canada and the Irish Free State were all allowed to enter the U.S. freely at any time without having to bother with travel permits. Hull assured Lindsay that the American government would consider the issue. However, the system of permits stayed in place and Australian businessmen entering into American continued to feel themselves at a disadvantage.[35]

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[34] T.B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations 1788 – 1977* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 111.
[35] Sir Ronald Lindsay to Cordell Hull, Oct. 4, 1933 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1934 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 833.

The treatment of Australian businessmen was only a minor point in the larger debate. The adverse trade balance that Australia ran with the United States was at the core of the acrimony that marked the last half of the decade. 1934 was the beginning point of what became an open and quite serious disruption in the diplomatic relations between Australia and the United States. In that year alone the United States only bought one-sixth as many goods from Australia as it sold.[36] Initial Australian efforts to remedy this situation were taken up by Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and other government officials who attempted to find a way to even trade with America while avoiding any disruption in formal relations between both nations. American responses to these overtures were markedly negative. The Roosevelt Administration, led principally by Cordell Hull, maintained its adherence to a policy of free trade that meant that no favoritism would or should be shown to any other country. The Australians, finding their initial efforts rebuffed by Washington, began to hint that they would take a tougher stance in regard to American trade if steps were not taken to equalize trade between the two. Stanley M. Bruce, now serving as Australian High Commissioner to Great Britain, first broached this in a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Francis Sayre in Washington. Bruce stated "that Australia's problem was an immediate one and that if he found a country which was prepared to purchase at once any considerable quantity of the above mentioned Australian products [butter, meat, wool] we must not be surprised if a deal were made which might react to the disadvantage of American trade." A member of Sayre's staff made reference to Australia's adherence to unconditional most-favored

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[36] Aitchison, *Americans in Australia*, 51.

nation trading status. Bruce shot back that Australia was not formally bound by any treaty

commitments and would pursue any line of trade which would best benefit Australia.[37]

Starting in 1934, Australia began to place higher tariffs on American goods

coming into the country in an effort to stem the Australian appetite for American goods.

It was hoped that these tariffs would encourage the American government to reconsider

both its policy towards Australian businessmen entering the U.S. as well as allowing for

more imports of Australian staple commodities into American markets. In a speech

before the Australian Parliament, Sir Henry Gullett outlined the Australian governmental

plan to curtail American imports. He framed it in such a manner as not to appear critical

of the U.S. but everyone understood clearly that the U.S. was the principal target of such

a plan. "In other words," Gullett claimed, "we have resolved to give more room in this

market to those who are our great buyers, and somewhat less room to those who are

indifferent buyers."[38]

The Roosevelt Administration was taken aback by the audacity of the Australian

actions. They were even more angered when they received a proposal from Canberra that

the United States should purchase from Australia 50,000 tons of beef and butter without

duty or at a greatly reduced rate of duty in an effort to help balance the trade gap between

the two powers.[39] Joseph Lyons's request that the United States limit the sale of its

agricultural exports to Great Britain and to other European countries in order to allow

[37] Memo of Conversation between Stanley M. Bruce and Francis B. Sayre, June 6, 1934, Official File Box 11, Folder 48-d 1933 – 40, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Records from this archive hereafter cited as FDR Library.
[38] Speech by Sir Henry Gullett before the Australian House of Representatives, May 22, 1936, Series # A1667, Control # 430/B/B52, NAA.
[39] Robert O'Brien to Cordell Hull, Aug. 10, 1934 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1934 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 844.

Australia an opportunity to find more markets for its own agricultural exports was, in the words of one American official, "unexampled in commercial negotiations."[40] The Australian actions had the opposite of their intended effect. Cordell Hull wrote to the American consul general in Sydney and informed him, "In your discretion you may convey our feeling that the discrimination against American goods referred to above is considerably more irksome and damaging to American interests than the present necessity of obtaining visitor's visas can be irksome or damaging to Australian interests."[41] Tensions between the two nations continued to escalate for the remainder of 1934 and into 1935.

In a bid to help ease those tensions, Prime Minister Joseph Lyons planned a state visit to the United States in 1935 with the intent of securing a security pact with the Americans as well as to reach a consensus on the trade issues dividing the two parties. The majority of Lyons's time in the U.S. was spent in meetings with Cordell Hull. It was made clear to Lyons that Washington did not feel that a security pact with Australia would be to their benefit at that moment because of other concerns the Roosevelt Administration had at the moment, including a growing fight over some of the key New Deal initiatives like the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. On the issue of trade Hull and Lyons both agreed that an agreement had to be reached but neither party was willing to meet the other halfway.[42] The Australians still maintained that it was the

[40] Ibid., 843.
[41] Cordell Hull to Sydney Consul General, January 30, 1934 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1934 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 836.
[42] Memo of Conversation between Joseph Lyons and Cordell Hull, July 9, 1935, Cordell Hull Papers, Subject File – Australia 1935 – 1944, Reel 28, (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress Photoduplication

Americans who were most responsible for the current economic discrepancies their

country faced while Hull insisted that Australia discontinue its bullying trade tactics. In

the end no final agreement was reached and Lyons left Washington with relations

between the two countries still in decline.

The trade disagreement reached its apex in 1936. The trade balance between the

two nations had continued to run in favor the United States much to the chagrin of the

Lyons government who had put so much effort into balancing trade between the two.

Moffat wrote to Hull informing him that, "the fact that imports from the United States are

continuing to advance while exports to America are increasing only slightly, if at all, is

causing the Commonwealth Government acute embarrassment."[43] Facing an upcoming

general election in which the issue of trade with the United States would be a key issue,

the Lyons government decided to move beyond the realm of words and into the realm of

action. If there was any hope of re-election then the Lyons government had to at least

portray itself as acting tough with the Americans.

The key moment came on May 22, 1936 when Lyons introduced an act to the

Australian Parliament that would become the Trade Diversion Act of 1936. Assistant

Secretary of State William Phillips outlined the act for President Roosevelt in a letter on

June 26, 1936:

> On May 22, 1936 the Prime Minster of Australia presented to Parliament a
> measure that became effective as soon as tabled providing, inter alia, for the
> creation of an import licensing system. Under this system a list has been

Service, 1974). The above collection is the microfilmed copies of the Hull's papers held by the Library of
Congress.
[43] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, March 4, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign
Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S.
Government Printing Office, 1953), 742.

established of products for the import of which into Australia, from a country with which Australia has a passive trade balance, a license is required. The collectors of Australian customs have received instructions *to refuse licenses to import from the United States all goods on this list*, with the exception of chassis and typewriters for which special treatment is reserved, unless applications are accompanied by documents setting forth the goods are unprocurable except at greatly increased cost from the countries with which the balance of trade is in Australia's favor.[44]

The act was designed to seriously curtail the growing trade gap between the Australians and Americans by basically not allowing the free and easy import of American goods into the country except under the most special of circumstances. While it must be pointed out that the act affected the imports of other countries, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that it was specifically aimed at the United States. Many in Canberra saw this as a suitable retort to the American's system of visitor's visas for Australian businessmen. As George Pearce told Moffat in a personal letter, "in our view, it matters little whether exclusion is brought about by licensing, quotas, or prohibitive duties. The effect is the same, and we in particular have been sufferers."[45] Australia had moved beyond the realm of threats with the Trade Diversion Act and into what one historians has termed "a declaration of economic warfare by Australia on Japan and the United States simultaneously."[46]

The actions taken by the Australian government caught many in the Roosevelt Administration by surprise. Washington had thought that the proclamations of the Lyons

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[44] William Phillips to Franklin Roosevelt, June 26, 1936, OF Box 11, Folder 48-d 1933, FDR Library.
[45] George Pearce to Jay Pierrepont Moffat, June 6, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 760.
[46] Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13 – 14. It was hoped that the act would also help to limit Japanese purchase of raw materials that were being used to fuel their war efforts in China. The limits placed on Japan were, however, negligible compared to those placed on American imports.

government were purely for show and that no action, at least on a scale such as this, would be undertaken. To those officials in the State Department stationed in Canberra and other Australian cities it quickly became obvious that the Australians were through with trying to bargain with the United States. Moffat attempted to forewarn his superiors in Washington of the change of attitude occurring among Australian policy makers. He stated, "I think that we must look forward to some formal adverse action (probably discriminatory) if for no other reason than that the Government must try to shift on to other shoulders the blame for a condition of affairs where imports have increased to a point which is causing concern as to the future of Australia's financial credit."[47] Even with the benefit of Moffat's keen insight, Washington still found itself blindsided by the actions of the Lyons Government. In the immediate aftermath of the Trade Diversion Act, the United States sought to understand how this new action taken by the Australian government would affect them. Moffat was asked to go over the act and report back on the bearing this would have on U.S. trade with Australia. The day following the passage of the act, Moffat cabled his superiors in Washington stating that the new act would leave 80 percent of American trade untouched but would eliminate twenty percent, chiefly to the benefit of British goods.[48] The United States was forced to respond to what Moffat openly decried as Australian blackmail.[49]

The Roosevelt Administration found itself faced with two possible avenues of action. First, they could have accepted the validity of the Australian claims and actions

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[47] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, April 2, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 744 – 745.
[48] Ibid., 752.
[49] Ibid., 751.

and sought to balance their trade with that country. This however would have been a

repudiation of the basic free trade ideas that Hull and others had consistently espoused

not only to Australia but also to the world in general. The second option was to maintain

the same position that had been held throughout the negotiations with the Australians.

This position maintained that any discriminatory trade policies would only further retard

world economic recovery and serve to further isolate each nation from its neighbors. Hull

and other administration officials made it quite clear to the Lyons government that they

would choose the second option. Hull cabled Moffat on May 27 with orders to pass along

the text of his cable to the Lyons government. The cable was classic Hull, stressing the

need for the removal of artificial trade barriers and strongly remonstrating against

Australia's actions:

> The Government of the United States recognizes the rights of every nation to
> determine its commercial policy and to enact measures and administer them in
> any way which the Government concerned see fit for the purpose of carrying out
> these policies. Nevertheless, in view of the conviction which it has frequently
> urged upon other governments that only a mitigation of existing trade barriers can
> restore and adequate volume of international commerce for the benefit of all
> nations, the Government of the United States deplores the fact that Australia has
> seen fit to impose new and substantial restraints upon its import trade.[50]

Hull's message to Lyons was a clear indication that the Australians' bid to end

discriminatory American practices against Australian imports would not work and, if

anything, would only serve to harden American resolve not to be bullied by Canberra on

this issue.

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[50] Cordell Hull to Jay Pierrepont Moffat, May 27, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 753.

The Trade Diversion Act created tension between representatives of both nations. A constant theme in Australian communications to the Americans was one of perceived indifference on the part of the United States about Australia's economic plight. In March 1936, Henry Grady, Chief of the Division of Trade Agreements in the State Department, had made several conciliatory comments on the issue of U.S. – Australian trade in a bid to help lessen the recent tensions between both nations and return both parties to the negotiation table. Grady's comments were greeted with skepticism in Canberra as Moffat made clear to his superiors. In a cable to Washington, Moffat related how "Lyons gave out an interview the gist of which was that the United States is indifferent to Australia … and that it was evident that we were willing to underrate Australia's help or position."[51] In separate meetings with George Pearce, Minister for External Affairs, and Sir Henry Gullett, Minister for Directing Negotiations for Trade Treaties, the theme of American indifference reappeared. Pearce again highlighted the economic issues that Australia felt had to be addressed in order for a meaningful dialogue to take place between both nations. However, he also linked the issue of American indifference to foreign policy issues. Pearce argued that America's seeming intent to pursue an isolationist foreign policy in both Europe and in the Pacific "had convinced the average Australian that he could not count on our [American] assistance in case of peril."[52]

Gullett issued a scathing critique of American economic policy toward Australia in his conversation with Moffat. He accused the United States of excluding Australian

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[51] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, April 6, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 745.
[52] Hooker, ed., *The Moffat Papers*, 134.

goods from American markets through the use of restrictive and arbitrary tariffs, of

driving Australian shipping out of American waters by subsidizing American lines and

even of throwing Australian fruit overboard from ships so that it would not reach

American consumers. Gullet turned the moral table on Hull and Washington by pointing

out that American tariffs remained too high "to be consistent with your high

professions."[53] Gullett also placed the blame for the continued disagreement on the

shoulders of Hull and others in Washington. He maintained that the Australian

government was quite willing to work to end the trade war but that U.S. government had

refused to even begin any such negotiations.[54]

The effect of the remonstrations of men like Pearce and Gullett was minimal on

the American government's resolve to maintain their policies in regards to Australia and

trade. American tariffs on Australian goods and the visa system for Australian

businessmen remained in place. If anything, the fight initiated by the Trade Diversion Act

strengthened American resolve to maintain their position. After all, from the viewpoint of

Washington, the United States was far more important to Australia than Australia was to

Washington at this moment. As Moffat wrote to Hull, "There is a rather naïf belief that

Australia can be deliberately anti-American in matters of trade and yet count on

American political assistance and cooperation."[55] For the time being this was not to be

the case.

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[53] Ibid., 140.

[54] Speech by Sir Henry Gullett before the Australian House of Representatives, November 24, 1936, Series # A1667, Control # 430/B/B52, NAA.

[55] Jay Pierrepont Moffat to Cordell Hull, August 7, 1936 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1936 Vol. I *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), 765. The political assistance that Moffat refers to here most likely means the Australian overtures concerning the formation of a Pacific wide security pact in 1935.

The Australian insistence on confronting the Americans over the trade issue can be linked to an older debate within the Australian body politic over the nature of Australian statehood. Australia had been fully self-governing only since 1901 and for much of that time, especially in the realm of foreign relations and economics, it had continued to rely on the offices of Great Britain to carry out its affairs in the world. In the aftermath of World War I an internal debate between traditional imperial loyalists on one hand and those who agitated for a more independent path for Australia dominated the internal politics of the nation.[56] This debate often translated into a pervasive sense of being overlooked or under appreciated by the world community that was shared by both sides. This can plainly be seen in the statements of men such as Lyons, Pearce and Gullet during the Trade Diversion Act crisis with the United States.

Neither side was willing to make concessions to the other as both governments had invested large amounts of political capital in the fight. The final settlement of the American – Australian trade struggles of the latter half of the 1930s was tied to the bettering of relations between the United States and Great Britain and not any great change in the American – Australian relationship. The bond between Washington and London during most of the decade had been icy at best. Inherent mistrust of British imperial policies and aims was commonplace among American political and military planners who viewed British motives with reserve at best. British Prime Minister Neville

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[56] This debate has formed one of the central questions in Australian historiography. As it was in the 1920s and 1930s there has been no consensus on this topic among Australian historians. Jeffrey Grey in *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge, 1990) argues, "As before the Great War, Australia did not act independently on defense and foreign policy issues in the 1920s and 1930s and remained firmly within the alliance system of imperial defense." (119). Other historians, such as Raymond Esthus in *From Enmity to Alliance*, have argued the opposite, maintaining that "throughout the 1930s am increasing sense of distinct nationhood pervaded Australia." (4 – 5).

Chamberlain's decision to sacrifice the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia in order to avoid the outbreak of a general war in Europe was seen by many in America as a thinly veiled effort to ensure the protection of the British Empire.[57] Australian Richard Boyer made note of this American distrust in a speech he gave in San Antonio during a tour of the U.S. Americans wondered, Boyer stated, if the British and French were for "human freedom and a better world, or just for the integrity of the British and French empires, and if for both, how much for each and in what proportion."[58]

Trade had also been a barrier to better relations between Great Britain and the United States during the decade. With the onset of the Great Depression, the British conceived of a plan that became known as "imperial preference" in order to ensure continued markets for British and British Commonwealth goods. The imperial preference system formed a self-contained trade zone where British manufactured goods could be exchanged for raw materials from the British Commonwealth nations, such as wool, meat and butter in the case of Australia. Foreign goods faced high tariffs and duties. This in effect curtailed American access to these markets and was seen by Roosevelt, Hull and others in Washington as a prime example of the sort of autarkic system they hoped to eliminate with the creation of free trade zones. The British hoped that the system of imperial preference would allow them to maintain their slowly eroding position as a world manufacturing power as well as help to shore up the bonds of the Empire that had

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[57] Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was seen as he chief architect of the Munich Agreement of 1938 even though Italian leader Benito Mussolini put the final proposal forward. See Erik Goldstein, *The Munich Crisis, 1938: Prelude to World War II* (London, 1999), Barbara Franham, *Roosevelt & the Munich Crisis: A Study of Political Decision Making* (Princeton, 1997), Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938 – 39: The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, 1984) and Telford Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace* (Garden City, NY, 1978).
[58] "The American Angle on War Aims," November 20, 1939, Sir Richard Boyer Papers, MS 3181, Box 8, Folder 4, NLA.

frayed in the aftermath of World War I. But even with the dire economic landscape of the

world depression, British leaders recognized that they could not afford to alienate

American political and business leaders, especially with the renewed threat of Nazi

Germany and Fascist Italy.[59]

The British relationship with the United States was often affected by Australia.

Traditionally one of the most loyal dominion states, Australia's attempts to more closely

align themselves with the Americans upset many in London. Looking back on the Great

White Fleet's visit to Sydney in 1908, British newspapers expressed disapproval over the

fact that Australians gave such an enthusiastic welcome to the American fleet and feared

that the Australians would look to the United States Navy instead of the Royal Navy for

its protection.[60] The Lyons Government's bid to secure a Pacific security treaty with the

United States in 1935 was received coldly by the British who pointed out that they had

clearly indicated their commitment to Australian defense in the Pacific at the 1923

Imperial Conference.[61] However, such a promise was looked on with skepticism by some

elements of Australian political life. In the wake of World War I, relations between

Great Britain and Australia were strained as the Labor Party in Australia pushed to

separate their country from its traditional ties with the British in an effort to finally

establish Australia as a fully independent actor on the world stage.

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[59] In his article "Empire v. National Interests in Australian – British Relations during the 1930s," *Historical Studies* 22 (1987): 569 – 586, John O'Brien argued that the creation of the imperial preference system was not the culmination of established British practice but "was in fact an aberration arising from immediate circumstances of the world-wide depression." (50)
[60] John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941 – 1945* (New York: Quill, 1982), 28.
[61] John McCarthy, "The 'Great Betrayal' Reconsidered: An Australian Perspective," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 48 (1994): 55 –56.

But even with the differences that arose between Canberra and London there was little doubt that the ties of Empire were still strong between both mother country and former colony. The upper strata of Australian society continued to look to Great Britain as its cultural and political paradigm. Politically, American democracy was viewed with some distaste by Australian observers. Interestingly, the Australian's low opinion about American politics was driven by seeming racial and cultural factors. In a letter to his colleague W.R. Hodgson, Sir Keith Officer pointed out that, "Democracy works in England because the educated and able play their part in politics. The same to a lesser degree applies in Australia. Here [U.S.] to a large extent politics have become the plaything of the professional and the 'boss'." Many of these bosses, Officer pointed out, were "low-call alien (that is to say non Anglo-Saxon) political bosses."[62] The heterogeneous population of the U.S. was never viewed by Australians as a strength or a positive. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Australian commentary consistently pointed to this aspect of American life as a principal reason to defend the policy of White Australia.

Culturally, Australians continued to discount the offerings reaching their nations from the U.S. As Kate Darian-Smith pointed out, "Australian intellectuals were concerned with the conflicts between American and British cultural influences … Americanization … became equated with trash and corruption, in contrast to British highbrow culture and the 'quality' of British institutions and society."[63] Australian schools still focused on teaching children the importance of the Empire while subject

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[62] Sir Keith Officer to W.R. Hodgson, February 2, 1938, Sir Keith Officer Papers, MS 2629, Box 1, Correspondence May 1937 – August 1937, NLA.
[63] Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front*, 208.

matter on the United States was virtually non-existent. This lack of formal education concerning the U.S. ensured that the general Australia populace was as ill-informed about Americans as Americans were about Australia. This would have an effect, generally negative, on the development of the relations between the two powers during war time.

Australian businesses greeted the imperial preference system with enthusiasm because it offered a guaranteed outlet for their commodities. But this windfall proved to be a pitfall in British – Australian relations and helped to contribute to Great Britain's role in ending the American – Australian trade war. In 1932, British Commonwealth nations held an imperial economic conference in Ottawa, Canada, to discuss ways to weather the economic storm buffeting the world markets. As mentioned previously the end result of the conference was the creation of the imperial preference system. But another important result was that the British left the conference with a profound dislike of the Australian delegation's motives. Great Britain agreed to accept raw material from British Commonwealth nations at significantly reduced tariffs. For the British this meant that all British Commonwealth nations should have an equal opportunity to offload their excess goods. However, the Australian delegation pushed for special treatment for Australian goods, such as meat, wool, wheat and tallow, over those from the other British Commonwealth nations. Because of the inability of the other nations to band together to stave off the Australian demands, the British delegation had little choice but to agree to grant special tariff rates and concessions to Australian goods entering into Great Britain, with the exception of meat products.

Both parties left Ottawa with distinctly differing views on the outcome of the conference. For the Australians, Ottawa had been a windfall. As John O'Brien stated, "with the exception of disappointment in the case of meat, Australia achieved all that it desired – free entry for most of its goods to Britain with nearly all of them enjoying a preferential tariff over foreigners."[64] The British left with a far different outlook on the outcome of the conference. The stated aim of the Ottawa Conference had been to strengthen economic ties between Great Britain and the British Commonwealth nations by providing some small measure of relief from the declining world markets. These altruistic aims were ignored, and indeed completely bypassed by the Australians at Ottawa. The Australians adamant insistence on special treatment for their own goods left the British frustrated with the "naked opportunism" displayed by Australia.[65]

Negative feelings from Ottawa tainted Australian – British relations throughout the remainder of the decade but were on display most prominently during the late 1930s. During the Trade Diversion Act fight with the Americans, the Australians were taken aback by the very negative reception their actions received in London. Great Britain was shocked that such a dire action was taken unilaterally and without prior consultation. The primary reason for the British reaction was the fact that they were seeking to negotiate a new trade treaty with the Americans and were afraid that the Australian actions would be blamed on them because of the American view of the British Commonwealth as a monolithic entity. In trying to negotiate a trade treaty with the United States, Great Britain walked a very fine line. Any trade concessions granted to the Americans would

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[64] O'Brien, "Empire v. National Interests in Australian British Relations during the 1930s," 575.
[65] Ibid., 577.

have to come at the expense of imperial preference, meaning that the agreements reached at Ottawa four years earlier would be almost worthless. This would be especially galling to Australia which had pushed so hard to come out of Ottawa with special benefits.[66] In the end, the British decided that the benefits of a trade agreement with the Americans would outweigh any possible repercussions from the British Commonwealth nations, including Australia. For the Americans, the British offer of negotiating a trade treaty offered an opportunity to apply leverage against Australia in its own trade fight with that country. The Americans insinuated to the British that no treaty would be forthcoming as long as member countries of the British Commonwealth maintained discriminatory trade practices. This was clearly aimed at the Australians and the British understood this.

The British pressured the Australians to soften their stance towards the United States. The Lyons Administration was at first reluctant to give in to the British pressure after having spent so much energy on the issue. However, the Australians came to realize that the British – American trade negotiations would continue and the only outcome for them would be to be left out from both countries' trade. Because of this, starting in late 1937, Australia began to remove the barriers that had been erected under the Trade Diversion Act of 1936. For the Americans, however, the trade restrictions that they had placed on Australian goods as retaliation stayed in place until 1938. This of course provoked another round of recriminations from Canberra. In a formal telegram to the American government, the Lyons government indicated their profound disappointment over the American decision to not remove their own trade barriers and that the Lyons

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[66] Esthus, *From Enmity to Alliance*, 36.

government was shocked at what it saw as the "non-cooperative attitude of the American government" on this issue.[67]

By early 1938 American trade barriers had been lifted but lingering dissatisfaction tainted the American – Australian relationship. Jay Pierrepont Moffat confirmed to his superiors in Washington that this continued to be the case. In a conversation with Sir Earle Page, Moffat recorded that he was informed:

> The Australian public knew that Australia had made definite sacrifices in order to being about a U.K. – U.S.A. trade agreement; that Canada had done the same; that Canada was rewarded with new negotiations and Australia was shut out in the cold. He went on to say that that not only had she been shut out in the cold but that we had made a proposal to her six weeks that were it made public would so anger the Australian people that negotiations between the two countries would be out of the question for twenty years.[68]

It was obvious that the issues over which the Australians and Americans had clashed during the previous two years would not soon be forgotten. The end result was a very real deterioration in the relations between both nations. So real in fact, that Joseph Lyons cancelled a 1937 state visit to the United States because of fears of public outcry from the Americans over Australia's decision to implement its trade diversion scheme.[69] While the official blocks between both countries had disappeared by the end of the decade, suspicion and a latent hostility still existed.

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[67] Keith Officer to Jay Pierrepont Moffat, January 14, 1938 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1938 Vol. II *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), 123.

[68] Memo of Conversation between Jay Pierrepont Moffat and Sir Earle Page, August 12, 1938 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1938 Vol. II *The British Commonwealth* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), 153. Page would succeed to the Prime Ministership upon the death of Joseph Lyons in April 1939 and stay in that position for only three weeks before being replaced by Robert Menzies.

[69] Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 27, 1937, OF Box 11, File 48-d 1933 – 40, FDR Library.

Only the outbreak of war in Europe on September 1, 1939 eased tensions between the United States and Australia. When the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in Great Britain observed its treaty obligations with Poland and declared war on Nazi Germany, Australia found itself once again preparing to send its young men to Europe to fight alongside their British cousins. Australians had worried that the outbreak of war on the continent would once again drag them into a conflict far away from their own sphere of interest and they, like the British, concluded that any war fought against Germany would require the assistance of the United States in order to be successfully concluded.

In May 1939, B.S. Stevens, Premier of New South Wales, wrote Roosevelt to address the issue of the American – Australian – British relations. In his letter Stevens harkened on a theme that would become a popular and consistent message used by the Australians throughout the war in an effort to court American support. Stevens wrote, "in this country [Australia] there is at the present time a sense, keener perhaps than ever before, of the basic affinity between the English-speaking people in all parts of the world, and also, I think, a realization that upon those people there has developed a supreme task of leadership in the present dangerous state of world affairs."[70] This idea of an Anglo-sphere would be one that dominated relations between the three powers, but especially between the United States and Australia. It was also one that, as the war spread to the Pacific region, would take on a predominantly racial tone that would form the foundation of the American – Australia alliance.

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[70] B.S. Stevens to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 10, 1939, OF Box 11, File 48-d 1933 – 40, FDR Library.

Events once again, however, conspired to limit progress being made to improve the relationship. Australia looked to the United States in hopes that it could supply the needed materials necessary for Great Britain and its allies to fight. The new Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, addressed this issue in a letter to Roosevelt on September 7, 1939. He wrote, "We are greatly perturbed by the immediate result of your Neutrality Proclamation since it cuts off from us not only military aircraft already on order and approaching delivery but actually makes it impossible for us to purchase from the United States civil aircraft for civil training purposes."[71] Menzies here is making reference to the 1936 Neutrality Proclamation Act passed by the United States Congress which forbade trade in war materials to belligerents as well as the extension of loans and credit. The strong backlash from the American public against being dragged into another European war convinced Australian observes that eventually American suspicion, at that time aimed at Great Britain and France, would eventually be turned on them. Sir Keith Officer informed the Department of External Affairs to be prepared for such a development. He wrote, "The sentiment against this latter danger [entering into World War II] is as strong, perhaps stronger than ever, and we may see next a period of criticism of us, our aims, and efforts as part of the effort to maintain peace."[72]

In the aftermath of Hitler's invasion of Poland and the subsequent declarations of war by Great Britain and France, who were joined by the British Commonwealth nations such as Australia, the American Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1939, which

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[71] Robert Menzies to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 7, 1939 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1939 Vol. I *General* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 671.
[72] Sir Keith Officer to Department of External Affairs, November 6, 1939, Series # A5954, Control # 2068/6, NAA.

amended the earlier Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936 and 1937. Known as the "cash and

carry" policy, the Neutrality Act of 1939 was seen by its supporters in Congress and the

American public as a way to keep Americans out of another wasteful war in Europe. For

Roosevelt, the 1939 act represented the best compromise he could get at the moment in

moving America towards greater involvement on behalf of the Allies. It officially kept

America neutral in the conflict but was clearly intended to aid the British and French in

the struggle against Nazi Germany.[73] The Australian reaction to news of the American

decision to remain neutral was decidedly negative. For many in Australia, it brought back

memories of the American decision to not enter World War I at the start. Few in

Canberra could truly understand the precarious balance that Roosevelt had to maintain in

his approach to the outbreak of the war. An editorial in *The Washington* Post gave voice

to the concerns of American isolationists who hoped to keep the U.S. out of war. The

editorial stated that, "Vigilance against war sentiment and war propaganda is perhaps

even more important now than it was before the Neutrality Act was passed."[74] In the face

of such sentiment Roosevelt, ever the consummate politician, recognized that the

American public was not ready to commit their own sons to war and yet he also

recognized that America had to begin to prepare for its eventual entrance into the conflict

on the side of the Allies. For now, Australia, and Roosevelt, would have to be satisfied

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[73] The Neutrality Proclamation Act of 1939 allowed belligerent nations to purchase war materials from the United States as long as those nations transported the materials themselves. With British and French control of sea lanes, the act for all intent was designed to aid the Allied nations in their fight against Nazi Germany. Works to consult on the debate over American neutrality include Ruth Sarles, *A Story of America First* (Westport, CT, 2003), Justus Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon* (New York, 2000), Nicholas Cull, *Selling War* (New York, 1995), Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War* (New York, 1988), Patrick Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, (DeKalb, IL, 1987) and Warren Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act*, (Baltimore, 1969).
[74] "Only the Groundwork," *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1939, Series # A5954, Control # 2066/6, NAA.

with what aid the Congress and the American people were willing to allow to be given to the Allies.

1940 brought the realities of war in Europe into the Pacific. The rapid victories of Nazi forces on the continent served to embolden the military in Tokyo to make advances in the Pacific and on the mainland in Asia. The Japanese government exerted pressure on the Vichy regime to close off aid to China from Indochina and on the Dutch government for concessions from the oil rich colony of the Netherlands Indies (now modern day Indonesia).[75] The Japanese pressure proved highly successful. By September of 1940, Japanese forces were allowed to establish military bases in the region. Saburo Ienaga noted in his study of the Japanese war effort that these early moves on the part of the Japanese were primarily extensions of their war effort against China. As he remarked, "In effect, the China war zone of operations was expanded by a flanking operation."[76] However, the movement into Indochina and the beginning encroachment on the Dutch East Indies also provided a better jumping off point for any future offensive actions in the south Pacific.

The American response to these initial Japanese actions represented President Roosevelt's and Secretary of State Hull's quandary. The American general public was only beginning to swing in favor of more active intervention in Europe and there was almost no interest outside of official policymaking circles of becoming involved in the Pacific. Traditional appeals to international law and morality had proven useless but the U.S. did not want to go as far as a proposal put forth by the British and supported by

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[75] Ronald Spector, *Eagles Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 62.
[76] Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War 1931 – 1945*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 130.

British Commonwealth nations like Australia that the full force of the American Pacific fleet be transferred to Singapore as a deterrent. The compromise that was reached by the Roosevelt Administration was to move the fleet from its traditional base in San Diego to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in April – May 1940. This decision has received much attention from historians who argue that it portended an inevitable decision on the part of the U.S. to go to war with Japan. Jonathan Utley contended otherwise in his insightful analysis of the diplomatic maneuverings that led to the outbreak of war in December of 1941. He pointed out that Roosevelt had not ordered a mobilization of the fleet, which found itself still severely understaffed and underequipped.[77]

Through the spring and summer of 1940, the American government began to prepare itself for war in Europe, and most likely in the Pacific as well. Roosevelt brought on Republicans Henry Stimson and Frank Knox to serve as Secretaries of War and Navy respectively. In July 1940, Congress authorized the National Defense Act which gave the president authorization to declare certain items vital to American national security and thus exportable only with a license. This act was designed to insure that key military goods such as aviation gasoline, oil and steel went only to those nations considered friendly by the Roosevelt Administration. This act would provide the basis for the first major challenge to the growing military power of Japan, economic embargo.[78]

The Japanese responded to such actions by formally aligning themselves with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the 1940 Tripartite Agreement. Such a move inspired fear in Washington and London about a global coordinated effort among the militaristic

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[77] Utley, *Going to War With Japan,* 85.
[78] Ibid., 96 – 101.

powers. However, as Mark Stoler details in his study of war time alliances, "In reality, this pact was nothing more than a diplomatic bluff designed to scare the United States into inaction."[79] As the events of World War II would demonstrate the Axis alliance proved to be nothing more than window dressing. There was never any serious attempt by the Germans or Japanese to coordinate their military planning and an inherent distrust of each other that marked the relationship. A prime example of this was the German decision not to inform Japan about their planned invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 or the Japanese decision not to inform Berlin about the attack on Pearl Harbor. It is ironic that Hitler's decision to observe the Tripartite Agreement and declare war preemptively on the U.S. on December 11, 1941 helped seal the fate of Nazi Germany in Europe.

American military officials were alarmed by the lack of coordination that existed between the U.S. and its potential allies in Europe and the Pacific. In January 1941, British and American staff meetings began in Washington D.C. to begin to lay out combined military plans. The British, pushed by Australia and New Zealand, hoped to convince the U.S. Navy to transfer a bulk of its forces in the Pacific to the great naval base at Singapore.[80] American Navy officials, however, resisted the British efforts and instead offered to transfer the bulk of their forces to the Atlantic theatre which would allow the British to move forces into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Unilaterally, the American government decided through the summer of 1941 to step up the embargo war against Japan moving from aviation gasoline to scrap metal and eventually oil. In a

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[79] Mark Stoler, *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers 1940 – 1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 16.
[80] Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 66.

greater effort to coordinate efforts against Japan, a loose affiliation between the Americans, British, Dutch, and Chinese (the ABCD) took form to create "an economic noose around Tokyo's ambitions."[81] However, declining British fortunes in Europe and the Mediterranean drew their attention away from the Pacific and the fall of the Netherlands in May 1940 rendered Dutch aid against the Japanese almost nil.

To the south, Australia looked on these developments with growing frustration and worry. British demands for Australian military aid in the Middle East and North Africa had placed a severe strain on Canberra's ability to defend itself from the growing threat of Japanese militarism. Australia began to clamor for a greater voice in Allied planning and for more access to the halls of power in Washington. However, the rancor of the decade leading up to the outbreak of World War II made any immediate fruitful partnership almost impossible.

The decade of the 1930s had been rocky at best for American – Australian relations. The opportunity for a possible friendship stemming from World War I was wasted by both parties. Australians, for their part, showed remarkable insight by recognizing that in many ways, they bore a large part of the blame for the acrimony that marked the decade. As one Australian report reflected, "After the War [World War I] an unexpected friendship spread throughout the American people for the people of Australia. We can scarcely claim that this feeling was returned."[82] However, neither side was truly blameless in their actions.

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[81] Ienaga, *The Pacific War 1931 – 1945*, 132.
[82] "Japan and the Defense of Australia," 1935, p. 35, Series # A5954, Control #1025/12, NAA.

Issues of trade, regional security, American reaction to the growing menace of militarism in the world and the United States' sometimes icy relationship with Great Britain all conspired to weaken the efforts of leaders in both countries to bring their peoples closer together. The exigencies of the war would help to ameliorate these issues somewhat but a sense of suspicion still pervaded Australian views on the United States and to a lesser extent American views of Australia. The cleavages that had appeared between the two during this decade seemed incapable of being bridged. But in the next six years, the alliance between these two powers would be strengthened beyond the hopes of men such as Joseph Lyons and Jay Pierrepont Moffat as the threat posed by a common challenger in the Pacific brought the two powers closer together. Even more importantly, though, a single ideological tenet that had lain under the surface of the American – Australian relationship from the beginning would bring both parties into a closer relationship than had been thought possible.

<u>Chapter 3: A Two-Front War: 1941 - 1945</u>

By late 1941 many Americans had reached the conclusion that entry into the war

raging around the globe was only a matter of time. Opinion over the past year and a half,

since the fall of France and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940, had swung in favor

of active American support of Great Britain and the Dominions. American attention was

focused on the German bombing campaign against Great Britain and on the German

invasion of the Soviet Union.[1] In the Pacific, relations with Imperial Japan had

deteriorated over the course of 1941 due to increased economic embargoes put in place

by the Roosevelt administration as a means of trying to undercut the Japanese war

machine.

When war did break out, it happened in a manner that caught the country by

surprise. At 7:48 A.M. Hawaii time, dive-bombers and torpedo planes of the Japanese

Imperial Navy launched a surprise attack on the American fleet moored at Pearl Harbor

Naval Base. The attack left 2,388 Americans dead and numerous naval vessels damaged,

some beyond salvage.[2] Michael Hunt wrote, "For Americans this 'sneak attack' was an

extraordinary outrage (though entirely consistent with assumptions about the wily

oriental character)."[3] While many in Washington had concluded that war was inevitable

with Japan, the way the war began came as a shock to them and the American people.

The Pearl Harbor attack was timed to coincide with Japanese attacks on the Philippines

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[1] The "Blitz" took place between September 1940 and May 1941. Operation BARBAROSSA, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, commenced on June 22, 1941.

[2] Some works to consult on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor include Emily Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham, NC, 2003), Stanley Weintraub, *Long Day's Journey Into War: December7, 1941* (New York, 2001) and John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath* (Garden City, NY, 1982).

[3] Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 145.

and the opening of a general offensive in Southeast Asia aimed at expelling the British and Dutch from their colonial holdings. In Australia, traditional fears about the expansion of an Asian power into their region were being realized. With Great Britain involved in a seeming life or death struggle with Nazi Germany in Europe and North Africa, the Australians began to turn to the one power who they hoped could help them stave off the Japanese, the United States.

The first joint effort between the Australian and American government in the Pacific came out of the ARCADIA Conference in Washington D.C. in December 1941 – January 1942. In order to coordinate the efforts of American, British, Dutch and Australian forces spread over several thousand miles of the southeast Asia and the Pacific, General George Marshall proposed the creation of a unified command structure, ABDACOM. From the beginning, ABDACOM was not expected to meet with any success. But, as Ronald Spector pointed out, the importance of the body lay in establishing the principles of a unified, multi-national command.[4] ABDACOM proved incapable of halting the Japanese advance. Japanese victories in Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies placed the existence of ABDACOM in great doubt. The destruction of the main joint naval force of American, Dutch and Australian ships at the Battle of the Java Sea on February 27, 1942 effectively ended ABDA as an Allied organization and would lead to the creation of the Southwest Pacific theatre and the Central Pacific theatres under overall American command. The first attempts at a joint American – Australian effort had been an abject failure.

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[4] Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 129.

However, over the course of the war in the Pacific, the Americans and Australians developed an alliance that lead to the defeat of Japan in 1945. The Pacific was primarily an American operation throughout the war, and some in Washington fought hard to keep it that way. However, during the first two years of the war Australia was central to the American effort.[5] Both nations found themselves allies due to the exigencies of war and after the acrimony that marked the previous decade's relationship it remained to be seen if the relationship would be a smooth one or one marked by continued disagreement.[6]

Trying to put aside past differences, even in a time of war, proved to be a difficult chore for the Americans and the Australians. Their wartime relationship was marked by sharp divisions at the official level and on the unofficial level as for the first time numerous Americans and Australians became familiar with one another. In the end though, the relationship did function, despite the obstacles that both nations placed in the way. The primary factor in overcoming the problems that arose was not simply the pressures of the war, which failed to halt the development of these problems in the first place. Rather, the primary issue that bound Americans and Australians together was a shared ideal of race. Their complementary views on this issue provided a common ground for both parties that bridged the divisions that separated them.

On the official level, relations between Washington and Canberra were strained from the start of the war. The central issue between the two was the American insistence on seeing the Pacific War as their sole domain and Australian insistence on having their

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[5] Eric Bergerud, *Touched With Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific* (New York: Viking Press, 1996), xi.

[6] Edward Drea highlighted this view in his article "'Great Patience is Necessary': America Encounters Australia, 1942," *War & Society* 11 (1993): 21 – 51. Drea called particular attention to this point on pages 21 –22.

voice heard by Washington. In March 1942, the United States and Great Britain had agreed to divide the globe into three zones of responsibility. The Americans had sole responsibility for the Pacific; the British for the Middle East and the two shared the burdens of the European theatre.[7] American forwardness in pushing their agenda for the Pacific campaign was tempered initially by the realization that Australia, due to its location and industry, would have to serve as the primary Allied base in the southern Pacific until American forces established a foothold elsewhere in the region.[8] But even this realization did not force Washington to abandon the premise that "should differences develop between it and Australia (or indeed any Allied power in the Pacific), its own policies should prevail."[9]

One area of struggle was the issue of supplies and reinforcements to the Southwest Pacific theatre (SWPA). Established in 1942 under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, the SWPA was created to provide support on the flank for the American drive through the central Pacific and as the main area from which to launch the freeing of the Philippines. Australians and their government saw the SWPA primarily as a means to prevent the invasion of their country. Because of this both MacArthur and Prime Minister John Curtin developed a close working relationship since each of their own needs complemented the needs of the other. MacArthur needed more men and material to launch his drive north. For Curtin, this meant more men and material to keep Australia out of the hands of an Asian invader.

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[7] For a concise description of this refer to Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun* (1985), 142 – 149.
[8] Jane Fidcock, "The Effect of the American 'Invasion' of Australia 1942 – 45," *Flinders Journal of history and Politics* 11 (1985): 91.
[9] Bell, *Unequal Allies*, 39.

The seemingly incessant pleas for more material that emanated from MacArthur's headquarters in Brisbane and from Canberra was a constant source of annoyance to Washington. In a meeting of the Pacific War Council, an advisory body created to assuage Australian fears about being left out of planning, President Roosevelt openly expressed his frustration with Australian complaints about shipping priorities for the Pacific. He exclaimed, "We have troops on the West Coast and planes ready to go to the Southwest Pacific, but as I remarked above the problem is entirely one of ocean transportation, and I must ask, 'How the hell do we get stuff there? We have just about half enough troop transports. If anyone has a substitute for any of the items listed above, please come and tell me about it."[10] Roosevelt finally sent a formal cable to Macarthur signaling his agreement with the Joint Chiefs of Staff's estimation that troop levels in Australia were enough to allow MacArthur to undertake an offensive against the Japanese in New Guinea and to defend Australia from any possible invasion.[11]

American recalcitrance to send the materials deemed necessary by Curtin and his government for the defense of Australia and the perceived American indifference to the viewpoint of Australia in the Pacific War Council led to a growing dissatisfaction in Canberra. Sir Owen Dixon, who replaced Sir Richard Casey as Australian ambassador at Washington in 1942, gave voice to many of Canberra's complaints in meetings of the Pacific War Council. Dixon "wondered whether or not everything possible was being done about cutting down turnarounds on shipping, labor and dock facilities in remote

[10] Memorandum of Minutes of Pacific War Council Meeting, September 2, 1942, Franklin Roosevelt Papers, Map Room File, Box 168, Folder 2, FDR Library.
[11] Harry Gailey, *MacArthur's Victory: The War in New Guinea 1943 – 1944* (New York: Presidio Press, 2004), 4 –5.

parts of the world." Dixon inferred that perhaps American shipping was not being used to its utmost advantage, which contributed to the supposed dearth of materials earmarked for Australia. Roosevelt shot back that the last American convoy that had arrived in Australia had found the dockworkers on a week's holiday and that American soldiers were forced to unload the ships themselves.[12]

Eventually, Dixon reached the conclusion that the Pacific War Council was useless as an instrument to allow Australian views to be heard.[13] The endless stream of negative reports coming from Washington soured Curtin somewhat on the United States. Curtin had gained a reputation as the man who moved Australia away from Great Britain and towards a closer relationship with the United States. But the inability or unwillingness of the Americans to meet what he thought to be perfectly reasonable requests led the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision to forgo the traditional imperial relationship for the untested American one.[14] Australian policy began to shift towards considerations of the post-war region and how best to situate Australia to take advantage of the political and economic opportunities brought on by the war. Roger Bell argued that by 1944, when the fighting had shifted north away from Australia, "Australia assigned co-operation with America a secondary role in its general foreign policy and defense planning. Increased Dominion diplomatic and military independence, combined with active support for a reassertion of British power and influence in the Far East under

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[12] Memorandum of Minutes of Pacific War Council, Oct. 7, 1942, Franklin Roosevelt Papers, Map Room File, Box 168, Folder 2, FDR Library.

[13] Department of Information Background Letter, April 30, 1943, Theodor Bray Papers, Dept. of Information – Background Information – 1943, MS 2519, National Library of Australia. Records from this archive hereafter cited as NLA.

[14] Glen St. John Barclay, "Australia Looks to America: The Wartime Relationship, 1939 – 1942," *Pacific Historical Review* 46 (1977): 271; Christopher Thorne, "MacArthur, Australia and the British 1942 – 1943: The Secret Journal of MacArthur's British Liaison Officer (Part III)," *Australian Outlook* 29 (1975): 209.

Australian leadership, was the principal feature of Australian policy during 1944 –6."[15]

The relationship between the two powers had not been smoothed by the war. Continued

disagreement brought back memories of the bitterness of the 1930s and insured that both

countries continued to view each other with sometimes thinly veiled contempt.

For the Australians, the lack of regard for their views was a central problem in

their external relations throughout World War II. Curtin and others maintained that

Australia, as a Pacific nation and as the most important British dominion in the region,

could not be ignored in the formulation of war strategy and post-war planning. Jeffrey

Grey concluded that, "despite attempts to influence the distribution of forces between the

Atlantic and Pacific theatres, the Australian government had no say in the strategic

decisions of the Anglo – American alliance as they affected the Far East."[16] Chief among

these strategic decisions was the American and British decision to pursue a Europe first

strategy.

Herbert V. Evatt, Australian Minister for External Affairs in the Curtin

government, addressed this issue in a meeting with Cordell Hull. Evatt revealed that a

plan "for a second military front in Western Europe against Germany had occasioned

fears that the Pacific situation might be minimized or neglected and that this phase of the

question should not be and need not be overlooked."[17] The Australians feared, correctly,

that the push for the Europe first strategy would draw resources away from the war in the

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[15] Bell, *Unequal Allies*, 171; Roger Bell, "Australian – American Disagreement Over the Peace Settlement with Japan, 1944 – 1946," *Australian Outlook* 30 (1976): 241.

[16] Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 162.

[17] Memo of Conversation between Herbert V. Evatt and Cordell Hull, June 9, 1942, Cordell Hull Papers, Subject File – Australia 1935 – 1944, Reel 28, (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, 1974).

Pacific. A key resource was modern aircraft, which the Australians felt were being siphoned away from areas in the Pacific where they were sorely needed, such as the British naval base at Singapore, the centerpiece of Australian pre-war defense planning.[18]

Australian exclusion from high level meetings such as Arcadia (December 22, 1941 – January 14, 1942), Casablanca (January 14 – 24, 1943), Cairo (November 22 – 26, 1943), Tehran (November 28 – December 1, 1943), Yalta (February 4 – 11, 1945) and Potsdam (July 16 – August 2, 1945) helped foster the idea in Canberra that their American and British allies were making wide reaching decisions which could not help but to affect Australia. David Day noted that, "Although Australian interests were intimately involved in the Casablanca discussions, Curtin was neither informed nor consulted about them."[19] After learning about the decisions reached at Casablanca in the press, Curtin and other members of his government flew into a rage. The Prime Minister addressed a tersely worded letter to Roosevelt that stated "The simple fact is that we had no voice in the decisions. We were confronted with a fait accompli and we had no alternative but to accept the decisions, much as we disliked them."[20] Evatt told Hull flatly that not enough attention was being paid to the Pacific campaign and that the Japanese were reaping the benefits of the Europe first strategy. Owen Dixon related to Sumner Welles that he feared the creation of "a very unhealthy situation … which might degenerate into a serious difficulty" between the two allies.[21] American ambassador

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[18] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 24.

[19] David Day, *Reluctant Nation: Australia and the Allied Defeat of Japan 1942 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 84.

[20] John Curtin to Franklin Roosevelt, March 31, 1943, Franklin Roosevelt Papers, Map Room Files, Box 12, Folder 2(A), FDR Library.

[21] Memorandum of Conversation between Herbert Evatt and Cordell Hull, April 15, 1943, Cordell Hull Papers, Subject File – Australia 1935 – 1944, Reel 28, (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress

Nelson Johnson related to his colleague R.B. Stewart that, "Australia is bombarded with stories of what we are doing and going to do to Germany and eventually Japan, but Australia feels left out in this Pacific area, and it feels very sharply the threat of Japanese domination in the Pacific."[22]

Sympathy for the Australian view was hard to find in Washington. Key members of the Roosevelt administration and the military, among them Roosevelt himself, Cordell Hull and George C. Marshall, often felt that the Australians were purposefully overstating their case in an effort to gain more material through Lend-Lease and thus build up their own secondary industries in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities the war presented in the Pacific region. Personal animosities also played a role in making American – Australian relations worse. The chief target of American dislike was Herbert V. Evatt, the Australian Minister for External Affairs. Few men engendered as much anger as did Evatt. His outspoken views on Australian rights of representation and necessity of supply led P.G. Edwards to mark Evatt as "a significant factor in the course of Australian – American relations."[23] Evatt refused to recognize that the relationship between Australia and the United States was anything more than a relationship between equals. Because of this, Evatt pushed the United States hard for the creation of a formal military alliance that would formalize the alliance between the two nations.[24] This push recalled the efforts of the Australian government in 1935 to achieve a similar formal

Photoduplication Service, 1974); Memorandum of Conversation between Sir Owen Dixon and Sumner Welles, November 18, 1942, Sumner Welles Papers, Box 161, Folder 1, FDR Library.
[22] Nelson Johnson to R.B. Stewart, March 5, 1943, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 42, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Records form this archive hereafter cited as LOC.
[23] P.G. Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans," *Historical Studies* 18 (1979): 547.
[24] Joseph Siracusa and Glenn St. John Barclay, "Australia, the United States, and the Cold War 1945 – 1951: From V-J Day to ANZUS," *Diplomatic History* 5 (1981): 41.

military alliance. However, American leaders realized that any formal alliance would undercut their ability to dictate the course of the war in the Pacific as well as the post-war peace. The Americans also found little likeable in how Evatt approached his dealings with representatives of the United States. Richard Marshall, a member of MacArthur's staff in Brisbane, related how Evatt "criticized the American Minister for not getting round the country more to find out the continual irritations arising, and stated that the Australian Government felt that its support of General MacArthur both here and in Washington was not sufficiently appreciated."[25] Evatt's brusqueness often resulted in American leaders bypassing him to talk directly with Prime Minister Curtin or using the Australian Ambassador in Washington as their primary contact with Australia.

Evatt played a key role in one of the more important events that transpired in American – Australian relations during the war, the Australia – New Zealand Agreement of 1944 (ANZAC Treaty). The ANZAC Treaty was based on Australian and New Zealand objections to having been excluded from the Cairo Conference in November 1943 and aimed at limiting perceived American hegemony in the South Pacific region.[26] The Roosevelt administration took particular exception to two clauses in the treaty. The seventh clause stated:

> The two Governments [Australia and New Zealand] declare they have vital interests in all preparations for any armistice ending the present hostilities or any part thereof and also in arrangements subsequent to any such armistice, and agree

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[25] Diary of Richard J. Marshall, February 4, 1944, Richard J. Marshall Papers, RG 29c, Box 4, Folder 3, MacArthur Memorial Library, Norfolk, Virginia. Records from this archive hereafter cited as MML.
[26] Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 177; Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 34; Christopher Thorne, "MacArthur, Australia and the British 1942 – 1943: The Secret Journal of MacArthur's British Liaison Officer (Part II)," *Australian Outlook* 29 (1975): 210.

that their interests should be protected by representation at the highest level on all armistice planning and executive bodies.[27]

The second clause that caused consternation in Washington was Clause 27, which stated that Australia and New Zealand would not recognize any change in the sovereignty of any island in the Pacific if they were not included in the discussions about those islands.[28] It was obvious that these two clauses in particular were aimed at the United States and "designed to restrict American post-war influence in the Pacific to the northern hemisphere," while establishing Australian and New Zealand pre-dominance in the south.[29]

The effect of the ANZAC Agreement on Washington was decidedly negative. Whereas the Americans had previously ignored Evatt's demonstrations about Australian rights as being solely the views of one man, the ANZAC Agreement created the impression that there was a larger movement within the Curtin government that aimed to wean Australia away from the United States in favor of a renewed bond with Great Britain. Prior to meeting with Prime Minister Curtin in April of 1944, Roosevelt was given a memorandum on the ANZAC Agreement prepared by the State Department. The memorandum highlighted the clauses aimed at the United States and reminded the President that, "The Australian – New Zealand Agreement of January 21, 1944 is the principal question outstanding between the United States and Australia at present."[30]

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[27] Text of Australia – New Zealand Defense Agreement of 1944, p. 2, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 5, AWM.

[28] Text of Australia – New Zealand Defense Agreement of 1944, January 21, 1944, Series # A4311, Control # 449/1, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, Australia. All records from this archive hereafter cited as NAA.

[29] Day, *Reluctant Nation*, 209.

[30] Memorandum for the President on Meeting with Prime Minister Curtin, April 22, 1944, FDR Papers, President's Secretary's File, Box 23, Folder 3, FDR Library.

Cordell Hull hoped to persuade the President to take a hard line stance in dealing with the Australians after the ANZAC Agreement had been signed.[31]

Roosevelt, instead, adopted a different tact. In his meeting with Curtin, the President told Curtin that he guessed that the ANZAC Agreement was solely the creation of Evatt and that the Australian Government had merely gone along with it and had not intended it as an affront to the United States. Curtin stated that really the ANZAC Agreement had been meant to discuss " … the future of the white man in the Pacific," and was not meant as a barrier to future American – Australian relations.[32] Roosevelt did not wish to spend more time then necessary on the matter as the end of the war in Europe was within sight and Allied forces in the Pacific were beginning their offensive push that would carry them to the Japanese home islands. The ANZAC Agreement was one of the last major diplomatic ruptures that occurred while both Roosevelt and Curtin were alive but it would not be the last in the relationship between the two nations.[33]

The strains in the diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Australia were mirrored in the military relationship between the two during the war. This could be considered unusual given the popularity that the American military enjoyed in Australia, especially after the beginning of war in the Pacific in late 1941. These clashes, however, demonstrate that the relationship between the United States and Australia was never a natural or easy one for either side. Australian military planners placed great emphasis on

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[31] Cordell Hull to Franklin Roosevelt, May 31, 1944, FDR Papers, Official File, Box 11, Folder 48-d 1944 – 45, FDR Library. In this memo, Hull highlighted a number of what he saw as breaches of diplomatic etiquette by the Australians, most especially by Evatt.
[32] Memorandum of Conversation between John Curtin and Franklin Roosevelt, April 25, 1944, FDR Papers, Map Room File, Box 168, Folder 2, FDR Library.
[33] Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Georgia on April 12, 1945 while John Curtin died in Canberra, Australia on July 5, 1945.

the role that the United States had to play if Australia were to successfully turn back any Japanese attempt to conquer Australia. Starting in the late 1930s, Australia, along with Great Britain, had urged the American military, primarily the U.S. Navy, to place more forces in the Pacific region, principally at the British naval base at Singapore.

American naval leaders would not agree to the stationing of American ships at Singapore but Roosevelt did decide in late 1941 to transfer the bulk of the American fleet stationed in the Atlantic Ocean at Norfolk, Virginia to the naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Jonathan Utley pointed out that such a move would satisfy Australian demands for American action in the Pacific while allowing the British to keep the whole of their fleet in the Atlantic where it was desperately needed to combat the U-boat menace.[34] Both Washington and Canberra hoped that this action would curtail any action on the part of Imperial Japan. To further demonstrate its commitment to involvement in the Pacific, the U.S. Navy sent a force of two cruisers and five destroyers on a tour of the South Pacific, which included calls at Sydney and Brisbane in March 1941. Recalling past visits of American ships to Australia, the Americans were greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds who thought the fleet visit would act as a deterrent to the Japanese.[35] The harmony engendered by the stress of the war would be short lived however, on both the official and unofficial level.

While Australia hoped that they would figure prominently in American military planning in the Pacific, the reality of the situation was far different. In early 1942, then Brigadier-General Dwight Eisenhower released an assessment of necessary military

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[34] Utley, *Going to War With Japan 1937 – 1941*, 57 – 58.
[35] Barclay, "Australia Looks to America," 258.

tasks: securing the British Isles and the Atlantic shipping lanes, preventing the collapse of India and the Middle East and keeping the Soviet Union in the war. All other matters, "even the defense of Australia, New Zealand, Alaska and the rest of South America, were 'merely' desirable' in the present crisis and therefore secondary."[36] The American military, especially the Navy, who assumed primary responsibility for the Pacific campaign, believed that a thrust through the central Pacific was the shortest and most effective way to strike at Japan. Thus, Australia initially held little attraction for the United States.

The fall of the Philippines in April 1942 altered American military plans in the Pacific. American troops and material that were headed for the islands were rerouted to Australia. It was decided that General Douglas MacArthur, commander of American forces in the Philippines, would be evacuated to Australia in order to assume command of Allied forces in the recently created Southwest Pacific Area. The first sizeable American contingent landed in Brisbane on December 22, 1941 after having been rerouted from the Philippines. Almost immediately, numerous problems arose between the American military command in Australia and the Australian government. One of the major problems that faced U.S. forces in Australia throughout 1942 was the shortage of food that the influx of American troops brought about. Australian manpower, in a nation of seven million, was already strained because of commitments to the military effort and the massive food subsidies Australia was providing to Great Britain.[37] A study of the reciprocal aid in foodstuffs offered by the Australians gives evidence to the sacrifices

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[36] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 72.
[37] "Procurement in Australia, Historical Record, Jan. 42 – Jan. 45," p. 3, K. R. Cramp Papers, PR 82/47, File # 419/71/35, Part 1 of 5, AWM.

made by the country to support American forces in the Southwest Pacific. Australians provided 69,440,000 pounds of beef and veal, 35,840,000 pounds of pork, 222,880,000 pounds of breads and cereals, 73,920,000 pounds of potatoes, 213,024,000 pounds of fresh, canned and dehydrated vegetables and fruits, 15,232,000 pounds of fresh butter, 49,728,000 pounds of sugar and 38,800,000 dozen fresh eggs.[38] To put this in further perspective, it should be noted that Australia provided 65 to 70 percent of all foodstuffs consumed by American forces in the SWPA during the last half of 1942. Also, by 1943 48,000 Australian civilians were working directly on projects related to U.S. military construction.[39]

Materials and wastage remained a key point of friction between Australian and American military officials. The American reliance on firepower to overwhelm Japanese positions was seen by Australians as incredibly wasteful while Americans viewed Australian tactics with contempt, seeing high Australian casualties as an example of the poor leadership indicative of Australian officers. General Sir Thomas Blamey, head of Australian army forces and Supreme Allied Commander of Allied Land Forces in the SWPA, received a memo from his quartermaster's office revealing the frustration that the Australian military felt over the issue of supplies. "None know better than we do," the memo stated, "the avoidable waste of manpower and materials that went on without question and the lavishness and extravagance which characterized U.S. demands whilst Australian Army and Australian Services demands were being subjected to rigid scrutiny

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[38] Ibid, p. 4.
[39] Drea, " 'Great Patience is Necessary'," 26 – 27. It must be remembered that the total population of Australia at the time was only seven million.

and economies."[40] Oftentimes the conflict over materials filtered down to the military level from the civilian government's clashes. But this issue was also indicative of a larger problem between the American and Australian militaries.

Both sides saw the other as amateurs at war, making sometimes unforgivable blunders in their prosecution of the war. The Australians viewed the Americans as Johnny come latelys who would rather spend all their time lobbing shells at an enemy position than seizing it. The Americans saw their counterparts as being unskilled in the doctrine of fire and maneuver and wasteful with manpower. As Eric Bergerud stated, "Americans lacked their [Australians] experience and battle technique. They also had a more measured and less aggressive style of combat, which frustrated Australian commanders. Australians fought harder but paid the price for it."[41] In no instance was this division more obvious than during the Allied campaign to push the Japanese from their foothold on Papua and New Guinea.

In early 1942, Japanese forces established a foothold on the northern coast of New Guinea, having taken the towns of Lae, Sanandana, Buna, Gona and Wau. The primary aim of the Japanese was the capture of Port Moresby on the southern coast of the island. This would allow them to interdict the shipping lanes to Australia and to cut off the supply lines from the United States to Australia. The Japanese army also temporarily toyed with the idea of using New Guinea as a jumping off point for an invasion of northern Australia but this idea was quickly abandoned when it was decided that such an undertaking would prove too great a drain on resources. An initial Japanese attempt to

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[40] "Reciprocal Aid: U.S. Forces," p. 2, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 6, AWM.

[41] Bergerud, *Touched With Fire*, 223 – 224.

seize Port Moresby by an amphibious landing was thwarted by the Allies at the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 4 – 8, 1942). A subsequent Japanese thrust over the imposing Owen Stanley Mountains forced the small Australian force holding the mountain passes to fall back almost all the way to Port Moresby. Eventually, lengthened supply lines and the rough terrain helped to stave off the Japanese threat.

However, this initial clash between Australians and Japanese gave American commanders a bad impression of the Australian Army. General George C. Kenney, who had replaced General George Brett as Allied Air Commander in August 1942, related his concerns about Australian troops to MacArthur. In a private conference with MacArthur, Kenney stated, "That there was a definite lack of inspiration all over the Australian ground show and a don't care attitude that looked as though they were already reconciled to being forced out of New Guinea."[42] In a strategy conference on the Pacific war held on September 25, 1942, at Palmyra Atoll, more American concerns were raised over the quality and ability of the Australian forces fighting in New Guinea. Admiral Chester Nimitz was informed that New Guinea was all but lost because Prime Minister Curtin would not allow American forces to intervene because of the political repercussions it would have on the home front. One attendee opined that:

> The Australians won't fight. This war has been a series of withdrawals and disasters for them. They now have the habit. All their plans in New Guinea have been withdrawal and routes by which to retire … The sons of the Australians of the last war have all the bad habits of their fathers but none of the good qualities. They just don't want to fight and won't.[43]

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[42] General George C. Kenney Diaries, September 4, 1942, Vol. 2, 1 September 1942 – 31 October 1942, Call # 168.7103 – 71, IRIS # 01129421, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, AL. Records from this archive hereafter cited as AFHRA, MAFB.

[43] Notes on Conference at Palmyra Atoll, September 25, 1942, Ernest J. King Papers, Series 1, Reel 2, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1991).

Of course, the reality of the situation was far different than the perception held by the American command structure. By the time American troops entered into combat in New Guinea, Australian forces had pushed the Japanese back over the Owen Stanley Mountains and were beginning their offensive to push the Japanese out of their footholds on the northern coast. Harry Gailey pointed out that it was primarily Australian forces who earned the victories in New Guinea of which General MacArthur was so proud while Edward Drea related how, "The casualty list serves as a sharp reminder of American dependence on its Australian ally: of 8,500 battle casualties, 5,689, or two of every three, were Australians."[44]

The headquarters of Douglas MacArthur, often for purely personal reasons, consistently downplayed the sacrifices of the Australians in New Guinea. MacArthur came to play the same role on the military side that Herbert Evatt played on the diplomatic. His imperious manner and reluctance to share the glory of the Allied victories over the Japanese created a great sense of resentment among Australian soldiers on all levels. Initially, the Australians welcomed MacArthur as a savior, a fulfillment of the promise of American support against the Japanese. In the end, MacArthur created more divisions between two allies already faced with numerous others.

Much of the problem created by MacArthur's imperious manner could be attributed to the situation he was faced with upon his arrival in Australia in March 1942. General Robert Eichelberger, who would become one of MacArthur's most trusted commanders, confided that the Australia MacArthur arrived in was "in chaos" and that,

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[44] Gailey, *MacArthur's Victory*, 147; Drea, "'Great Patience is Necessary'," 39.

"There was confusion everywhere; a spirit of defeatism and despair cloaked the nation."[45] The specter of Japanese invasion hung over the country and influenced many of the decisions made by Prime Minister Curtin, including his decision to align himself as closely as possible with the newly appointed Supreme Commander, SWPA. Curtin's action represented, according to historian Jeffrey Grey, a "significant surrender of national sovereignty."[46] David Day concluded that by welcoming MacArthur as a savior, Australia committed itself to being a *de facto* American colony for the duration of the war.[47] This point is overstated. As has been shown, the Australian government never became a subservient partner to the United States during the war. On numerous occasions, Australia demonstrated its intention to be seen as an equal partner who could, and would, dictate its own policies.

Two central problems arose between MacArthur and the Australians. First was his decision to exclude both Australian civilian and military leaders as much as possible from the planning and prosecution of the war in the Southwest Pacific. MacArthur received several entreaties from Washington to include Australians on his staff, many of which MacArthur totally ignored. In fact, there are several examples of MacArthur instructing his officers not to work with the Australians. The most famous example was MacArthur's order to Robert Eichelberger, prior to the latter's departure to take over U.S. forces in New Guinea, to "pay your respects to the Australians and then leave them alone. Don't

[45] "MacArthur's Claim to Greatness," p. 3, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Writings and Speeches, Folder 2, Box 69, Perkins Library, Duke University.
[46] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 173.
[47] Day, *Reluctant Nation*, 20.

have anything to do with them."[48] This was a pattern that continued throughout the

remainder of the war. When the time came for the Allies to launch their campaign to free

the Philippines, MacArthur made sure to exclude the Australians by directing them to

conduct operations in Papua and New Guinea to "mop up" the remaining Japanese forces

there. This action ran contrary to the Allied practice of island hopping, bypassing isolated

Japanese forces instead of wasting men and material retaking each small island and atoll.

This led to numerous casualties for the Australians and led to further anger being directed

at MacArthur.[49]

The second issue that arose between MacArthur and the Australians was

MacArthur's low opinion of the quality of the Australian soldier. This was exceptionally

difficult for Australians to take, especially given the important role that the Australian

soldier played in the national mind. Soldiering had formed a key element of the

Australian sense of national identity that had emerged in the first half of the twentieth

century.[50] Numerous historians have commented on MacArthur's dislike of the

Australian military. Eric Bergerud stated that MacArthur's questioning of the Australian

retreat over the Owen Stanley Mountains led to a shake up in the Australian command

structure, which was a blow to Australian pride and to some officers' careers, a point

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[48] Glenn St. John Barclay, *Friends in High Places: Australian – American Diplomatic Relations Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 14; Military Papers: WW II Campaigns: Buna, New Guinea, Dictated Notes and Other Notes, 1948, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Folder 7, Box 33, Perkins Library, Duke University.
[49] Eric Bergerud, *Fire in the Sky: The Air War in the South Pacific* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 380; Costello, *The Pacific War 1941 – 1945*, 569 – 570.
[50] Works to consult concerning the role of soldiering in Australian national identity include Fiona Nicoll, *From Diggers to Drag Queens: Configurations of Australian National Identity* (Sydney, 2001), Stepehen Alomes, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australia Nationalism* (North Ryde, NSW, 1988), Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Digger: The Australian Soldier in Tow World Wars* (Sydney, 1985), John Carroll, ed., *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity* (Melbourne, 1982) and Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Canberra, 1974).

which earned MacArthur numerous enemies throughout Australia.[51] Ray Aitchison

argued that MacArthur's point of view was influenced by the fact that, "He was a

defeated general who had to be given another American army to try again."[52] The

Australian retreat in New Guinea provided the initial impetus for MacArthur's low

opinion of Australian troops and it was one that, regardless of the successes enjoyed

subsequently by the Australians, would not disappear.

Reports swirled around MacArthur's headquarters in Brisbane that the Australian

retreat had become the butt of many jokes between MacArthur and his staff. General

Eichelberger recorded that his chief of staff reported to him that,

> High ranking officers and he [Eichelberger's COS] mentioned Sutherland [Lt.
> General Richard Sutherland, MacArthur's COS] and Kenney [General George
> Kenney, Allied Air Commander] had made fun of the fighting ability of the
> Aussie, particularly when the Australians retreated to the outskirts of Port
> Moresby down the Kokoda trail. There was some indication that General
> MacArthur had made remarks.[53]

Eichelberger also related that one Australian officer remarked to him:

> American officers with their Australian girls around the Lennon Hotel have made
> joking remarks about the surrender at Singapore and the Australian retreat over
> the Kokoda Trail to Port Moresby. This has been contrasted with the great
> fighting ability of the Americans at Bataan. The Australian girls have repeated
> these jokes and they have spread over Australia. A number of your highest-
> ranking officers were included. No matter how hard you have fought, the
> Australian troops would like to show up the Americans.[54]

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[51] Bergerud, *Fire in the Sky*, 34.

[52] Aitchison, *Americans in Australia*, 64.

[53] Military Papers: WW II Campaigns: Buna, New Guinea, Dictated Notes and Other Notes, 1948, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Folder 7, Box 33, Perkins Library, Duke University.

[54] "Explanation of Certain Statements During the Buna Period," p. 4, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Folder 7, Box 68, Perkins Library, Duke University.

Actions like these earned MacArthur many powerful enemies in Australia; among them the powerful newspaperman Sir Keith Murdoch and the commander of Australian ground forces, General Sir Thomas Blamey.

Murdoch was among the most enthusiastic supporters of increased relations between Australia and the United States but he, like many, soured on the relationship because of MacArthur. General George Kenney related to his diary an argument that he had with Murdoch over the sudden anti-American tone appearing in the editorials in papers owned by Murdoch. Murdoch retorted that MacArthur's strategy "was no good", and that "we needed a new Allied commander whom he trusted and could back."[55] Murdoch's dislike towards MacArthur could be explained by MacArthur's influence over John Curtin, something which irked Murdoch who wanted to have a strong say in the development of Australian policies during the war.

The situation with General Thomas Blamey symbolized the numerous differences that existed between the American and Australian militaries. One of the reasons for the poor rapport between the two men was that MacArthur thought Blamey harbored political ambitions. To this end, Macarthur often did everything in his power to keep American forces from under Blamey's control, even creating special separate commands for American troops to operate under.[56] Another point of contention between the two was Blamey's views on American troops, which was as poor as MacArthur's was on the Australians. During the Allied fight to force the Japanese out of the town of Buna, the American 32nd Division, under the command of General Edwin Harding, suffered several

[55] General George C. Kenney Diaries, January 13, 1943, Vol. 4 m 12 January 1943 – 31 March 1943, Call # 168.7103 – 71, IRIS # 01129423, AFHRA, MAFB.
[56] Day, *Reluctant Nation*, 160.

setbacks that caused embarrassment to MacArthur. Blamey insisted that Australian troops, "who knew how to fight," be sent in to aid the Americans.[57]

On a separate occasion, an American special command, Alamo Force, landed on the undefended Woodlark Island. MacArthur's headquarters celebrated the operation as an important tactical victory over the Japanese. Blamey confided to his memoirs:

> It [the Woodlark operation] was hailed as a fine operation of war by the news hungry. It was in fact, one of the jokes of the war. There was not one Japanese on the island and had been occupied by a small number of troops for some time. It had the effect, however, of holding up materials and vessels urgently required for following up operations against Lae.[58]

The theme of waste was a constant one in Blamey's criticism of his American allies. When ordered by MacArthur to mop up in Papua and New Guinea while American forces liberated the Philippines, Blamey called it "a colossal waste of manpower, material and money."[59] Whether this or the fact that American troops were receiving more press coverage bothered Blamey is not clear. Both were men of strong egos and belief in the fighting quality of their respective nationalities. It is natural that friction would occur between allies in times of war but the personalities of men like MacArthur only served to exacerbate those differences.

The ill will fostered by MacArthur and his commanders was ameliorated to some degree by the work of American and Australian commanders in the field. Robert Eichelberger, in his personal papers, made continual reference to the high quality of the Australian fighting man and the officers who led them. "Both the Australian 7th Division and the 18th Brigade," Eichelberger wrote, "were excellent, battle-tried units. General

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[57] Costello, *The Pacific War 1941 – 1945*, 378.
[58] Quoted in Gailey, *MacArthur's Victory*, 49.
[59] Costello, *The Pacific War 1941 – 1945*, 570.

Vasey (Gen. George A. Vasey, commander Australian 7th Division), the top Australian commander at the front, was a superb soldier, courageous and capable."[60] General George Kenney, the American commander of Allied air forces in the SWPA, also held the Australian military in higher opinion than did those in MacArthur's immediate coterie. He was impressed by the Australian's ability to shake off what would have been severe blows to morale and unit cohesion. As he related to D. Clayton James in 1971, "I liked the Australians because their ground troops and their air men were sterling characters who would take losses and laugh about them whereas most other countries' forces with the same percentage of losses would be out of action."[61]

These attempts to lessen MacArthur's harsh criticisms were appreciated by those within the Australian command structure. It must also be pointed out that generally, in New Guinea, where the ardors of combat and terrain lessened cultural differences, average Australian and American soldiers enjoyed a strong solidarity. As T.J. Baker, a private with the 42nd Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force stationed in New Guinea reminisced, "They [Americans] were pretty good jokers and were telling us how they liked Aussies, and even though they got a few hidings off some of the jokers, they still reckon the Aussies are the goods, so they must have had a good time."[62] However, the cordial relations that existed in New Guinea on the ground level were overshadowed by the contentious relationship that existed in the higher echelons of command.

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[60] Notes on the Buna – Sanandana Operation, IV. Allied Organization and Troops, p. 2, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Box 68, Folder 7, Perkins Library, Duke University.
[61] Oral Reminisces of General George C. Kenney, New York, New York, July 16, 1971. Interviewer: D. Clayton James, p. 3. Call # 168.7103-24, IRIS # 1028948, AFHRA, MAFB.
[62] Letter entry of July 16, 1943, T.J. Baker Papers, p. 7, 3DRL 7528, File # 749/1/1, AWM.

One can see that the official relationship between the United States and Australia during World War II was never a smooth one, contrary to popular belief. The divisions at the higher levels were often mirrored by conflicts among ordinary Americans and Australians who for the first time were meeting each other in large numbers. This should come as no surprise as both peoples were generally ignorant about the other. Kate Darian – Smith pointed out, "Australians were generally ignorant about American history, politics, literature and social life." This lack of knowledge was reinforced by the Australian educational system's emphasis on ties with the Empire and Great Britain.[63] Americans were equally uninformed about their new hosts. The G.I. *Pocket Guide to Australia* informed soldiers, "There's one thing you'll run into – Australians know as little about our country as we do about theirs."[64] R.R. Farnes, a flight sergeant with the Royal Australian Air Force, recorded his impressions of Americans during a trip to Canada. He wrote, "I have spoken to quite a few people and most of them know nothing about Australia."[65] In a commemorative booklet about the American presence in the town of Mackay, Australia, several Australians remembered the amazement of the Americans that Australia had towns and cities and that Australians were white and spoke good English. Some of the Americans were under the impression that they were going to Austria.[66]

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[63] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 207; Anthony Barker and Lisa Jackson, *Fleeting Attractions: A Social History of American Servicemen in Western Australia During the Second World War* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1996), 18.

[64] *Pocket Guide to Australia*, p. 16, 1942, Printed Materials, Box 527, FDR Library.

[65] R.R. Farnes Diary, February 9, 1944, R.R. Farnes Papers, PR 83/108, AWM.

[66] "Australia Remembers: Commemorative Booklet of Memories, Mackay, QLD. 1939 – 1945," Miscellaneous Documents, Call # K238 – 056- 52, IRIS # 01151373, AFHRA, MAFB.

With little actual knowledge about each other, both Australians and Americans sought to find frames of reference with which to interpret each other. For Australians, the primary reference was American films. Robert Eichelberger wrote to his wife that, "Their [Australians] only constant recreation is to watch American movies so of course they know more about us than we know about them."[67] John Lardner, a writer for *The Saturday Evening Post*, revealed to his readers in the U.S. that, "It's a certain truth that much of what Australians know of our manners, customs and speech before our troops came in large numbers was gleaned from movies."[68] K.R Cramp, an American officer who worked in procurement, wrote that, "Go to the movies and you see mainly the product of Hollywood. Listen to the radio and you hear music that is chiefly American recordings."[69] Australian reliance on American film as the primary means of understanding Americans was bound to lead to conflict. The idealized image, that of the American gangster or starlet, many Australians held about America was vastly different from the reality of the men and women who entered their country after 1942.

For the Americans, there was little, if any, popular culture on which they could rely for a frame of reference. Instead, American servicemen in Australia did what many Americans did while abroad during World War II. They placed the strange new lands and people they came across into patterns of historical analogy drawn from American

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[67] Robert Eichelberger to Emmaline Eichelberger, October 19, 1942, Robert Eichelberger Papers, Correspondence: 1942 October, Folder 1, Box 7, Perkins Library, Duke University.
[68] "A Handy Guide to Australia," by John Lardner, *The Saturday Evening Post*, December 19, 1942, p. 73, Call # 168.7265 – 65, IRIS # 01094031, AFHRA, MAFB.
[69] "On the Australian Scene," p. 1, K.R. Cramp Papers, PR 82/47, File # 419/71/35, AWM.

history.[70] In Australia, a nation that was still in many ways a frontier country, it was only

natural for Americans to look to their own frontier past. Peter Schrijvers remarked that:

> Many a GI reported that Australia bore an uncanny resemblance to the Old West.
> Hunting kangaroos from jeeps and playing poker into the night, a submarine crew
> on leave in western Australia claimed that both Perth and the much smaller town
> of Fremantle breathed a 'certain frontier town atmosphere,' which by the time had
> 'become unfamiliar and strange to us Americans.'[71]

As there were pitfalls with the Australian reliance on film, American's insistence on

seeing Australia through the lens of the American experience could not help but lead to

conflict. When Australians did not behave in the manner in which Americans thought

they should, conflict was quick to ensue. General Thomas Blamey offered an important

insight to Australian officers visiting the United States. He told them, "In many ways

they [Americans] are very like us but there are, at the same time, big differences. We do

not talk the same language; shades of difference in meaning can cause quite serious

misunderstanding."[72] Events would bear out Blamey's estimation as Americans and

Australians quickly found out that their ideas about each other were vastly different from

the reality they faced.

American troops' initial impressions of Australia were often quite favorable.

Welcomed as heroes by the Australians, Americans were treated much like movie stars.

Australians of all classes and political leanings courted them with food and drink. Eric

Bergerud pointed out that for American troops fighting in the Pacific, "Australia was big

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[70] Gaddis Smith, *American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941 – 1945* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), 178.

[71] Peter Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan: American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific During World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 16.

[72] "Notes for Service Personnel," p. 1, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 7, AWM.

steaks, strong drink, real cities, hotels and girls."[73] G.J. Stuart, among one of the first

American servicemen to arrive in Australia via convoy, wrote "Seldom have so many

been welcomed to anyplace as we were. It was in fact impossible to walk down any main

street in Melbourne without getting stopped by an Aussie and asked to tea (their dinner),

a drink, play golf, or just plain 'welcome, we sure are glad to see ya, Yank'."[74] This

initial honeymoon period was short lived, however. After the threat of Japanese invasion

had been lessened by the Allied victories at the Coral Sea and in New Guinea, the

differences between U.S. servicemen and Australians came to the fore, much of it caused

by the lack of appreciation for the cultural gap between the two peoples.[75]

While both parties spoke Englishthey did not speak the same form of English. The

Australian language relied heavily on slang terms peculiar to that country. Many of these

terms caused confusion and consternation among the American GIs attempting to deal

with the local populace. One member of the 158th Infantry Regiment recalled how one

particularly attractive Australian woman asked him "if he had been 'screwed' yet –

meaning paid." The GI mistakenly took this innocent question for an invitation for an

amorous meeting and was rebuffed by a sharp slap to his cheek.[76] While events like this

may seem trivial, in the larger context of the meeting of two cultures unfamiliar with one

another, simple events such as this provided the impetus for violence.

Other important cultural factors caused problems between the two groups. For the

Americans, used to a society based on speed and efficiency, the slower pace of life in

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[73] Bergerud, *Touched With Fire*, 495.
[74] "Wartime Experiences of G.J. Stuart, Jr.," p. 23, G.J. Stuart, Jr., Papers, MSS 1240, AWM.
[75] Drea, "'Great Patience is Necessary'," 27.
[76] Arthur, *Bushmasters*, 182.

Australia was a constant source of annoyance. Many among the Americans came to see an inherent laziness in the Australian people or lack of commitment to the war effort. The Australian wharf laborer became the symbol of this lack of effort for many American GIs, who often ended up having to unload American supply ships themselves.[77] Thomas R. St. George, a member of the U.S. 32nd Division, wrote a series of articles for *The San Francisco Chronicle* which detailed life in Australia. St. George recorded that Australians "refused to recognize that we [Americans] were a mechanized army and continued to move at a top speed of about four miles an hour."[78] The War Department killed an article that *Collier's Magazine* was preparing to run which highlighted the lackadaisical attitude of the Australians. The article stated, "Instead of preparation for war, one sees in Australia a life of horse-racing, beer drinking, and long vacations on its beaches. The feeling among a great many people is that conquest by the Japanese will be no worse than capitalistic domination by the United States."[79] American's strong feelings about Australia's commitment to the war effort led not just to sharp words but overt violence in some instances.

By mid-1942 the combination of wartime shortages, overcrowding in Australia's few urban centers and increasing dislike by both Americans and Australians for the other led to numerous incidents of violence.[80] The article from *Collier's Magazine* related that, "Fighting among the soldiers occurs continuously and the Australian soldiers have a habit of waylaying single American soldiers. Up to June, more American soldiers were killed

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[77] Drea, "'Great Patience is Necessary'," 22.
[78] Thomas R. St. George, *C/O Postmaster* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1943), 66.
[79] George C. Marshall to Harry L. Hopkins, October 5, 1942, Harry L. Hopkins Papers, Folder 1 – Australia, Box 132, FDR Library.
[80] Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here*, 143.

and wounded on the continent of Australia by such waylaying than by Japanese action."[81]

There is little doubt that the article overstated the situation in Australia but it also cannot

be ignored as sensationalist either. Coral Bell noted that a confluence of factors,

including competition for women, liquor and battlefield glory, made the outbreak of

violence almost a certainty.[82] One example involved two troop trains in northern

Queensland, one carrying American GIs south for leave, the other carrying Australian

soldiers north for embarkation to New Guinea. The two trains pulled alongside each other

at which point both groups "began exchanging friendly banter about women, and then

insults, and then swarmed into each other's trains to fight it out."[83] Throughout 1942 and

early 1943, events such as this became more commonplace across Australia.

The most well known act of violence to occur between Australians and Americans

was the infamous "Battle of Brisbane" on November 26 and 27, 1942. The incident is

unique because initially the clash occurred between American and Australian servicemen

on one side and military police on the other. The impetus for the riot sprang from a

decision made by the American military which disallowed Australian servicemen from

shopping in American canteens, where prices for items were far lower and the selection

much larger. The Australian government protested this point and eventually a

compromise was reached in which Australian soldiers could buy limited amounts of

certain items in American canteens. However, American soldiers were forbade by the

U.S. military from shopping in Australian military stores, the fear being that the

[81] George C. Marshall to Harry L. Hopkins, October 5, 1942, Harry L. Hopkins Papers, Folder 1 – Australia, Box 132, FDR Library.
[82] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 29.
[83] Aitchison, *Americans in Australia*, 72.

American's superior purchasing power would cause dissatisfaction among the Australian military.

The catalyst for the larger riot occurred on November 26, 1942, when an American MP stopped an American serviceman from entering into an Australian canteen with two Australian soldiers. The American ignored the MP's instructions which led to the MP knocking him unconscious. The two Australian soldiers, upon seeing this, came to the American soldiers' aid and attacked the MP. The resulting fracas spilled out into the nearby street turning into a larger brawl between nearby MPs and American and Australian servicemen. Eventually a truckload of American MPs from a nearby base was sent in to restore order. During this time an Australian soldier seeking to take away one MPs gun attacked the MP. The gun accidentally discharged killing the Australian serviceman. This proved to be the impetus in turning what had been up to this point a U.S. – Australian servicemen against MP battle into an Australian – American one and also highlighted another important cultural division between the two groups. Australians always thought that American GIs were quick to go for the knife or a gun in a fight, something that was considered cowardly in Australia, where fights were to be settled with fists and boots.[84]

In response to the killing, gangs of Australian servicemen throughout Brisbane began to attack lone GIs, severely injuring several. Reports of GIs being lashed by Australian soldiers with their belts was common during the incident as were reports of Australian and American soldiers leaving their bases armed with hand grenades and

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[84] "Disturbances Between Australian and American Troops," p. 2, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 7, AWM.

bayonets. These attacks continued throughout the night and into the following day. In an effort to curb the violence all US soldiers were restricted to base and any gathering of more than three soldiers was broken up. In the aftermath of the incident, it is interesting to note that the American military command placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Australian military while the Australians took the opposite tact.

Larry H. Vaughan, the U.S. Provost Marshal in Brisbane and later President Harry Truman's military advisor, issued a report that stated, "(1) That the Australian Military police had failed to perform their function of maintaining order among the Australian troops. (2) That the Commandos utilized by the Australian Military Police had turned at least four (4) of their guns over to the rioters (the Australian Provost Marshal later denied to me that this had been done). (3) That a considerable number of the Australian Military Police removed their M.P. arm bands when trouble occurred." Vaughan concluded his report by stating that while Americans were not always innocent in matters such as this, in this particular instance it was obvious that the blame lay wholly with the Australians.[85] Other Americans contributed the violence to inherent flaws in the Australian character. General Henry "Hap" Arnold, after touring Australia in September of 1942, concluded that "the Australian is not a bushman; he is not a field soldier. He is nothing but a city slum dweller."[86] Thinking similar to Arnold's was prevalent among many in the American command structure, many of whom refused to recognize the contributions of the Australian military and civilians to the war effort against Japan.

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[85] Report of U.S. Provost Marshal, Brisbane, November 28, 1942, Richard J. Marshall Papers, RG 29c, Box 1, Folder 2, MML.
[86] Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 190.

The Australians, on the other hand, saw the Americans as to blame for the episodes of violence around the country. A report prepared by the intelligence service of the Australian army offers an insight into what the Australians thought the motivating factors in these clashes were. Several key factors were identified as playing a role in starting altercations between Americans and Australians: drunkenness, differing rates of pay, discrimination in shops, hotels, cafes and by taxi drivers in favor of the Americans, a general hostility towards Americans and the "girl" question.[87] At the heart of this issue was the fact that Australian soldiers felt like second-class citizens in their own country when forced to compete for scarce items like alcohol and women. Pat Frank, who worked for the Office of War Information (OWI), wrote to his colleague Harold Guinzburg that, "And of course, that American troops get all the pretty girls, and they have more money, and the American canteens are cleaner and better equipped, and the Americans have snap and drive and are eager for a scrap. The Aussies who came home after being mauled in Egypt and Singapore can only brood and drink."[88] Knowingly, or not, American troops alienated a large segment of the Australian populace who saw the frequent episodes of poor treatment that Australian troops had to endure.[89]

The Australian government moved quickly to help shore up what was already a rocky relationship with the Americans. Pressure was applied to the Australian press who were asked to "refrain from unduly playing up incidents of the kind which have occurred in capital cities recently and to publicize sporting fixtures and fraternization meetings

[87] "Disturbances Between Australian and American Troops," p. 2, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Records, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 7, AWM.
[88] Pat Frank to Harold Guinzburg, August 25, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, President's Secretary's File, Box 23, Folder 5, FDR Library.
[89] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 218 – 219.

which are sponsored by both Americans and Australians."[90] Explicitly, the media was

ordered to carry no coverage or make no mention of the riot in Brisbane in any way.[91]

The Australian press complied with the government's wishes and no official record of the

Brisbane incident was kept. However, it was difficult to get those who saw the riot not to

talk and word of the fracas spread throughout both American and Australian military

camps. Abraham Felber, a member of the 1st Marine Brigade, recorded in his diary

hearing rumors of the fights between Australian and American soldiers in Melbourne and

Brisbane. The proof for him lay in the fact that, "I note in today's paper that there will be

a 'get-together' held this coming Sunday at which 4,000 Australians and 3,000

Americans are to be expected. There will be free beer and sandwiches … so it looks as

though there might be some grounds for all the stories, and that the authorities are taking

energetic measures to cope with the situation."[92] The efforts of the Australian government

and American military to foster good will between the two groups were a mixed success.

In the end, free sandwiches and beer could not overcome the very real issues that served

to sour relations between the GIs and Diggers.

Of the several factors identified by the Australian military intelligence, the two

most important were the economic and labor issues and the issue of women. The influx of

American troops into Australia added new pressures onto an economy already stretched

thin by the demands of wartime production and rationing. Jane Fidcock stressed this

point, "There was a growing resentment as American demand stretched out into the

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[90] Department of Information Background Letter, March 8, 1943, Theodor Bray Papers, MS 2519, NLA.
[91] Censorship Instructions June 9, 1942 – December 29, 1942, November 27, 1942, Theodor Bray Papers, MS 2519, NLA.
[92] Abraham Felber, *The Old Breed of Marine: A World War II Diary* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2003), 167.

community-at-large. Besides the truckloads of timber and meat, the acres of ground and the thousands of workers procured by the Australian government to meet American requirements, the civilian community became conscious of the American demand for a share in their entertainments."[93] Abraham Felber recorded in his diary that the American accumulation of money, and the ease with which it was spent, led to shopkeepers refusing to sell to Australian soldiers.[94] Paul Kincade, an American Navy signalman who served aboard an Australian destroyer in 1944, related how when the special stores he was promised were not delivered to the Australian ship he proceeded to buy up all of the ships' chewing gum and canned fruit. He wrote in his memoir that, "Since the Aussies don't go much for chewing gum, my cornering the market didn't create too much of a problem. But when word got around that I had bought all of the tinned fruit available, I became as popular as Typhoid Mary, if not less so."[95] The disparity in pay scales between the American and Australian militaries ensured that scenes such as these were repeated through out the whole of the country during the war.[96]

The American military also encountered problems in dealing with the Australian labor force. The strong Labor party and movement in Australia was something with which very few Americans had previous experience dealing with. George C. Marshall identified the Australian wharf laborers as one of the largest obstacles standing in the way

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[93] Fidcock, "The Effect of the American 'Invasion' of Australia 1942 – 45," 93.
[94] Felber, *The Old Breed of Marine*, 164.
[95] "The Forgotten Few (A Yank with the British Fleet)," p. 62 – 63, Paul Bernard Kincade Papers, MSS 1638, AWM.
[96] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 214. Between normal pay and overseas and subsistence allowances an American soldier in the lower ranks could often earn twice the amount of his Australian counterpart.

of better American – Australian relations.[97] Hanson Baldwin, a writer for *The New York Times*, wrote a series of scathing articles attacking the apparent lack of effort by the Australians to help win the war in the Pacific. He noted that American soldiers had to unload convoys and replaced stevedores "who were not to work after the whistle had blown"; Baldwin concluded from this that, "The Australians helped but in so far as Labor is concerned, its help has by no means been what we hoped for."[98] U.S. Ambassador Nelson Johnson commented to his colleague William Lancaster that the Australian worker "seems more interested in his basic wage than he is in defending himself against invasion."[99] The situation was not helped when Australian labor unions filed complaints with the Australian government claiming that the Americans were depriving them of their livelihood or when the labor unions issued proclamations condemning "the usurpation of our industrial and civilian rights by American authorities."[100] The division between Americans and Australian labor served as another example of how the relationship between the United States and Australia was never an easy or pragmatic one for either side.

Perhaps the issue that caused the largest rift between the average Australian and American GIs was the matter of women. The conflicts that arose between Australian and American military personnel over women had several different causes. First was the feeling among Australians that with a population of only seven million, a sizeable portion

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[97] George C. Marshall to Harry L. Hopkins, October 5, 1942, Harry L. Hopkins Papers, Box 132, Folder 1 – Australia, FDR Library.
[98] "Labors Help Not What We Hoped," *The Argus*, October 29, 1942, Series # A5954, Control # 2068/6, NAA.
[99] Nelson Johnson to William Lancaster, March 13, 1942, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 40, LOC.
[100] Moore, *Over – Sexed, Over – Paid, and Over Here*, 230.

of which was male, they could ill afford to lose any sizeable number of women to the Americans.[101] Population growth was of central importance to the Australian people, who felt that increasing the native white population of their country would help to provide some security against the masses of Asia to the north. It is clear that the influx of Americans into Australia did have an effect on the rates of marriage, which peaked in 1942 – 1943, but it should be pointed out that the marriage rates had been on the rise since 1940, long before the Americans set foot in Australia.[102] The number of Australian women who became "war-brides" was never significant in terms of sheer numbers. By January of 1945, between 1,200 and 1,500 Australian women had moved to the U.S. as brides of American GIs, while another 10,000 waited in Australia to join their new families in the U.S.[103] However, the psychological effect that this emigration had on the Australian mind cannot be underestimated. The perception existed that that the Americans were stealing Australia's daughters or, if not stealing them, contributing to the soaring divorce rate among Australian couples during the war.[104]

One must also keep in mind that the Australian woman was not a passive actor in these events. They exhibited a strong willingness to challenge the traditional cultural norms of Australia by engaging in romantic or amorous relationships with American GIs. Australian society in the 1940s was a male oriented one. Ray Aitchison acknowledged that Australian women lived in a male world, one in which the women were often

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[101] Ibid., 160.
[102] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 121.
[103] Fidcock, "The Effects of the American 'Invasion' of Australia 1942 – 45," 98.
[104] Ibid., 97. It is difficult to establish any direct correlation between the rising number of divorces in Australia and the presence of American troops although some historians such as Jane Fidcock so make the connection between the two.

neglected or ignored. Because of this Australian women were quite happy to accept the attention of American servicemen, many of who had not seen or been with a woman in several months and were often unsure of when they would be again. As Aitchison stated, "The Americans made the Australian women feel like princesses – and the Australian women avidly wanted to be taught more of the ways of the wider world then they had previously known."[105] Aside from the ability of American soldiers to provide hard to find items and luxury goods, Australian women noted a marked difference in the manner of the new arrivals.

The average American GI was often seen as better dressed, more polite and more interesting then the average Australian male.[106] Numerous sources have commented on this. Leslie L. Grubin, a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, noted that, "… when a guy treats a lady like a lady in Australia they take it to mean more than is meant … It's just that the American male is different in certain respects to the Australian male."[107] The GI *Pocket Guide to Australia* informed soldiers that, "As a matter of fact, the Australians, especially the girls, are a bit amazed at the politeness of American soldiers."[108] The American GI was the embodiment of everything that Australian women had seen in the American films that had dominated the Australian cultural scene for the previous fifteen to twenty years. Thomas St. George recounted how Australian women reacted to the introduction of American style jazz. "The girls as a rule," he wrote, "being pretty

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[105] Aitchison, *American in Australia*, 70.
[106] Fidcock, "The Effect of the American 'Invasion' of Australia 1942 – 45," 92.
[107] Leslie Grubin to Bill Kerr, December 18, 1944, Leslie L. Grubin Papers, PR 01643/1, Part 1 of 2, AWM. The Kerr's were an Australian family that Grubin had stayed with during his time in Australia. He corresponded regularly with family until 1966. The correspondence covers a 24 year period.
[108] *Pocket Guide to Australia*, p. 45, 1942, Printed Materials, Box 527, FDR Library.

impressed with the Yanks anyhow, took to this violent form of exercise with enthusiasm, discarded formal evening wear in favor of slacks (to the utter horror of town mothers) and learned to cut a pretty decent rug themselves."[109] While many of the interactions that took place between American troops and Australian women were innocent affairs, Australian males and the American military command saw it differently.

For the returning soldiers of the Australian military who had fought in North Africa, Crete and in New Guinea, the reception given to the American GIs, many of whom had not seen combat, was especially galling. The majority of clashes, many of which "made John Wayne fights look like high school picnics," between the two sides were attributed to arguments over women.[110] Concerns and thoughts on this phenomena appeared regularly in letters between Australian soldiers abroad and their wives and sweethearts. Alan Francis Hackett, a private in the 2/12 Battalion, Australian Imperial Force (AIF), corresponded frequently with his wife Maureen on this topic. One letter between the two related to a mutual friend who had started seeing an American GI. Hackett wrote asking his wife, "Are you sure she only goes 'horse riding' with the Yank?" Maureen Hackett responded by assuring her husband, "I am quiet certain she goes more than horseback riding."[111] Many of the letters of Australian GIs are filled with this type of innuendo. Fear of American sexual conquests was rampant among the men of the Australian military as well as among civilian authorities, who saw the young women of Australia openly embracing the more open sexual attitudes of the Americans.

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[109] St. George, *C/O Postmaster*, 97.
[110] Costello, *The Pacific War*, 563.
[111] Alan Francis Hackett to Maureen Hackett, June 13, 1943, PR 09/88, File # 90/0905. AWM; Maureen Hackett to Alan Francis Hackett, June 17, 1943, PR 09/88. File # 90-0905, AWM.

An intelligence report produced by the Australian army identified this issue as the central one in the deteriorating relations between Australians and American troops. It is interesting to note that the report also places part of the blame on the shoulders of Australian women themselves:

> Australians of the better sort are resentful of the loose behavior of many Australian women, whose husbands are serving abroad, with American Servicemen, and of the cheap regard in which a large number of American troops appear to hold Australian girls. In particular, they do not like the way Americans "paw" them and embrace them in public. Australians of other types are annoyed when Australian girls refuse their company, but soon afterwards are seen to accept the advances of the first Americans that offer.[112]

The open sexual behavior of both America troops and Australian women was also a cause of concern for American military authorities, who worried that venereal disease would erode the effectiveness of American troops. By May 1942, venereal disease among American troops in Australia was running at 45.8 per thousand. By November of 1944, however, that number had declined to 4.2 per thousand.[113] One of the ways this decline was accomplished was a push by the American military authority to portray Australian women as unclean in comparison with the "clean" American girls waiting back home. Australian women were also painted as "good time honeys" seeking to fleece the unsuspecting American GI of his hard earned money.[114] Little was often said, though, about the actions of American GIs, who took the friendliness of Australian women to mean availability, which led to several incidents of rape and murder, which placed further

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[112] "Disturbances Between Australian and American Troops," p. 2, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 7, AWM.
[113] Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan*, 153.
[114] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 189, 232.

strain on the relationship between the American military and the Australian general public.[115]

One can clearly see that the relationship between the United States and Australia during the war was not always a cordial one. The two countries, separated often by differences of culture and of political aims, oftentimes found it difficult to find common ground, even in the face of a common enemy. While the war certainly provided an impetus in developing the bond between the two it is difficult to argue that this was the only factor that did so. If this were the case then, given the contentious nature of the relationship, after the war both the U.S. and Australia would most likely have returned to the status quo of the 1930s. This however was not the case. What other factor could have led to the development of as close a relationship that came out of the war period? One answer that has not received strong consideration is the ideology of race. For both nations, race lay at the center of their worldviews. And given the nature of the war in the Pacific, race was a place where both Americans and Australians found commonality.[116] In fact, it was reported to Canberra that both Admiral Ernest King and Franklin Roosevelt had stated the prestige of the white man as one of the primary reasons why the Japanese could not be allowed to take Australia.[117] Race would prove to be the one factor that

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[115] Ibid., 223. The most famous case from the war was the infamous "Brown Out Strangler." An American private, Eddie Leonski, was convicted of having murdered three women in Melbourne in May 1942 and was subsequently hung by the American military.

[116] John Dower in his work *War Without Mercy* contends that, "In the war in Asia – and in general – considerations of race and power are inseparable." (xi) The Australian historians Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon contend that "… the Pacific War was a racial war that not only exposed tensions between nations but also exposed tensions and contradictions within nations." (607) Taken from "Jim Crow Down Under? African American Encounters with White Australia, 1942 – 1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 71 (2002): 607 – 632.

[117] Richard Casey to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, March 6, 1942, Messages to and from Naval Attache, Washington D.C., AWM 124 4/155, AWM.

united Americans and Australians when the numerous other factors of the relationship

worked to drive them apart.

Chapter 4: The Commonality of Race

Australian ambassador Richard Casey gave a revealing insight into how race helped bring Americans and Australians together in a speech he gave at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. in 1940. Casey told the assembled newspapermen, "We [Australians] seem to have the same likes and dislikes as you – and the same prejudices – and after all, one can't feel at home except amongst people that have the same prejudices as oneself. Let's keep our prejudices. They're consciously or unconsciously, based on something."[1] While Casey did not mention racial prejudices specifically, it is not difficult to assume that given the importance of race to Australians and Americans in this time period, that it is implied in his speech.

Since the first white settlers set foot on the continent, Australia had been a land where race had always been central in conceptualizing the world.[2] By the time war broke out in the Pacific, the concepts of Australian identity and nationalism were still wholly fixed upon this idea of race, something that had changed little since the country achieved federation in 1901.[3] Many Australians boasted that the country was "98% British," a claim of pride that Australia had managed to maintain a rather homogeneous population in the face of the threat of being overrun by the numerous Asian groups who surrounded

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[1] Richard G. Casey, "Text of Speech to National Press Club" (speech given to the National Press Club of Washington D.C. on March 12, 1940), R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File #419/18/6, AWM.

[2] Works to consult that address the issue of race and racism in Australian history include Alice Pung, ed., *Growing Up Asian in Australia* (Melbourne, 2008), David Hollinsworth, *Race and Racism in Australia* (Katoomba, NSW, 2006), Peter Gale, *The Politics of Fear: Lighting the Wick* (French Forest, NSW, 2005), Keith Windschuttle, *The White Australia Policy* (Paddington, NSW, 2004), Jill Vickers, *The Politics of "Race": Canada, Australia, and the United States* (Ottawa, 2002), Belinda McKay, *Unmasking Whiteness: Race Relations and Reconciliation*, (Nathan, QLD, 1999) and Itiel Bereson, *Racism: Australian Perspectives* (Cheltenham, Victoria, 1998).

[3] Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," 610. It should be noted that the first act of the Australian Parliament in 1901 was the establishment of the restrictive immigration policy that came to be known as the "White Australia" policy.

their country.[4] Australia also served as a rallying point for other European whites in the Pacific region. In the face of Imperial Japan's rapid expansion in late 1941 and early 1942, many whites in the region gravitated toward Australia thinking that would be where the white race made its last stand in the region.[5]

While it may be difficult to judge to what degree race influenced an individual's decisions, an examination of a wide range of sources from Australian officials and private citizens demonstrates that race was a common frame of reference and that the Australians consciously sought to use race as a means of developing a stronger relationship with the United States. On the official level, Prime Minister John Curtin made frequent references to race in his public speeches and private correspondence. In a letter to Franklin Roosevelt seeking additional aid for Australia, Curtin pointed out repeatedly, "We are now, a small population in the only white man's territory south of the equator, beset grievously. Because we have added to our contribution in manpower so much of our resources and materials we now lack adequacy for forces of our homeland on our own soil."[6] When Australian newspaper magnate Sir Keith Murdoch opined that Australia should offer full citizenship to all of Australia's allies, Curtin chastised the publisher for suggesting such a thing, pointing out that Australia's allies "included Chinese and other colored people."[7] Curtin's use of racism was common to most Australians, who did not view race necessarily in terms of a biological sense as was more common in the United States. Rather, Australian racism was rooted in a deeply held fear of dispossession. The

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[4] Alexander, *Australia and the United States*, 14.
[5] Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan*, 146.
[6] John Curtin to Franklin Roosevelt, February 21, 1942, Sumner Welles Papers, Box 161, Folder 1, FDR Library.
[7] Notes of Curtin Press Conference, July 7, 1942, Frederick Smith Papers, MS 4675, NLA.

constant fear of having their land taken from them by the vast Asian multitude encircling

them led to the heightened awareness of race that most Australians had.[8] It must be noted

that this fear of dispossession fits squarely into the economic aspects of "whiteness" that

historians such as Theodore Allen and David Roediger have documented in their works

on the subject in the United States and provided a strong point of familiarity between the

two groups.[9]

Many others in the Australian government made use of race in their public

pronouncements. In another speech in Washington D.C., Casey explained to Americans

that:

> We are endeavoring to create and to maintain a uniform race in Australia – a race
> which will avoid those difficulties that we believe are inseparable from the
> mingling of two different types of civilization – the East and the West. We don't
> for one moment attempt to lay down that our Western civilization is superior to
> that of the Far East – but we do say that it is different and we believe that the two
> cannot be mixed to advantage.[10]

Casey's pronouncement that he was not attempting to put Western culture above Eastern

culture certainly was influenced by the political landscape at the time. Relations between

Western nations, like Australia, and Japan had been deteriorating over the course of 1940

and any remarks that could be seen as inflammatory would serve only to further

exacerbate the situation. But when the final part of the quote is taken into consideration,

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[8] Day, *Reluctant Nation*, 179.

[9] See Theodore Allen, *Invention of the White Race* (London, 1994) and David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness* (London, 1991). Both Allen and Roediger document how the capitalist system of the United States was used to reinvent the concept of race in order to gain allegiance from disaffected lower class ethnic groups, such as the Irish.

[10] Richard G. Casey, "Text of Speech to National Press Club" (speech given to the National Press Club of Washington D.C. on March 12, 1940), R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File #419/18/6, AWM.

along with the previously cited remark concerning prejudices, it becomes clearer that there is a strong racial overtone to Casey's speeches.

An examination of the records of other Australian government officials demonstrates that other officials shared these racial assumptions. Frederic Eggleston, who served as Australia's ambassador to China from 1941 to 1944 and to the United States from 1944 till 1946, felt race should be a key component of Australia's immigration policy. Eggleston maintained:

> Australia is a democratic community governed under the institutions of the British type and that if any considerable body of aliens who could not understand these institutions came into the community we would lose what we value most … and it is absurd to go to the expense of protecting ourselves from external attack if we are going to allow our heritage to be destroyed by floods of alien immigration.[11]

The fear of dispossession cited by David Day is very prominent in Eggleston's letter and was a concern that crossed over political boundaries in Australia. The members of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia, a group of veterans whose political leanings generally ran counter to those of the Labor Party in Australia, argued for a strong immigration policy which defended the livelihood of white Australians. Their primary complaint was that the dislocation caused by the war would allow "non – British" persons to come to Australia to take work from returned veterans.[12] The Australian Labor Party made the preservation of the White Australia policy a central point of the Empire Labor Talks held in 1944.[13] The fear of dispossession mentioned by Day was something concrete and real for a vast number of Australians and not simply an

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[11] Frederic Eggleston to Herbert Evatt, March 15, 1943, Series # A433, Control # 1944/2/53, NAA.
[12] Darian–Smith, *On the Home Front*, 32.
[13] "A.L.P. for London Empire Labor Talks," *Melbourne Herald*, November 25, 1944, Series # A433, Control #1944/2/53, NAA.

ethereal idea that is difficult to pinpoint in the writings of public pronouncements of

Australian officials.

More evidence of this view can be found in the writings of Sir Keith Murdoch, the

influential newspaperman whose views helped to shape the opinions of the country as a

whole. In an undated speech, Murdoch pointed out that, "The question of whether

Australia is part of Asia has been raised not only by Japan in her co-prosperity designs,

but in the inexorable facts of population, of geography, and of natural law. We have to

keep answering No, and be able to strongly and effectively answer No."[14] The overthrow

of white colonial power in Asia, for Murdoch, also meant an end to the restraints placed

upon the native peoples. He feared that these groups, perhaps unused to the freedoms of

self-rule, would turn south to eliminate the last bastion of white power in the region.

Murdoch pointed out some basic facts Australia had to face in the wake of increased

agitation for the expulsion of European powers from Asia. He told the Combine Clubs of

Ballarat:

> There are nine million white people in the South-Western Pacific. There are one
> thousand million Asians not far from them. There are ninety million Japanese –
> industrious, warlike, simple in tastes, patriotic, increasing by nearly a million a
> year. There is an awakened China, opening its eyes to new world conceptions
> after its long sleep. There is a resurgent India, claiming freedom to go its own
> way.[15]

The sheer numbers facing Australia were, Murdoch hoped, enough to force the country to

take vigorous action to ensure that the dominance of the native Anglo-Saxon stock would

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[14] "What Shall We Make of Australia," undated, Sir Keith Murdoch Papers, MS 2823, Box 10, Series 7, Folder 1, NLA. Capitalization in original document.

[15] Address to the Tootscray Rotary Club, October 8, 1942, Sir Keith Murdoch Papers, MS 2823, Box 10, Series 7, Folder 1, NLA; Address to Combine Clubs of Ballarat, May 20, 1943, Sir Keith Murdoch Papers, MS 2823, Box 10, Series 7, Folder 2, NLA.

be maintained. The rising nationalism in nations such as China and India also continued to trouble the mind of both Australian and American policymakers after the guns in the Pacific had fallen silent.

There was also no doubting that Australians were not shy about sharing their racial views with outsiders. In an article published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, Australian journalist Brian Penton wrote a long article that appealed to the American public to send more aid to Australia. The crux of Penton's article centered on a shared identity with Americans, one with strong racial overtones:

> One side of Australia's case for America's aid I have not mentioned because I do not think I need to tell you Americans that this wholly white democracy of 98 percent British stock looks with horror at any change of its status vis-à-vis the little yellow man. We think this country could support four or five times the present population, but we want newcomers to be our own color and race. We have fought pretty hard to pioneer this oldest and in many ways hardest of continents, and we think your own pioneering history will make you understand how we feel about our brand new cities and settlements that we have beaten out of the bush.[16]

Penton's allusion to the pioneering past of the United States was certainly designed to conjure certain images in the American reader's mind. The connection of westward movement in American history with images of white Americans carving a space out of a harsh wilderness and fighting off bands of Native Americans was still a powerful image in the American consciousness in the 1940s.[17]

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[16] "Help Us Hold Australia!," *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 11, 1942, p. 55, Cal # 168.7265-65, IRIS # 01094031, AFHRA, MAFB.

[17] A plethora of works exist which cover the topic of American expansion into its western lands and the important role that the idea of the frontier has played in American history. The most important of these is Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920). More recent works to consult include Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion* (New York, 2008), William Unrau, *The Rise and Fall of Indian Country, 1825 – 1855* (Lawrence, KS, 2007), Robert Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT, 2006), Eric Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865 – 1900* (Chapel

It is interesting to note that Australians used the United States' race issues as a justification for their own racial views. After Franklin Roosevelt's death, members of the Australian Parliament made speeches memorializing the former American president. Senator R.V. Keane hailed Roosevelt for having overcome a vast array of problems during his life, among them "the racial diversification present in his own country."[18] An article from *The Argus*, a popular Australian newspaper from Melbourne, carried an article on the debate over Australian immigration that made another allusion to the problems that plagued the United States because of its multi-racial makeup. The article argued that, "It is also pertinent to note that similar problems have existed in other countries, and that once they have been allowed to go on increasing in complexity, as in the case of America's color problem, they present tremendous, if not insuperable difficulties to the generation inheriting them."[19] For Australians, the United States served as both a beacon of hope in fighting off Asian domination but also as a warning of what would happen should Australian society be opened to other races.

Race was an issue in the Australian reaction to the arrival of American troops in their country starting in late 1941. The arrival of American forces was interpreted in Australia as a signal of white solidarity against the "Yellow Peril" threatening Australia from the north. American Ambassador Nelson Johnson wrote to Franklin Roosevelt informing him of the positive reception given to the Americans. Johnson felt that the

Hill, NC, 2004), David & Jeanne Heidler, *Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT, 2003), John Selby, *The Conquest of the American West* (Stroud, 2003) and Page Stegner, *Winning the Wild West: The Epic Saga of the American Frontier, 1800 – 1899* (New York, 2002).
[18] "A Tribute to the Memory of Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States," April 24, 1945, Printed Materials – Oversized Books, Box 44 – 5, FDR Library.
[19] "Australian Immigration," *The Argus*, January 29, 1944, Series A433, Control # 1944/2/53, NAA.

decision to reroute troops and material to Australia was "… concrete evidence that this remote island of occidental culture and civilization would not be abandoned to its fate at the hands of the oriental hordes that were bearing southward upon it."[20] In a separate letter to American editor William Allen White, Johnson related that the appointment of Douglas MacArthur to the role of Supreme Commander of Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific had been a stroke of genius. It assured the Australians, Johnson concluded, that the United States was not going to abandon their white brethren in the region.[21] The Australians took these actions as evidence of a racial bond between the two peoples, one that was necessary to promote a strong and lasting alliance. Sir Keith Murdoch highlighted this same point in an editorial that appeared in *The Herald* in 1943, in which he stated that "… without a lasting friendship with America Australia must, in time, drop into the Asiatic bucket."[22] For Australians, this was a very real and palpable fear in late 1941.

Race served as a common language used by both parties, but also caused serious disruptions between the Americans and the Australians. The American decision to ship labor companies to Australia composed mainly of African – Americans caused great consternation among Australian policymakers. This point will be explored further in this chapter, but it is worth mentioning here the initial reaction of Australia, which was decidedly negative. A memorandum from the Australian Department of Labor and National Service suggested that the importation of African-American laborers into

[20] Nelson Johnson to Franklin Roosevelt, October 12, 1942, FDR Papers, President's Secretary's File, Box 23, Folder 3, FDR Library.
[21] Nelson Johnson to William Allen White, April 2, 1942, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 41, LOC.
[22] "Comrades and Friends: The Vast American Effort in the Pacific," *The Herald*, May 17, 1943, Series # A5954, Control # 2228/2. NAA.

Australia "would have the most dangerous consequences."[23] One Australian Royal Air

Force officer recorded in his diary that during a troop transit to Darwin, several men took

to a nearby swimming hole to relieve themselves from the oppressive heat. When they

arrived they found "four black fellows" already swimming there so the Australians

instead found a spot further upstream.[24] Many Americans would hardly have considered

the reaction of the Australian in this situation strange during this time. One of the primary

reasons why this would have been was the fact that, like Australia, the American

worldview was one tinted by the lens of race.

The issue of race had dominated American culture since the pre-colonial period.

Michael Hunt concluded that, "Americans of light skin, and especially of English

descent, shared a loyalty to race as an essential category for understanding other peoples

and as a fundamental basis for judging them. They had in other words, fixed race at the

center of their world view." This preoccupation with race, Hunt argues, was reinforced

and refined by those people who Americans came into contact with as they spread across

their own continent and into the wider world.[25] This ideological component of American

foreign policy was a real and powerful motivating factor in American dealings with non-

white peoples and helped provide the United States with a paradigm to understand the

rest of the world.[26]

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[23] Department of Labor and National Service memorandum, January 13, 1942, Series # A433, Control # 1942/2/258. NAA.

[24] Diary entry of R.R. Farnes, Dec. 15, 1942, R.R. Farnes Papers, PR 83/108, AWM. It is unclear if the blacks Farnes talks about where native Aborigines or African – American troops from a nearby military encampment. It is possible that it was the latter since Farnes did not make use of the popular term "Abos" to indicate that they were indeed natives.

[25] Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 91, 52.

[26] Cecil Crabb, *American Diplomacy and the Pragmatic Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 182.

The Americans who came into contact with Australians during World War II found similar racial attitudes. There were slight differences in how Americans and Australians perceived race. As mentioned previously, Australian racial fears were generally predicated on a fear of dispossession while more often American racial attitudes were based upon ideas of superiority over non-white races.[27] There was also a shared concept about "whiteness," that is, the division of racially white groups into various strata based upon their ethnicity. These concepts of race and "whiteness" had led the United States, by the 1940s, to adopt a strongly bifurcated racial view of the world. It is interesting to note though that World War II posed some challenges to this system, especially in the case of the Chinese. By 1938 the Japanese had replaced the Chinese as the primary targets of anti-Asian sentiment in the Pacific region. Americans saw gradations among the peoples of Asia. By the 1940s, American immigration policy that had blocked the majority of immigration from Asian nations was slowly being relaxed. The Australians maintained a more traditional view on race, choosing to see shades of white for their immigration policies but viewing almost all Asian groups as a potential threat to their own racial homogeneity. This difference was a slight one though and never came between the two groups. And just as the Australians sought to make race a clear connection between both sides, the Americans did the same. Upon his arrival in Australia, Douglas MacArthur issued a public proclamation, stating:

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[27] Works to consult which outline the development of racist attitudes in the United States include Matthew Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900 – 1940* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of* Race (Cambridge, MA, 1998), Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995), David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London, 1991), Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black / White Relations in the South Since Emancipation* (New York, 1984) and Winthrop Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York, 1974) and *White Over Black: American Attitudes Towards the Negro, 1550 – 1812* (Baltimore, 1969).

> There is a link that binds our countries together which does not depend upon a written protocol, upon treaties of alliance, or upon diplomatic doctrine. It goes deeper than that. It is the indescribable consanguinity of race which causes us to have the same aspirations, the same hopes and desires, the same ideals and the same dreams of future destiny.[28]

MacArthur's choice of the word consanguinity, with its implication of blood relation, resonated with Australian leaders who saw the world in terms of an "Anglosphere," a conglomeration of the British races of the world who were responsible for the policing of the globe. This idea was also certainly not limited to Australia. American historian Allan Nevins had pushed for the creation of a "League of Democracies," similar to the idea of the "Anglosphere" popular among Australian thinkers and politicians.[29]

American policymakers were also quite open about the importance of race in the Pacific campaign. Admiral Ernest King wrote a letter to other members of the American military planning circle outlining his reasoning for making the Pacific the primary theatre of American interest in World War II. The pervasive racial rhetoric that appears in this letter. King stressed that the "prestige of the white man" had been severely hurt by the actions of the Japanese in the Pacific and that only the use of force would restore it since that was the "only thing the oriental, with his special philosophy, would respect."[30] Given King's passion for seeing the Pacific as the United States's main sphere of interest, it is perhaps difficult to judge to what degree his use of racial rhetoric was a gambit. It must be pointed out, though, that an examination of King's other writings, such as his famous

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[28] "General MacArthur's Pledge to Australia," Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 40, LOC.
[29] See Gerald Fetner, *Immersed in Great Affairs: Allan Nevins and the Heroic Age of American History* (Albany, 2004).
[30] Ernest J. King to William Leahy, George C. Marshall and Hap Arnold, Sept. 26, 1944, Franklin Roosevelt Papers, Map Room File, Box 168, Folder 4, FDR Library.

memo to Roosevelt concerning the "white men's countries" of Australia and New

Zealand, highlight the fact that race was at the forefront of King's mind.

The idea of an Anglo brotherhood was central to the American ambassador to

Australia, Nelson Johnson. Johnson was an ardent proponent of a strong relationship

between the United States and Australia. He pointed out that it would be difficult for the

United States to rely on Russia or China to help with problems in the Pacific due to the

fact that both groups were dissimilar in what Johnson termed "mental outlook." For

Johnson, Australia was the only feasible country the United States could turn to in the

Pacific. In a letter to American editor Roy W. Howard, Johnson wrote that Australia was

"the largest homogeneous Occidental in the Pacific zone," and because of this,

Australians were "… our natural *racial allies* in the Pacific. We need them, as recent

months have amply demonstrated; and of course, they need us."[31] One would be hard

pressed to find a clearer statement of the role race played in influencing the development

of American – Australian relations. Australian observer Fred Alexander reported that on

the West Coast of the United States that traditional animosity to the Japanese virtually

ensured that any threat of invasion to Australia would arouse the racial animus of

Americans there who would bring great pressure to bear on Washington to enter the

war.[32]

The racial attitudes of Australians and Americans can be seen in three separate

areas during the war. First, and most prominently, was the issue of Japan. It should be

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[31] Nelson Johnson to Roy W. Howard, May 12, 1943, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 42, LOC. Emphasis added by author.
[32] Fred Alexander, "Political Relations Between United States and Australia," June 10, 1940, Series #A981, Control # UNI 79 Part 1, NAA.

pointed out that the specific issues that both Australia and the United States had

concerning Japan were tied into larger fears over the rise of Asian nationalism and the

latent fear of the "Yellow Peril." Several historians have commented on this issue

including Peter Schrijvers, who contended that the war in the Pacific brought to the fore

memories "of Orientals as a human flood threatening to wash away Western civilization

…" which reinforced the primary Australian fear of dispossession.[33] John Dower argued

in his seminal work *War Without Mercy* that the specific anti – Japanese sentiment of

Australia and the United States was often tied to larger fears over the "Yellow Peril" and

the rise of non-white peoples everywhere.[34] For white Americans World War II certainly

highlighted the increased racial awareness of minority groups within the United States as

evidenced by the Double V campaign carried out by African – Americans during the war

and a growing racial awareness among Latinos in the western United States.[35]

Japan's initial victories over the Americans, British, Australians and Dutch in the

Pacific region led many observers to conclude that the Western powers had received a

blow from which they would be unable to recover. One example of this can be found in

the diary of Eilean Giblin, a native of Canberra, who kept a series of diaries chronicling

her experiences through World War II. In the entry for January 13, 1942, Giblin recorded

that, "The feeling of superiority of the occidental for the oriental may not in many cases

be subconscious, but be a feeling of active and conscious superiority." This feeling of

superiority, Giblin goes on to say, had been undercut by the Japanese advances in the

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[33] Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan*, 135.
[34] Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 146.
[35] See Michael Cooper, *The Double V Campaign: African Americans and World War II* (New York, 1998) and Kevin Allen Leonard, *The Battle for Los Angeles: Racial Ideology and World War II* (Albuquerque, 2006).

Philippines, Singapore and in the Dutch East Indies and represented the worst blow to the prestige of the white races in Asia since the Russo – Japanese war of 1904 – 05.[36]

The Japanese offensive of December 1941 had struck the Americans and Australians like a lightning bolt. The speed, precision, and overall success of the Japanese military in the first six months of the Pacific campaign sent both nations reeling. In many ways, however, the fashion in which the offensive was executed confirmed many of the traditional views that whites in Australia and the United States held about the Japanese and Asians in general. They were "subhuman yet cunning, unfeeling yet boiling inwardly with rage, cowardly and decadent yet capable of great conquests."[37] The Japanese were often viewed as children by Australians and Americans, tempestuous in temper but lacking the innate technological ability or capabilities to truly challenge white domination in the Pacific. Evidence of such views can be found throughout pre-war military intelligence reports. One Australian report covering the period of November 7 – 23, 1941, maintained that the Japanese air fleet would find themselves at considerable disadvantage due to their lack of "mechanical sense" and their inability to grasp advanced aeronautic principles.[38] Only a few short weeks later, Australians and Americans found out how wrong their estimations of Japanese aeronautical ability were with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Another example of this sort of reasoning can be seen in a letter to John Curtin from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill who cautioned against viewing the

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[36] Eilean Giblin, Diary entry of January 13, 1942, Lyndhurst Giblin Papers, MS 366, Box 4, Folder 2, NLA.
[37] Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 69.
[38] Australian Military Forces Weekly Intelligence Review No. 99, Nov. 7 – 23, 1941, Charles A. Willoughby Papers, RG 23a, Box 1, Folder 2, MML.

Japanese as superhuman fighters because of their early successes. As Churchill stated,

"so far the Japanese have had only two white battalions and a few gunners against them,

the rest being Indian soldiers."[39] Of course the Japanese success in storming the British

base at Singapore would shatter any ideas about superior fighting abilities of Europeans

in the Pacific.

The conflict between the Japanese and Australians and Americans in the Pacific

undoubtedly had an economic aspect. Japanese offensive operations were aimed at

controlling the oil producing regions of the Dutch East Indies. For the Americans and

Australians, there was always concern over post-war access to regional markets and raw

goods. It is important though not to forget that the fighting between these three powers in

the Pacific was also undoubtedly a cultural conflict.[40] Akira Iriye maintained that the

Allies' fight against the Japanese was not just a physical struggle but a cultural one as

well.[41] This gaping cultural chasm between the three parties served only to reinforce the

racial animosity that colored the fighting in the Pacific. Numerous American and

Australian observers made note of the cultural divide between themselves and the

Japanese. An examination of these views reveals that there really seemed to be no hope

of reconciliation or moderation in the Pacific.

The last minute negotiations between the Japanese and the United States in

November 1941, in the context of this cultural gulf, had little chance of success. Jonathan

Utley highlighted how presuppositions about the Japanese character helped to determine

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[39] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, Jan. 14, 1942, Series # A12728, Control # 1, NAA.
[40] Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan*, 213.
[41] Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979): 125.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull's personal outlook on the talks. Hull entered into the

meetings with long standing assumptions about the Japanese character based on previous

American involvement in East Asia and key among these assumptions was "the deep and

abiding belief that Japan was not trustworthy."[42] Hull's counterpart in Australia, Herbert

Evatt, delivered an address to the Overseas Press Club of New York on the nature of the

Pacific War. Evatt concluded his talk by stating that the war against Japan was not about

regaining or retaining territory but rather retaining civilization in the Pacific. Evatt goes

on to state that this civilization is implicitly European and from this one can extrapolate

that he also means white.[43] A 1945 letter from Evatt to Norman Makin reveals how even

at the end of the war a vast cultural divide still existed. In the letter, Evatt summarized the

findings of a report on Japanese war crimes during the Pacific fighting. He related in an

aside, "It reveals not only individual and isolated acts of barbarity but also practices

which are beyond the pale of accepted human conduct."[44] The language used by Evatt in

this letter is by no means isolated. Both Americans and Australians sought to show that

the Japanese could not be reasoned with and indeed had to be dealt with harshly due to

their supposed sub-human nature.

It is common in times of war for adversaries to attempt to dehumanize their

opponents. The British achieved great success in portraying the Germans in World War I

as bloodthirsty brutes with exaggerated stories of German atrocities in Belgium. Evidence

of these dehumanization campaigns in World War II have been well documented by

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[42] Utley, *Going to War With Japan 1937 – 1941*, 4.
[43] Address of Dr. Herbert V. Evatt to Overseas Press Club of New York, April 28, 1943, Harry L. Hopkins Papers, Box 132, Folder 1- Australia, FDR Library.
[44] Herbert Evatt to Norman Makin, Sept. 7, 1945, Series #A5954, Control # 671/1. NAA.

historians especially in the conflicts on the Eastern Front and in the Pacific. The success

of the American and Australian militaries in painting the Japanese as horrific monsters

contributed greatly to bringing race into the Pacific theatre as a primary consideration. Sir

Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-Chief of Allied ground forces in the Southwest Pacific,

gave voice to these views in an open letter to his subordinates. He wrote that the Japanese

"were not a European race and it would be of no avail to treat them, or endeavor to

reason with them, entirely on European standards."[45] This would be a constantly

recurring theme in the writings of both Americans and Australians. Their inability to

grasp what they saw as the maniacal actions of Japanese soldiers in combat served only

to help lessen their own compassion towards their enemy.

There were several factors that contributed to this phenomenon during the war.

The first is related to the point made earlier about the cultural gap that existed between

the Japanese and Americans and Australians. The Japanese way of war, with its emphasis

on the traditional philosophy of *bushido*, led most Allied soldiers to believe that the

Japanese naturally valued human life far less than did their own societies. General

George Kenney related to his diary that the average Japanese soldier would rather

commit suicide or carry out a futile banzai charge rather than allow himself to be taken

prisoner. Such actions led Kenney to conclude that, "This looks like a war of

extermination. The trouble is there are 75 million of them."[46] Percy Spender shared this

dire assessment of the Pacific conflict in a speech to the Constitutional Club of Brisbane.

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[45] Thomas Blamey to GHQ SWPA, June 18, 1943, USAFPAC Allied Air – Allied Naval Correspondence, RG 4, Box 6, Folder 2, MML.
[46] General George C. Kenney Diaries, January 23, 1943, Vol. 4, 12 January 1943 – 31 March 1943, Call # 168.7103-71, IRIS # 01129423, AFHRA, MAFB.

He told the assembled crowd that, "This is a war which must be fought to the bitter end. It is a war of extinction." He also related that the Australians and Americans could show no mercy towards the Japanese because they could expect to receive none in return.[47] These dark pronouncements certainly help to explain the ferocity of the fighting in the Pacific to some degree. Americans and Australians expected no quarter to be given by the Japanese so why, they asked, should any be given?

Many American and Australians soldiers and sailors entered into combat in the Pacific with only vague preconceptions of the Japanese based on little actual interactions with Japanese culture. Because of this many based their views on that of their leaders like Kenney and Blamey. The realities of combat went a long way towards convincing the average Allied serviceman that their enemy was indeed, as one Australian intelligence review stated, "A savage whose conception of the value of human life is totally different from ours."[48] The fighting in Papua and New Guinea gave many Americans and Australians their first direct encounter with the Japanese. The end result only strengthened those numerous preconceptions that the white allies carried into the jungles and mountains with them. The Australian Army's official history of the Papua and New Guinea campaigns stressed the "fanatical and savage" nature of the Japanese, a group who "knows neither the decencies of civilization nor subscribes to the international code of warfare."[49] Two specific items helped to mold Allied images of the Japanese as sub-

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[47] Address by Percy Spender to Constitutional Club of Brisbane, Aug. 20, 1942, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 2, folder 7, NLA. In this speech Spender makes the interesting point that the war led Japan to hope to "smash us as a race and grind us into dust for all time."

[48] Australian Military Forces Weekly Intelligence Review No. 9, Sept. 25 – Oct. 2, 1942, Charles A. Willoughby Papers, RG 23a, Box 2, folder 3, MML.

[49] *The Jap Was Thrashed*, 1944, p. 6, Series # A5954, Control # 2234/4, NAA.

human: the conditions under which Japanese soldiers lived and reports of atrocities on the part of the Japanese.

In the U.S. Army's official history of the Papua and New Guinea campaign, Samuel Milner related how the Japanese had used the bodies of their fallen comrades as sandbags at the village of Gona and that after the Allies had seized the position the stench of the unburied dead was so overpowering it led many to wonder "how human beings could have endured such conditions and gone on living."[50] The question of the Japanese's ability to tolerate what most Westerners considered sub-human living conditions was one that reappears throughout the documents covering the fighting on the island. One undated Australian report concerning the living conditions of the average Japanese soldier in Papua questioned whether European soldiers would have tolerated the same conditions. The report goes on to maintain, "In like circumstances I am convinced that Europeans would have attempted to fight their way out to escape the disgusting conditions in which they were living."[51] It is important to note the constant referencing back to the inherent differences between the Japanese or Asian mindset and the European, or more implicitly, the white psyche.

The Australian military, in celebration of the Allied victory in Papua and New Guinea, released a brief historical account of the fighting bearing the revealing title *The Jap Was Thrashed*. This document, much like its American counterpart produced after the war, highlighted the poor living conditions of the Japanese soldier as well as drawing

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[50] Samuel Milner, *The War in the Pacific: Victory in Papua* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2003), p. 216.
[51] "Some Sidelights on the Japanese Solder," undated, George Vasey Papers, MS 3782, Box 3, Folder 19, NLA.

attention to the idea that the Japanese were unthinking and unquestioning beings. One description stated, "he [the Japanese soldier] couched in his post 24 hours a day – eating, drinking, sleeping in a dank, filthy pit only a few feet square, obeying like an automaton his orders to stay there, to kill or be killed."[52] This was certainly a popular view of the Japanese as a whole during World War II. Their seemingly unquestioning obedience to the Emperor was taken as further evidence that the Japanese were not human in the same manner as Americans or Australians. Historians dealing with the development of "whiteness" have maintained that one of the central aspects of "whiteness" was the ability to participate in government and not simply be governed.[53] The seeming inability of the Japanese to question their political leaders automatically designated them as something lower than the white, or more specifically the Anglo races of the world.

The atrocity issue was instrumental in helping to shape a racial image of the Japanese as inferior. A story in the *Sydney Morning Herald* related that the "Japanese committed barbaric acts against our troops which branded them as the lowest order of savages."[54] Many of the atrocity stories dealt with the murder of prisoners of war and stories of cannibalism on the part of the Japanese. The Japanese certainly could not claim to have committed the only atrocities in the Pacific. Stories of American Marines and Army soldiers collecting skulls and teeth of Japanese dead have been well documented. The successful dehumanization campaign on both sides allowed for numerous acts that

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[52] *The Jap Was Thrashed*, 1944, p. 80, Series # A5954, Control # 2234/4, NAA.
[53] See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, p. 22 – 31 for a historiographic and theoretical discussion of the interplay between whiteness and political citizenship.
[54] "Atrocities in Papua," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 16, 1943, Series # A5954, Control # 671/1, NAA.

violated many of the accepted norms of war. And both sides used these acts to

demonstrate to their own people the depravity of the enemy.[55]

Americans and Australians viewed their own acts of violence within the context

of a racial viewpoint. Most Allied soldiers came to believe that the seemingly inhumane

acts of the Japanese set a precedent for the fighting in the Pacific. The issue of

mistreatment of prisoners was an especially sore one. During the Papua and New Guinea

campaigns both American and Australian intelligence services received numerous reports

of the murder of Allied prisoners of war. One report from the Australian military related

three authenticated reports of atrocities committed by the Japanese military against

Australian prisoners at Milne Bay. The report detailed how Australian soldiers were

found tied to palm trees, having been bayoneted repeatedly.[56] Another report, prepared by

Australian jurist Sir William Webb after the war, related an incident in which one

Australian soldier attempted to escape from his Japanese captors. The Australian was cut

down by an officer's sword and then shot in the head. Two other members of the same

party were bayoneted in the stomach and left to die. They managed to reach a nearby

village but were found by another Japanese unit and burned alive in the hut they had hid

in.[57] Reports like these, coupled with earlier reports of the events like the Bataan Death

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[55] Some works to consult include Kelly Crager, *Hell Under the Rising Sun: Texan POWs and the Building of the Burma Thailand Death Railway* (College Station, TX, 2008), Brian MacArthur, *Surviving the Sword: Prisoners of the Japanese in the Far East, 1942 – 45* (New York, 2005), William Dyess, *Bataan Death March: A Survivor's Account* (Lincoln, NE, 2002), and E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed, at Peliliu and Okinawa* (New York, 1990).

[56] Australian Military Forces Weekly Intelligence Review No. 9, Sept. 25 – Oct. 2, 1942, Charles A. Willoughby Papers, RG 23a, Box 2, Folder 3, MML.

[57] "Summary of Facts and Findings from the Report on Japanese Atrocities and Breaches of the Rules of Warfare in the Neighborhood of the Territory of New Guinea and Papua," Sept. 12, 1945, Series # A5954, Control # 671/1. NAA. It should be noted that Webb would serve as President of the International Military Tribunal of the Far East that carried out the Tokyo War Crimes Trials.

March, reinforced an already strong negative racial viewpoint that the Americans and Australians held of the Japanese.

Reports of cannibalism further tarnished the image of Japanese soldiers, making them seem subhuman by western standards. Rumors of cannibalism filtered throughout the Allied armies and fueled racial anger towards the Japanese. Many of the reports were unauthenticated but there was certainly some evidence that Japanese soldiers in Papua and New Guinea, facing extreme shortages, did engage in acts of cannibalism. In post-war interviews, American and Australian intelligence officials did gain some acknowledgement of this from Japanese prisoners of war. However, it is difficult to ascertain to what degree these reports can be believed. Regardless though, these reports seemingly substantiated the stereotype of an indifferent and inhuman Japanese soldier. Eiichi Yanagizawa, a private in the Japanese 41st Division, told his Australian captors that, "On 21 December 1944, at Marujippu, Major Morimoto, 2 Battalion Commander, shared out to his troops the flesh of two Australian soldiers who had been killed in action and joined them in eating it."[58] Sir William Webb's post-war report also contained accounts of cannibalism that Japanese prisoners of war related. One soldier admitted that upon running short of rations he and his comrades began to eat the bodies of their fallen comrades as well as bodies of fallen enemy dead.[59]

These issues helped to fuel anti-Japanese sentiment on the home front as well as on the front lines of combat. Newspaper reports carried the horrors of the fighting into the

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[58] "Japanese Violations of the Laws of War," Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, June 23, 1945, GHQ SWPA Papers, RG 3, Box 120, Folder 4, MML.
[59] "Summary of Facts and Findings from the Report on Japanese Atrocities and Breaches of the Rules of Warfare in the Neighborhood of the Territory of New Guinea and Papua," Sept. 12, 1945, Series # A5954, Control # 671/1. NAA.

homes of average Americans and Australians, especially after 1943. A reading of the

news stories and editorials gives voice to the vehement hatred felt towards the Japanese

by Americans and Australians. The strong racial language in the newspapers and to

realize this helped to shape average conceptions of the Japanese as inhuman. One

editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* opined that the Japanese were "the nearest thing

in human form to a bush animal."[60] Another editorial argued that, "the Japanese are not fit

to have any place alongside civilized nations, and there is a demand, as in the *Daily Mail*,

for outlawing them completely."[61] This editorial is very reminiscent of Herbert Evatt's

claim, cited earlier, that the fighting in the Pacific was a war to preserve European

civilization in the region. A separate editorial gives evidence to how deeply racial animus

animated much of the writing about the war. "The Japanese have proved themselves a

sub-human race," the editorial argues, "and it is in that regard they must be treated. There

can be no place for them after the war in the concourse of civilized nations and in the

common relations of human beings."[62] Often the rhetoric of the civilian home front went

far beyond the rhetoric used by those closest to the combat. However, both groups were

bound tightly by their mutual hatred for and disgust with the Japanese.

The Pacific War also brought Americans and Australians into closer contact with

other non-white natives who lived in the Pacific region. The Australians and other former

colonial holders in the Pacific viewed with some alarm the interactions of the native

islanders, especially with the American military forces. Much of what troubled European

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[60] "Atrocities in Papua," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 16, 1943, Series # A5954, Control # 671/1, NAA.
[61] "Japanese Crimes Will Not Alter Global Strategy," *The Herald*, Jan. 31, 1944, Series # A5954, Control # 2169/8, NAA.
[62] "Punishment for Japan's Crimes," *The Herald*, Jan. 29, 1944, Series # A5954, Control # 2169/8, NAA.

whites in the Pacific was the unknown effect that the Americans would have on the pre-war relationships that had marked white and non-white interactions in the region. Many feared that the Americans were helping to usher in social practices into an area that was felt to be ill equipped to handle them.[63] The economic effect was especially troubling since the American military often paid native workers what were considered lavish sums to help in transporting and unloading of material. Australian officials tried to impress upon the Americans the necessity of avoiding the giving of items such as tobacco, food or clothing as this would "destroy their [native islanders] incentive to work."[64]

Australian officials found the introduction of African American servicemen into Papua and New Guinea especially upsetting. Historians have noted that the effect of what were perceived to be well-educated, well-paid and well-dressed African American soldiers would lead the native islanders to question their own relationship with their former colonial masters. Equally upsetting was the fact that the Australians, for example, were no longer the main distributor of goods and services in the region. They had been demoted to the rank of junior partner, even in dealings with the non-whites of the region.[65] If left unchecked it was feared that the native islanders would begin to push for greater economic rights as well as political rights. Certainly much of the concern being expressed by the European colonial powers in the southwest Pacific region was overblown. The African Americans serving in the southwest Pacific were, in comparison to the natives, well-educated and well-paid. However, Australians who claimed that African Americans and whites were working in near equality were consistently

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[63] Bergerud, *Fire in the Sky*, p. 112.
[64] Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here*, p. 181.
[65] Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here*, p. 181, 209 – 210.

overstated. African American soldiers were faced with working in segregated units, often under the command of white officers, and many times found themselves blocked from certain jobs due to their race. Perhaps much of the fear that Australians and other former colonial powers in the Pacific had was because of the very clear anti-imperialist message that had been a consistent component of Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy.

As irrational as these fears were, they still led the Australians to move to reassert their dominance over their former colonial charges. Numerous American accounts detail the harsh measures meted out by Australian overseers on former plantations that served to remind the native islanders who was in charge. An American sailor near Port Moresby recorded one particularly brutal episode. He related that a native worker, who had been working to clear coconut groves on a plantation that had been overrun by the Japanese, was brought before the Australian overseer. The worker had stopped his work to relieve himself on a nearby pathway. The overseer, as the American soldier watched in shock, "grabbed a stick the size of a broom handle, then thrashed the native's bare back with all his might."[66] The overseer told the American sailor that the punishment had been because the worker had not asked permission to stop work.

The Australian colonial government reestablished itself in Papua and New Guinea after the Japanese were forced back into the north of the island. Much of the harsh reinstatement of colonial rule was rationalized as a way to insure the compliance of a possibly untrustworthy population. This matter was brought to the attention of the Australian military in several intelligence reports which detailed Japanese efforts to turn native islanders against their former colonial masters. This was a tactic that had yielded

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[66] Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan*, p. 75.

some successes on the southeast Asian mainland as evidenced by the formation of the

Indian National Army under Subhas Chandra Bose.[67]

There was little evidence that the Japanese actually ever made any headway with

the island natives in Papua and New Guinea. But this did not stop the Australians from

worrying about that possibility. One report concluded that the native islanders in central

Papua "cannot be trusted and would be more likely to assist the Japanese than the whites

because the Japanese gave them presents of food, tobacco, etc."[68] This suspicion of native

sentiments was pervasive among the Australians. Another intelligence report related that

natives who lived in areas that had been under Japanese control displayed uncertain

attitudes towards the war effort. Because of this, then, they were restricted to their

settlements or their employer's residence and could not move about without a special

pass issued by the colonial administration.[69] The interactions with native islanders

provided an interesting detour from the standard story of race in the Pacific War. The

issue helped reveal that the relationship was far more complicated than simply being a

shared hatred of a common enemy. Race helped to provide a common framework within

which both Americans and Australian operated but also helped to complicate the

developing relationship.

The African American servicemen stationed in the SWPA further complicated the

racial relationship between the Americans and Australians. The issue of race and racial

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[67] Bose was an Indian nationalist who had split with the Indian National Congress over Mohandas Gandhi's ideology of non-violence.

[68] Australian Military Forces Intelligence Weekly Review No. 188, July 3 – 31, 1942, Charles A. Willoughby Papers, RG 23a, Box 1, Folder 12, MML.

[69] Australian Military Forces Intelligence Weekly Review No. 179, May 1 – 29, 1942, Charles A. Willoughby Papers, RG 23a, Box 1, Folder 10, MML.

awareness is intimately tied into the experience of African Americans in World War II. Those who served in the Pacific found themselves in a particularly peculiar situation. With the growing emphasis of the Double V Campaign by African Americans to combat fascism abroad and racism at home, African American servicemen in the Pacific found themselves fighting a war driven by race and in many ways to reestablish white colonial power in the region. The African American came to occupy a unique place in the American and Australian relationship. On the one hand, African Americans were welcomed by the Australians as saviors from Japanese invasion and celebrated for their Americanness. On the other hand, through, they were seen as potential threats to a society that had maintained a social and political philosophy based on defending its whiteness.[70]

The Australian government's initial reaction to the introduction of African American troops was most decidedly negative. Minister of War Frank Forde publicly expressed no misgivings about the possibility. Privately though he and other government officials protested loudly to Washington about this action until they received assurances that all of the African American troops were good soldiers and would be closely watched by their American superiors.[71] A separate memo from the office of Prime Minister John Curtin to other Australian governmental offices indicated that, "Whilst the Australian reaction to the dispatch of negro troops to Australia would not be favorable," the end decision lay in Washington and not Canberra.[72] The Australian government made sure that the United States was well aware of their displeasure at the possibility of having

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[70] Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," p. 628 and Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here*, p. 208.
[71] Moore, *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid, and Over Here*, p. 105.
[72] Prime Minister's Department cablegram, Aug. 15, 1942, Series # A816, Control # 19/312/116, NAA. Underlined emphasis in original document.

African Americans stationed in their country. In a memo to the Department of Interior, the Australian War Cabinet reached a decision that "no colored troops from the United States will be stationed in Australia" but that the Australian government would not have any problem with convoys carrying African Americans stopping at Australian ports.[73]

The realities of the war forced the Australian government to recognize the necessity of having African American troops stationed in Australia. The vast majority of the 8,025 African Americans who would be stationed in Australia served in logistic units helping to build new aerodromes, army camps, roads and in the unloading of vital material at Australian ports. These jobs were of fundamental importance to the success of the Allied war effort in the Pacific. As mentioned previously, Australia early in the war faced a manpower shortage and would have been hard pressed to meet the demands of transforming their nation into the main base of Allied activity in the southwest Pacific. The introduction of the African American troops helped to ensure that the Allies would be able to more quickly move material to the north of Australia and engage the Japanese more quickly in Papua and New Guinea. But even knowing this reality there were still some rumblings from among the Australian population, especially the labor unions.

The president of the Townsville Trades and Labor Council, J.W. Clubley, penned a series of letters to the Ministry for Labor and National Service highlighting Australian labors' dispute with having African Americans introduced into their country.[74] Here again one can see the economic aspect of race coming into play. Labor's position within Australia was predicated on maintaining jobs such as wharf laborers solely for white

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[73] War Cabinet memo to Dept. of Interior, Jan. 19, 1952, Series # A981, Control # WAR 35, NAA.
[74] J.W. Clubley to E.J. Ward, April 9, 1942, Series # A816, Control # 19/312/116, NAA.

Australians and ensuring a certain standard of living for their white members. The introduction of non-white labor, especially non-white labor outside of the purview of government labor laws, was especially frightening to them. For Australian labor, there seemed to be little difference between having their job security threatened by the Japanese or by African Americans.

One can see then that African American servicemen entering into Australia faced a society already primed to see them as much as a threat as an ally. But what types of experiences did African Americans actually have in Australia? The reality of the African American experience in Australia can best be summed in one word: ambiguity. Australians both welcomed and shunned African American soldiers and sailors which reflected the deep dissonance their country felt towards aid from non-whites. Also, African Americans had to contend with the racial views of their fellow white Americans who often stood in positions of authority over them. The interplay between these three groups provides an interesting insight into how complex the racial relationship between the United States and Australia was during World War II.

Several historians have noted that most white Americans who arrived in Australia had little previous knowledge of their hosts. African Americans, if equally uninformed about the history and institutions of Australia, were more aware of Australia's history of racial dealings.[75] This likely pervaded their thoughts as the first African Americans arrived in troop convoys in Sydney and Melbourne. However, the Australian people initially made no differentiation between white and black Americans. Instead they focused on the Americanness of their new allies. The immediate threat of invasion in

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[75] Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," p. 614.

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1942 superseded any fears about race mixing among the Australian general population though, as pointed out earlier, the Australian government was less than pleased with the decision to ship African American troops to Australia.

While the threat posed by a Japanese invasion goes a long way towards explaining the positive reception African Americans received upon their arrival in Australia, other factors must be taken into consideration as well. Even though race had been a central preoccupation for the white population of Australia since its founding, the actual numbers of non-whites that had to be dealt with were miniscule, especially in comparison to the American experience of white / non-white interaction. In the United States formalized separation of the races represented in Jim Crow laws and in practiced social discrimination in the north was the norm. Australia, though, lacked any sort of principle that mirrored the American idea of "separate but equal." And as Edward Drea points out, "This meant that white men and, more especially, white women, treated white and black Americans in almost the same way."[76] This led to instances of African American soldiers and sailors being invited into Australian homes to share meals as well as being accepted on a social footing in places like dance halls. Davis Lee, a correspondent for the *Afro – American*, captured an interesting example of this phenomenon in an April 1942 story. He wrote that a local dance involving Australian soldiers and women as well as African American servicemen was broken up by white American military police, upset over what they saw as the illicit mingling of the races. The military police forced all of the African Americans to leave the dance hall. In response the Australian soldiers sent the girls home as a protests against what they saw as

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[76] Drea, "'Great Patience Is Necessary'," p. 25 – 26.

unfair treatment of brothers in arms.[77] Examples of incidents such as this are not

uncommon and highlight that African Americans who served in Australia were not

immediately subjected to various forms of discrimination. It is important to keep in mind

that often they were first and foremost to the Australians, Americans.

It would certainly be easy to take reports like Davis's and use them to argue that

Australia was always a hospitable society for African Americans. However, this is not the

case. African Americans came to discover there were underlying doubts about their

presence that came back to the fore. This is especially true after the threat of Japanese

invasion had dissipated after the Battle of the Coral Sea and can be seen as closely

mirroring the Australian's changing views on Americans in general. Generally these

doubts centered around one central question: what happened if those African American

servicemen, no matter how polite and well behaved, fathered children with Australian

women?[78] Fear about the loss of Australian women to Americans was a constant source

of friction throughout the war but the introduction of race into the equation served only to

heighten Australian fear. The growth of the Australian white population was a central

concern of Australian society both before and after the war. It was certainly an issue

which all Australians, regardless of political affiliation, saw as a crucial aspect of their

continued success as, to use John Curtin's phrase, "the only white man's country south of

the equator." By the end of 1942, African Americans in Australia faced a far different

situation then they had only a few months earlier. Some towns in Australia instituted

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[77] Quoted in Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," p. 619.
[78] Moore, *Over – Sexed, Over – Paid, and Over Here*, 208.

limits on liquor sales to African Americans and a more rigid institution of segregation of services in major cities like Brisbane and Melbourne.[79]

The Australian press notably covered concern over allegations of rape by African American servicemen in the Southwest Pacific. The *Sydney Telegraph* carried a story from New Caledonia concerning supposed reports of African American troops attacking the white female population of the island. The governor, Christian Laigret, informed the paper that, "Negro troops have attacked white women even in the company of their husbands and brothers," and that the young men of the island had organized themselves into bands for the defense of their women.[80] Coverage of events like this proved more often than not to be exaggerated but led to an increased wariness on the part of the Australians about the possibility of similar events happening within their own communities. The situation was also fueled by white Americans whose own racial sensibilities were offended by what they saw as the rather generous treatment of African Americans in Australia. Oftentimes, these white Americans took it upon themselves to teach Australians how to "handle" African Americans.[81]

Australian views on race were more often aimed at excluding non-whites from society than from containing a sizeable non-white population. The introduction of African American troops into Australian cities served to upset the racial system that the Australians had developed over time.[82] The vast majority of Australia's own non-white

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[79] Moore, *Over – Sexed, Over – Paid, and Over Here*, p. 81 and Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front*, p. 212.
[80] News & Editorial Highlights prepared by Press Relations Dept., Dec. 28, 1943, Richard J. Marshall Papers, RG 29c, Box 1, folder 3, MML.
[81] Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," p. 620.
[82] Kay Saunders, "Conflict Between the Australian and American Governments Over the Introduction of Black American Servicemen Into Australia During World War II," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 33 (1987): p. 40.

native population, the Aborigines, did not reside in the cities at the time. This led to a strong sense of uncertainty of how to best interact with the African American troops passing through places such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Some white American servicemen took it upon themselves to police the racial interactions taking place between African Americans and Australians in an effort to maintain the traditional racial hierarchy prevalent in American society.

Walter Dorsey McClane, a member of the NAACP's board of director's, made note of this phenomenon in a letter to Franklin Roosevelt. He observed that when African American troops first arrived in England, white officers "issued orders informing the English people that they must not treat colored North American soldiers as equals and they must have no social contact with them," and that similar reports were coming into his office from Australia.[83] A prime target of these actions in Australia were women. White Americans found themselves competing against both Australian servicemen and African Americans for the attention of the very small population of young Australian women in the major cities. It is not surprising therefore that where possible, some white Americans sought to tilt the field in their favor by trying to restrict African American interactions with the white female population of Australia.

Several different tactics were used to control contact between the two groups. Claims were made that African Americans were natural carriers of syphilis and other venereal diseases and would infect the clean daughters of Australia. Another widely used tactic was to appeal to the image of the African American "as an immoral degenerate

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[83] Walter Dorsey McClane to Franklin D. Roosevelt, undated, FDR Papers, Official File 93, Box 5, Folder 4, FDR Library.

creature who was undoubtedly a sex machine."[84] This was an especially potent tactic as it played on those deep fears in Australian society about the loss of homogeneity within their population. It can be argued that this tactic proved to be so successful because it resonated so deeply within white American culture as well. The fear of the African American as a sexual predator was a common thread providing yet another link in the racial line binding Australians and Americans together.

By the end of the war the African American experience in Australia had run the gamut from tentative acceptance to outright rejection. Jane Fidcock offered the view that African Americans were never fully accepted into white Australian society because of their status as the Other. She also argued that white American's racial views did not significantly alter Australian views but helped only to reinforce a commitment to the White Australia policy.[85] The racial experiences shared by Australians and Americans provided an important linkage that helped to ameliorate many of the long-standing political, military and cultural differences that proved so difficult to overcome. As one American officer wrote from Australia, "International friendship does not exit as an abstraction between political entities known as nations. Rather, it consists of a multitude of friendships between people in all walks of life in the two countries."[86] Race proved to be one of those important bonds of friendship between the two nations. And while race greatly strengthened the American – Australian bond it did not prove to be the cure all for eliminating disagreements between the two. The post-war world brought many old

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[84] Brawley and Dixon, "Jim Crow Down Under?," p. 621 – 622.
[85] Fidcock, "The Effect of the American 'Invasion' of Australia 1942 – 45," p. 99.
[86] "Report From Australia", p. 7, Part 5 of 5, undated, K.R. Cramp Papers, PR 82/47, File # 419/71/35, AWM.

divisions back to the fore and helped to introduce new ones as well. However, the ideological basis for the friendship between Australia and the United States that had been laid by their racial connection provided the framework for another ideological attachment in the post-war Pacific that would insure Australian and American cooperation for the remainder of the century.

Chapter 5: A Reddened Pacific: 1946 – 1949

On October 30, 1948, Australian Ambassador to the United States Norman Makin attended a solemn memorial service in Norfolk, Virginia. The occasion was to memorialize the drowning of an Australian citizen who had died while coming to the aid of a young swimmer. Makin was warmly received by the mayor of Norfolk, R.D. Cooke, who used the opportunity to remark on the larger significance of American and Australian relations that had emerged from World War II. Cooke's speech referenced the racial ideas that had proved so effective in bringing both nations together during the war. He also, importantly, made new reference to a growing world threat that was forcing both the United States and Australia to reevaluate their relationship in the postwar world.

Cooke spoke as much to Makin as to the gathered crowd in his speech. He told the assembly of public officials and private citizens:

> I hope in these times of stress and uncertainty, when the war clouds are rising over the distant horizon, that as long as we – and your people – and our other cousins in all parts of the world, stand together, for the things we cherish, the world will be safe for us and for our descendants. I hope that all members of the great Anglo – Saxon family, of which your family and mine are members, will fully realize this all-important manner and stand together for the good of the World.[1]

It is not difficult to miss the prevalent use of familial language that Cooke used in his speech. The racial ideas that had bound the United States and Australia together during the war maintained a vibrancy after the fighting had concluded. But one can also detect a plaintive tone in the speech. In the aftermath of the war in the Pacific, the United States and Australia found their relationship challenged by traditional conflicts of interest and

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[1] "Text of Speech Given by R.D. Cooke, Mayor of Norfolk, VA to Norman Makin," Oct. 30, 1948, Series # A1838, Control # 250/9/2 Part 1, NAA.

new problems emerging from the end of World War II. The postwar-period harkened back in many ways to the troubled relationship of the 1930s but also challenged both nations to come into closer accord in the early years of the Cold War.

A major issue that affected the alliance in the late 1940s was Australia's emerging emphasis on its role as a primary power in the Pacific. During the war, responsibility for the Pacific had fallen to the United States, a prerogative that the U.S. had jealously guarded. Seeming American indifference, or unwillingness to recognize the key role that Australia had played in defeating Japan, goaded the Australians into action. The Australian government under Joseph Chifley, who had replaced John Curtin as Prime Minister upon the latter's death in 1945, sought to clearly stake out a claim to have a prevalent voice in the postwar region. The idea was certainly not a new one. Australian policymakers had been arguing since the late 1930s that their nation was a Pacific power. In a 1939 speech, Prime Minister Robert Menzies declared that Australians "Are principals; we are not subordinate; we have no secondary interest in the Pacific; we have a primary interest in it."[2] This type of argument, while perhaps accepted in principle by Washington, could not help but lead to friction between the two powers.

There certainly were efforts to insure that this point of possible tension would not upset the bond that had emerged from the fighting in the Pacific. Even during the war, persons on both sides attempted to clarify the post-war relationship that should emerge between the United States and Australia. In a January 1941 speech to the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, Richard Casey, then Australian ambassador to the U.S. and later Australian Minister for External Affairs, told the assembled crowd that

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[2] Speech by Robert Menzies, May 15, 1939 quoted in Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 1.

Australia was determined to play a larger role in a post-war Pacific world. However, Casey moderated his argument somewhat by stating that Australia would have to cooperate with the United States even more closely than it had up to that point in time.[3] On the American side, Ambassador Nelson Johnson expressed his own thoughts on the subject to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. in 1943. Johnson insisted that both Australia and New Zealand had earned the right to take part in any post-war planning for the Pacific. He did concede that the Australians "Need us; but it is equally true that, just as we needed them in 1942 and 1943, so we will need them through the future years if we are to fulfill the responsibilities devolving upon us."[4] Clearly some on both sides hoped for the emergence of a symbiotic relationship that would serve the interests of both parties in the region.

The issue of Australia's role in the post-war Pacific arguably can be linked not to a lack of vision but rather to an uncertainty over what course to pursue. Jeffrey Grey identified three main suppositions of post-war Australian defense planning: first, that the United States would carry the primary burden of ensuring security in the Pacific; second, a continued role for Great Britain in southeast Asia, and third, an avoidance of the poor military preparedness that had seemingly imperiled Australia in 1942.[5] The first point coincided with the hopes of men like Casey and Johnson. Australia would provide key support for the United States in the Pacific but would not seek to challenge the U.S.'s primacy in the region.

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[3] Text of speech given to the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, January 17, 1941, p. 6, R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File #419/18/6. AWM.
[4] Nelson Johnson to Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., September 24, 1943, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 42, LOC.
[5] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 194.

The second point would lead to confrontation with the U.S. since any support of a continued British role in Southeast Asia would give tacit support to the reestablishment of colonial control in regions such as Malaya. This would be a challenge to the strong anti-colonial element that had been prevalent in the foreign policy of Franklin Roosevelt and under his successor Harry Truman. Washington policymakers could also certainly interpret it as a threat to U.S. economic interests in the region. Economic competition had long been a point of contention between the United States and Great Britain. A revived British presence in the region would certainly offer greater economic competition to American goods and services, something which Washington hoped to avoid.

Grey's final point served to isolate Australia from both the United States and Great Britain. An increased emphasis on ensuring the safety of Australia from external threats in the Pacific region played a significant role in the tumultuous debate that erupted between the Americans and Australians over the post-war peace settlement with Japan. Canberra's relations with London continued to deteriorate due to long standing Australian concerns about British capabilities to offer assistance in times of need. Australian defense planners still remembered what they saw as the callous way the British had sacrificed Australian troops in Crete, Tobruk and at Singapore. They were determined to ensure that such a thing did not occur again in the future. This strain of thought led Australian policymakers to realize that, "Australia was unwilling to submerge its growing political or military identity in the Pacific by joining a force not manifestly under Australian control and substantially Australian in composition."[6]

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[6] Bell, "Australian – American Disagreement Over the Peace Settlement With Japan, 1944 – 1946," 254.

What one sees emerging is a somewhat fractured postwar policy being pursued by Australia. One the one hand, Australia sought to maintain close ties with the United States in the Pacific but to also balance the growing power of the U.S. with a renewed commitment to the Imperial relationship. Both of these, however, were balanced against ensuring the freedom of action to pursue whatever might be the best course for Australia. This lack of a clear direction in Australian policy in the Pacific in the post war period was duly noted by observers in the U.S. and Great Britain but also by some within Australia. When Australia chose to support the new republic of Indonesia as a member of the Economic Commission for Asia & the Far East (ECAFE), an editorial in *The Sydney Morning Herald* lambasted the decision. It observed that "Australia is making a habit, and a dangerous one, of parting company with Britain and America on important international issues."[7] The attempt to balance the American relationship against the British one was an issue that successive Australian governments had great difficulty in solving in the early Cold War and led to fractures in ties with London and Washington.

The relationships between Australia and Great Britain underwent a reexamination after the war against Japan had ended. Britain's role in the Pacific had been greatly diminished due to the increased role the U.S. took in the region. This was primarily driven by Britain's own economic woes in the postwar period. During the war, Australia had been content to break away from the influence of London in favor of a closer

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[7] "Again Out of Step," December 9, 1948, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Myron M. Cowen Papers, Box 2, Australia – Press Clippings, Truman Library. The U.S. and Great Britain were concerned over the seemingly close ties that existed between the new Indonesian government and the Soviet Union. See John Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian, and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian – Indonesian Confrontation 1961 – 5* (New York, 2000), Robert McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945 – 49* (Ithaca, NY, 1981), and Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959 – 1965* (Ithaca, NY, 1974).

relationship with the United States. But the end of the war changed many of these factors. Curtin's successor, Joseph Chifley, was not as strident in his anti-British sentiment as Curtin had been. Chifley's Labor government viewed the growing economic influence of the United States in Australia and the surrounding region with some trepidation and because of this sought a renewal of the Imperial bond as a way to balance this. As the historian Tom Frame concluded, "For Australia, America was a friendly but foreign sovereign nation. It would never be a 'mother country,' not a benign imperial master or associate."[8]

It is difficult to argue that even during the war Australians had completely turned away from their relationship with Great Britain. It is worth noting Richard Casey's thoughts on the issue, especially since Casey had been one of the key architects of the American – Australian bond that had emerged from World War II. He argued that Australians were first and foremost members of the British Empire and would do their utmost to maintain that relationship.[9] Casey maintained this stance even into the 1950s, writing in 1955 that, "Our intimacy with America means no weakening in our ties with Britain – it is in fact one aspect of Anglo – American cooperation."[10] For Casey, and others who shared his thinking, Australia's true role was a bridge between their imperial mother and their republican cousins. The reality of the situation throughout the late 1940s was that Australia often did not figure into the thinking of either the Americans or the

[8] Frame, *Pacific Partners*, 92.
[9] Untitled Speech, October 16, 1939, R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File #419/18/6, AWM.
[10] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 10.

British.[11] And so, Australia found itself often having to insert itself into the consciousness of both nations, but in the immediate postwar period especially Britain's.

The major issue that developed between Great Britain and Australia was an economic one. The British viewed the reestablishment of a closer bond with Australia as a possible way to help ease the postwar economic malaise that World War II had brought on Great Britain. A report entitled "Some Thoughts on British – Australian Relations" highlighted ways in which the bond between both nations could be renewed, often at the expense of the American – Australian relationship. The majority of the suggestions contained within the report cite economic endeavors as the primary way to bring British and Australian interests into closer alignment. Some included having British film companies produce films in Australia. Another suggested that British manufacturers pay closer attention to Australian demands and in particular to the Australian woman's market.[12] These points were clearly aimed at lessening American economic influence in Australia. It must be remembered that Hollywood had achieved a dominant position in Australian markets even prior to the outbreak of Word War II and that American consumer goods, such as washers and dryers, were pushed heavily by U.S. corporations even before the fighting had ended.

Initially, British efforts to recapture a large share of the Australian market were successful. In 1948 – 49, Great Britain supplied, by value, half of Australia's imports. However, that percentage declined precipitously over the next several decades. By 1959 – 60 it had shrunk to only 36 percent; ten years later it was at 22 percent and by 1975 – 76

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[11] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 1.
[12] "Some Thoughts on British – Australian Relations," undated, p. 3 –5, 124 4/464, AWM.

only 13.5 percent. In looking at the other side, Australian exports to Great Britain, one can note an equally sharp decline in trade. In 1948 – 49 that number stood at 42 percent but by 1975 – 76 had declined all the way to 4.2 percent.[13] Even during the war this questions of what sort of postwar economic relationship Australia could expect with Great Britain was one on the minds of many observers. Nelson Johnson, in a letter to American newspaper editor Roy W. Howard, pointed out that, "There is a tendency to question whether England after this war will ever be able to climb back to that position of economic stability which had characterized England as late as 1938."[14] It is clear from examining the patterns of trade that efforts to reestablish the imperial relationship on commercial interests were not wholly successful. Partly this can be explained by the British decision beginning in the late 1940s to draw down their commitments east of Suez. A 1947 memorandum from the British government to Robert Lovett in the U.S. State Department highlighted this point. The memo stated that due to "the grave situation which confronts it as regards both finance and manpower it is essential to cut down to [a] minimum United Kingdom defense expenditure overseas."[15] As Great Britain withdrew its military forces from the Pacific region, a corresponding decline in British commercial interest occurred.

While in terms of economic and military ties the British and Australian bond lessened after 1945, cultural connections and an uncertainty about how active the United States would be in the postwar world did help to ensure that Great Britain and Australia

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[13] Millar, *Australians in Peace and War*, 189.
[14] Nelson Johnson to Roy W. Howard, March 3, 1943, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 42, LOC.
[15] Department of External Affairs to Robert Lovett, November 24, 1947, Series # A3300, Control # 456, NAA.

never completely abandoned each other. Nelson Johnson observed, "Australians, as well as British, are uncertain as to what we will do when peace comes. They recall our intervention in the last war. That intervention saved the British Empire. They recall that after our intervention we withdrew into ourselves. They fear that we will withdraw once more into ourselves after this war."[16] Australian policymakers led by Joseph Chifley were hesitant about committing Australian defense interests wholly to the United States who possibly might repeat its actions of World War I. If the U.S. retreated back into the semi-isolationist mindset that had marked American foreign policy of the 1920s and mid 1930s then, Chifley and others wondered, how safe would Australia truly be? Part of the problem on the Australian and British side was their misreading of American foreign policy during the supposedly isolationist period between the wars. They did not recognize that even under Presidents Harding and Coolidge the United States had been quite willing to engage the wider world as evidenced by events like the Washington Naval Conference of 1921, the Dawes Plan of 1924 and the Kellogg – Briand Pact of 1928.

Events were also complicated by American distrust of both the British and the British Commonwealth nations in the immediate postwar world. Americans feared a resurgent Great Britain would provide fierce economic competition in the developing regions of the world while nations like Australia sought to have a stronger voice in regional affairs that might provide a challenge to the growing American hegemony. The British and Australians clearly recognized these facts in their dealings with the Americans. A report created for Australian military officials visiting the United States identified the root of the problem in the American educational system. American schools

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[16] Nelson Johnson to Roy W. Howard, March 3, 1943, Nelson Johnson Papers, Box 42, LOC.

stressed that America had wrested its independence from Great Britain in armed struggle

and this led to a distrust of the English as well as the perception of disunity among the

British Commonwealth.[17] This last point was sorely misread by American policymakers

and led to a second issue that caused undue friction in the relationship between the three

nations.

This issue was the growing American distrust of the British Commonwealth

because of the British habit of sharing information from what the American believed to

be secret talks between the two nations. This especially irked the United States because

often these talks involved issues related to the other British Commonwealth nations. The

problem was Americans still chose to see Great Britain as the dominant partner in the

British Commonwealth, not recognizing that nations such as Australia were fighting for a

more independent role. Secretary of State Dean Acheson made this point known on

several occasions to his British counterparts. Acheson pointed out that the British habit

had the effect of "immediately revoking resentment against the United States on the part

of the Dominion Governments, particularly in the case of Australia and Canada,

presumably because they believed that Washington should have broached the matter with

them in the first place."[18] This friction was not a new one. Prior to World War II, and

even during the war, American officials had insisted on treating the British

Commonwealth not as a collective body but rather as a monolithic entity. The British

government had certainly done little to discourage such thinking on the part of

Washington and tried to use this to tie the British Commonwealth closer together. In the

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[17] "Notes For Personnel Visiting the U.S.A.," undated, Sir Thomas Albert Blamey Papers, 3DRL 6643, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 7, AWM.
[18] Barclay, *Friends in High Places*, 57.

postwar period, though, London was slowly beginning to recognize that such efforts were futile and that nations like Australia would no longer play the role of colonial dependent.

Washington was slow to pick up on the changes occurring within the British Commonwealth structure. But other factors also explain why the U.S. continued to try and deal with British Commonwealth nations through London. Evidence certainly exists that shows that the United States did not fully trust Australia, especially in the matter of the postwar reconstruction of Japan. The American viewpoint came out of the perception that the Chifley government was soft on communism and that the Australian government itself in the postwar period had been infiltrated by Communist agents who sought to turn Australia away from the United States. This point will be examined further in this chapter but it is important to note that the United States viewed the Australian representative on the Allied Council for Japan (ACJ), William Macmahon Ball, with uncertainty as to his loyalties to the democratic West.[19] Ball made note of this in a letter to Herbert Evatt in which he also commented on the effects this had on Australian and British relations. He believed there was "a deliberate effort here to drive a wedge between Australia and the United Kingdom," on the part of the United States which insinuated that Ball did not represent the views of the British Commonwealth as a whole but rather the narrow views of Australia only and the supposedly communist leaning Labor government.[20]

These two issues, postwar Japan and communism, were the most important factors in determining the course of the postwar relationship between the United States

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[19] For further information on Ball see John Hilvert, *Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda in World War II* (St. Lucia, Queensland, 1984) and Peter Ryan, ed., *William Macmahon Ball: A Memoir* (Carlton, Victoria, 1990).
[20] Macmahon Ball to Herbert Evatt, October 23, 1946, Series # A1838, Control # 482/1/7. NAA.

and Australia. The postwar relationship that emerged in the five years after the end of

World War II in the Pacific came to mirror in many ways the turbulent relationship that

had existed between both parties during the 1930s. It certainly was an issue at the

forefront of the minds of many leaders in Australia. In a 1941 speech Richard Casey

asked, "Are we going to fall apart after this war? Or put in another way – if we attain a

workable measure of cooperation in this war, as I believe it is to our mutual interest to do

– are we going to be able maintain it in peace?"[21] The war had thrust two nations together

who previously had little contact with one another. The expansion of Australia as a

regional power and a more expansive American involvement in Asia and the Pacific

ensured that contact between the two powers actually increased in frequency as well as

importance in the post war period.[22] It would only be natural that misunderstandings

would occur.

Some of the postwar acrimony can be laid at the feet of Australian Minister for

External Affairs Herbert Evatt. Evatt had been a lightning rod for American criticism

during World War II and proved to be equally so in the postwar world. His blunt manner

and unyielding belief that Australia be accorded a sizeable role in the postwar Pacific led

him to butt heads with many in Washington. The State Department prepared a rather

blunt assessment of Evatt for President Harry Truman prior to a personal meeting with

Evatt in 1947. The report detailed the image many policymakers in Washington had of

the forceful Evatt:

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[21] Speech to the Advertising Club of New York by Richard Casey, May 22, 1941, p. 4, R.G. Casey Papers, 3DRL 2418, File # 419/18/6, AWM.
[22] Bell, "Australian – American Disagreement Over the Peace Settlement With Japan, 1944 – 1946," 261.

He has been accused of self-seeking, and it is not always clear whether he is motivated by true patriotism or simply by egotism. He has great self-confidence and determination, is anxious to have a finger in every pie, is slow in giving his confidence, and insists on receiving full credit for his achievements. Quick to make up his mind, although often forgetful in completing urgent manners, he is respected for his intellectual and political courage.[23]

It is clear that Evatt had few admirers in Washington. And it is clear that the personal feelings many in Washington held towards Evatt tended to cross over and affect American – Australian relations as a whole.

One problem was the American view of Evatt's conduct as President of the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 – 49.[24] Evatt used this position to try to gain a greater voice for middle and small powers in a world quickly being polarized between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Evatt hoped to ease the growing tensions between the West and East because he, like many leaders in middle sized powers, feared being dragged into a conflict between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. From the American perspective, however, it appeared more often that Evatt sought to undermine American influence with neutral powers. His calls for mediation and restraint went against the growing sentiment of American foreign policy makers that communism had to be met with force. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal remarked in his diary upon this point and referred to Evatt as "an active source of both irritation and

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[23] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Call of Dr. H.V. Evatt, October 7, 1947, PSF Subject File, Foreign Affairs, Australia, Truman Library.

[24] Evatt had been elected with support from Western nations but more importantly with support form small and middle power states who supported his call for lessening the veto power of the Big Five and expanding the scope of discussion within the General Assembly. See Ashley Hogan, *Moving in the Open Daylight: Doc Evatt, an Australian at the United Nations* (Sydney, 2008), Alexander Buzo, *Pacific Union: The Story of the San Francisco Forty-Fivers* (Sydney, 1995), and W.J. Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order: Evatt at San Francisco, 1945* (Canberra, 1993).

uncertainty."[25] American concerns over the extent to which Australian actions seemingly

helped to advance Soviet or communistic aims in the Pacific became tied not so much to

Australia as a nation but rather to individual actors like Evatt. His efforts to act as an

intermediary between the United States and the Soviet Union, while motivated by an

altruistic view of the role of the United Nations, were seen by Washington as

unabashedly naïve and often to the benefit of the Soviets.[26] These feelings of animosity

towards Evatt and other members of the Chifley government led the State Department by

late 1949 to be "not merely indifferent as to the wishes of the Australian Labor

Government," but to work towards the ouster of Labor, "as apparently the only way of

getting rid of Evatt."[27]

Evatt was at the center of another postwar disagreement between Australia and

the United States. In the aftermath of the war, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff identified several

key island groups in the Pacific region that were desired for use as naval bases. One of

these was Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands which was within the Australian sphere

of influence due to its U.N. mandate over New Guinea. The Americans did not press for

full-time use of Manus as a permanent military installation but rather for the rights to use

the facilities on the island in the event of the outbreak of hostilities in the Pacific. This

claim was thought to be reasonable, especially since the U.S. military had been

responsible for the construction of the majority of facilities that existed on the island.

The main point of contention that arose was Evatt's insistence on discussing

basing rights at Manus only in the larger context of a joint Australian – American defense

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[25] Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), 532.
[26] Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans," 553.
[27] Barclay, *Friends in High Places*, 30.

plan on a scale similar to the U.S. – Canadian defense planning that took place immediately after World War II.[28] This approach went against the proposed American approach to its postwar relationship with Australia. In the late 1940s, American foreign policy towards Australia had three central aims: educational exchanges under the new Fulbright program, discussion of taxation issues on American imports and a general treaty of commerce and navigation rights in the southwest Pacific.[29] These limited aims reflected what Washington wanted from its relations with Canberra in the immediate postwar period. The creation of a general defense entity in the Pacific region was certainly not an issue that the United States wanted to pursue at the time.

The United States had several arguments against the creation of any regional defense entity. President Truman, prior to a meeting with Prime Minister Chifley, received a memorandum on the subject that outlined the American arguments. The memorandum stated the key point that, "The U.S. should oppose a general conference and an overall defense arrangement for the Southwest Pacific as premature, inadvisable, and likely to encourage the U.S.S.R. to advocate similar arrangements elsewhere not to the advantage of the U.N or the U.S."[30] The American military found it especially galling that the facilities they had built were being denied to them. In the end the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department counseled Truman to forget Manus in favor of other bases in the Pacific region. In Australia, conservative critics of the Chifley government hammered away at the seeming indifference of the Chifley government to American

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[28] Ibid, 24.
[29] Edwards, "Evatt and the Americans," 558.
[30] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Visit of the Prime Minister of Australia, May 8, 1946, OF 48d, Folder 1, Truman Library.

overtures of friendship. An editorial in the *Melbourne Herald* cautioned its readers that,

"There is a danger that if these continue to be received with indifference, the impression may be created in Washington that Australia is not interested in having relations of any cordial kind with her powerful and patient neighbor."[31] This was indeed one of the outcomes of the Manus Island disagreement. A growing sense of distrust of Chifley's Labor government began to pervade American foreign policy and military policy maker's thinking.

One area where this sense of distrust can be seen was in the sharing of military secrets related to the nascent American guided rocket program. Both Great Britain and Australia were keen to be informed about the details of the American program but fears about communist infiltrators inside of the Australian government led the United States government to reduce the flow of information to Canberra. Often, what information the Australian government did receive was filtered through the British government. In a meeting with Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Australian Ambassador Norman Makin commented on this issue. The filtering of information through a third party, Makin stressed, "was unfortunate, and it was the hope of his government that the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two governments which had been obtained during the recent war might be continued."[32] Sir Frederick Shedden, Secretary of Defense for Australia, in a separate meeting with Acheson, lamented that the lack of information from Washington hampered not only Australia and Great Britain's own rocket program but

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[31] "Government Indifferent to U.S. Goodwill?," *Melbourne Herald*, October 9, 1948, Myron M. Cowen Papers, Box 1, Australia – General #2, Truman Library. Emphasis in original document.
[32] Memoranda of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and Ambassador Norman Makin, February 17, 1949, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 65, Truman Library.

also hampered Australian efforts to create a coherent policy for what role to play in the defense of the Pacific.[33] However, none of these arguments swayed the United States. It would only be after the fall of Chifley's Labor government to the conservative government led by Sir Robert Menzies in December of 1949 and the creation of a new internal security service in Australia that the U.S. would restart the flow of information related to high level military secrets.

While relations between both countries did deteriorate in the immediate postwar period it should be noted that efforts were made to continue the successful alliance that World War II had built. In 1948, Rear Admiral John Collins, Chief of Naval Services of the Royal Australian Navy (CNSRAN), met with Admiral Dewitt Ramsey, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINPAC), at Pearl Harbor Naval Base. The two men carried out top-level strategic talks that dealt with regulating control of shipping between both nations' regional waters as well as determining a boundary between the Australian command and American command regions in the Pacific. These talks were the first in a series of naval talks between the two nations in the late 1940s that helped to ensure that the bond between Australia and the United States was not severed.[34]

Another area in which the United States sought to ease growing tensions with Canberra was through the selection of its ambassadors to Australia. The appointment of Robert Butler, a Minneapolis shipbuilder, in 1946 and Myron Cowen, a New Yorker who had served in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, in 1948 were well

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[33] Memoranda of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and Sir Frederick Shedden, April 20, 1949, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 65, Truman Library.
[34] Frame, *Pacific Partners*, 86.

received by the Australian government and people.[35] A 1946 editorial lauded President

Truman for the selection of Butler to fill the ambassadorship to Australia. "A change of

our diplomatic relations," the editorial informed readers, "is due to the increased

importance of the political and economic affairs of the Southwest Pacific for the United

States. American interests in Australia – political, military and economic – are

expanding."[36] But even the role of the American ambassador came to cause friction

between Australia and the United States. The problem stemmed from the fact that both

Butler and Cowen saw the Australian position as devoid of the possibility of career

advancement and because of this only stayed in the position for brief periods of time. A

report from the Australian Embassy in Washington D.C. to Canberra made note of this

issue stating that, "Butler's real trouble is that he is a man of great energy, side-tracked

into a country with which the U.S.A. has best possible relations and where he has

relatively little to do."[37] After Myron Cowen, who had gained great popularity in

Australia, the United States did not immediately fill the ambassador's position. The need

to fill such a position quickly was deemed of great importance by the Australian

government as Australian Ambassador Norman Makin stressed to Dean Acheson. Any

delay, Makin insisted, "Might be misunderstood and might occasion undesirable

speculation and comment."[38] Between 1945 and 1953, the United States had four

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[35] Both were well received primarily because they provided some stability to the American diplomatic corps in Canberra and publicly sought to court favorable Australian public opinion. Privately, both men often worked to shorten their time of service in Australia for what were considered choicer postings. Butler would leave for Cuba in 1948 and Cowen for the Philippines in 1949.

[36] "Robert Butler Is Honored," *St. Cloud Daily Times*, July 10, 1946, OF 1054, Truman Library.

[37] Australian Embassy, Washington D.C. to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, December 16, 1947, Series # A1068, Control # A47/2/8/8, NAA.

[38] Memoranda of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and Ambassador Norman Makin, February 17, 1949, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 65, Truman Library.

different ambassadors to Australia. Conversely, in that same time period, Australia had only two men serve as ambassadors to the United States. It is apparent that the Australian government had reason to worry that American opinion of the worth of the Australian rapport was falling in the postwar world.

The political and military considerations of the United States in the years following World War II were often at cross-purposes with Australia's. These factors conspired to ensure that both nations would not, as Richard Casey expressed hope for, "work together as closely as one blade of a pair of scissors with the other."[39] The American – Australian bond found itself complicated further by the reintroduction of economic issues that resurrected memories of the trade wars of the 1930s. The difference though was that unlike in the interwar years, trade between both countries had expanded significantly. An examination of reciprocal trade figures from the period immediately following the end of the war demonstrates how much trade patterns between the two powers had changed. In the twelve-month period beginning August 1945, the average American monthly exports to Australia were valued at $7.321 million per month; Australia exports to the United States were valued at $11.587 million per month. In period between 1936 and 1939 those numbers had only been $5.583 million and $2.09 million per month.[40]

The United States had replaced Great Britain as the primary economic relationship for Australia. Much of the new trade came out of the American Lend – Lease program of World War II. Australia received a significant amount of Lend – Lease

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[39] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 29.
[40] Bell, *Unequal Allies*, 205.

material during the war. This helped not only to fuel its war industries but also to position Australian secondary industries to take advantage of the economic opportunities coming out of the war. This had been a concern for the United States during the war and had caused some problems in the wartime relationship. The larger issue, however, occurred in the fall of 1945 when President Truman abruptly decided to end the Lend – Lease program. This was a particularly harsh blow to Great Britain whose economy was in shambles after the war and relied heavily on Lend – Lease materials to carry on. Australia, while not in as dire a position as Great Britain, also viewed the sudden ending of Lend – Lease with surprise and even anger.[41]

Truman's decision was motivated by domestic politics as much as international events. The conservative resurgence in the United States that had begun with the mid-term congressional elections of 1944 sent a signal to Truman and the Democratic Party. Many conservatives inside the United States demanded repayment of Lend – Lease materials fearing a repeat of the events after the end of World War I when several nations who had been major debtors to the U.S. had failed to repay their war debts. These domestic concerns, though, proved less persuasive abroad. Members of the British Commonwealth rallied to the side of Great Britain in expressing their dismay at the treatment that the U.S. extended to its primary wartime ally. An editorial in *The Argus* (Melbourne) reported that, "Australian suspicion that the U.S.A.'s decision to end Lend – Lease smacked of dollar diplomacy," because of conversations held with prominent

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[41] Truman was responding to a growing consensus in Congress that Lend-Lease not be used for the postwar rehabilitation of nations as well as growing concerns over the burden that Lend-Lease placed on the American postwar economy. See Warren Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939 – 1941* (Baltimore, 1969), George Herring, *Aid to Russia, 1941 – 1946: Strategy, Diplomacy and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1973) and Alan Dobson, *U.S. Wartime Aid to Britain 1940 – 1946* (London, 1986).

Americans in the city who asked not to be quoted.[42] It is difficult to prove that the American decision to end Lend – Lease was wholly motivated by a hope to have a greater stake in the postwar economic world. This, however, was exactly the impression that Australia came away with.

A major point of contention between the two powers was the issue of the postwar settlement of Lend – Lease materials to Australia. The United States argued that Australia had received far more in aid than it had supplied in reverse Lend – Lease materials during the war. The Australian government stridently denied this and maintained that Australia had emerged from the war with no material debt to the United States. This issue was a central point of conversation between President Truman and Prime Minister Chifley during the latter's visit to Washington in 1946. Truman was well prepared for the meeting on this point. Several reports and memos prepared by the State Department alerted the President to the Australian position and the American evaluation of the situation. One report highlighted the three main Australian counter-arguments: the parity of Lend – Lease and reverse Lend – Lease materials between the two nations, the undervalued Australian pound and the low price levels that characterized the Australian economy. The U.S., Truman was informed, had supplied Lend – Lease materials valued at near $1.4 billion and had received reverse Lend – Lease materials estimated at $900 million. The report maintained that the United States was confident that a settlement could be reached between the $100 million the U.S. asked for and the $15.2 million

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[42] "Empire Backing Britain," *The Argus*, August 28, 1945, Series # A5954, Control # 2091/4, NAA.

Australia was willing to offer.[43] Eventually the issue was settled along the lines outlined

here. The settlement of Lend – Lease though was only one economic issue that clouded

the alliance between Australia and the United States in the postwar period.

A second, and even more contentious issue was a renewed fear by Australia about

the revival of American protectionist trade policies and the impact on critical wool

exports. Wool was still one of the most important exports for Australia at the time and

because of this the Australian government tended to act aggressively towards what they

saw as American moves to limit or exclude Australian wool from the markets of the

United States. In 1947 the United States Congress had passed an amendment to the 1933

Agricultural Adjustment Act that would have allowed for the imposition of import fees or

quantitative limitations on wool coming into the United States. This act, the Wool Bill of

1947, became the centerpiece of American – Australian disagreement at a 1947

international conference on world economic issues held in Geneva, Switzerland. The

Australian delegation accused the Americans that the passage of the amendment violated

the principles of free trade that the United States had espoused during the war. The

Australians informed the Americans that, "It must therefore cause us to doubt the

capacity of the U.S. government to make effective the policy relating to international

trade which its delegation has outlined at this conference."[44]

The action taken by the Americans provided a rare instance of Labor and its

conservative opponents joining forces against American protectionism. An article in the

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[43] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Visit of the Prime Minister of Australia, May 8, 1946, OF 48d, Folder 1, Truman Library.
[44] U.S. Trade Delegation, Geneva to Dean Acheson, June 20, 1947, White House Confidential File, State Department Correspondence 1946 – 1947, Truman Library.

Sydney Morning Herald outlined both Joseph Chifley's and Robert Menzies' anger over the American actions. It related that the American decision to raise the import duty on Australian wool "would be to show complete contempt for the Geneva negotiations."[45] Ambassador Myron Cowen received several letters from prominent Australians detailing their anger over the American action. E.H. Cox, a prominent newspaperman, wrote to Cowen expressing his shock over Congress's decision to raise the duties. "You people [Americans]," the letter declared, "have not helped the situation much by kittenish reluctance to buy wool just when we most need the market." Cox further pointed out that a decline in Australia wool sales was particularly hard on his nation due to the growing dollar gap between Australia and the United States, which Cox expected to widen by at least an additional $30 million due to the proposed wool act.[46]

A combination of factors helped ensure that the situation never reached a potentially damaging climax. Domestic pressure on Truman led him to veto the wool bill when it came before him. The National Association of Wool Manufacturers opposed the passage of the wool bill due to the fears of retaliatory actions on the part of the Australian and British governments.[47] This was not an unfounded fear. Great Britain, along with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, formed a large joint venture to pool the wool resources from the four nations. The organization effectively controlled as much as 85 percent of the world's wool supply at this time. This step was seen by the British and

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[45] "Chifley and Menzies Criticize U.S.," *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 30, 1947, Series # A1068, Control # A47/2/8/8, NAA.
[46] E.H. Cox to Myron Cowen, July 21, 1949, Myron M. Cowen Papers, Box 1, Australia – General #2, Truman Library.
[47] Eugene O'Dunne, Jr., to William Bray, May 5, 1947, OF 485, Truman Library.

Australians as the only effective way to insure that their woolen products garnered what they believed to be a fair price on world markets.

Senator Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming wrote to President Truman expressing his fears about the British Commonwealth wool scheme. O'Mahoney chided Truman that "Failure upon the part of the Government of the United States to meet the world situation created by the world surplus and the British monopoly plan means disaster to so large a segment of our domestic economy that it is imperative for the United States to adopt a long-term policy."[48] This stance is not surprising considering that wool was a central export of O'Mahoney's state. The British efforts to dictate the market through what some American policymakers saw as economic extortion proved to be effective. It forced important business and political interests in the United States to throw their support against the wool bill and contributed directly to Truman's decision to veto the bill.

It should also be noted that the Australian government did not emerge from the fight with the Americans unscathed. Unlike the 1930s, when the majority of Australian citizens had looked upon American economic policies towards their country with a jaundiced eye, by the late 1940s many Australians blamed their own government as much for the economic fight as they did the Americans. Editorials in newspapers around Australia castigated the Chifley government for what seemed to be its stubborn refusal to meet the United States halfway. The *Melbourne Herald* called on the opposition parties in the Australian Parliament to "dispel by positive action the unhappy impression of an almost hostile coolness which has been created by many of Canberra's official contacts with America." The editorial went on to point out the Australian tardiness in accepting

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[48] Joseph O'Mahoney to Harry Truman, January 6, 1946, OF 485, Truman Library.

the American offer to fund cultural exchanges under the Fulbright Act of 1946 as well as

its procrastination on an agreement concerning the double taxation on profits passing

between the two countries. "Such inexplicable instances of grudging, parochial outlook,"

the editorial concluded, "must seem to Washington that we have dropped our wartime

desire for Australian – American cooperation. In giving this view the government grossly

misrepresents the views of the great majority of Australians."[49] The economics of the

U.S. – Australian relationship continued to be a point of dispute between the two powers

and while economic disagreements never approached the level of the 1930s they are key

to understanding that even in the postwar period the bond between the U.S. and Australia

was not without divisions.

Arguably the most contentious issue was Japan and the postwar settlement with

that nation. The United States and Australia came to widely divergent views on the issue

of how to treat their defeated enemy and proceed with the reconstruction of Japan. The

United States wanted to ensure that no other allied power had a say in the postwar

reconstruction of Japan.[50] This was partly motivated by the belief that the Pacific war had

been an American one but also by a strong conviction that it was necessary to exclude the

Soviet Union and avoid allowing communism to gain a foothold in Japan. Australia, for

its part, refused to believe that the spirit of militarism that had animated the Japanese

during the war had been easily broken. As T.B. Millar noted, "Australia did not lose her

sense of vulnerability with the defeat of Japan. On the contrary, the war seemed to justify

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[49] "Snubs for U.S.A. at Canberra," *Melbourne Herald*, December 29, 1948, Myron Cowen Papers, Box 2, Australia – Press Clippings, Truman Library.
[50] See Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock, NY, 2006) and Robert Wolfe, *Americans as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in Germany and Japan, 1944 – 1952* (Carbondale, IL, 1984).

generations of fears, and to prove that only American power could protect Australia in the Pacific."[51] It was this contradiction that served to cause friction between the two allies. On the one hand, Australia feared a resurgent Japan, reindustrialized with American aid. This fear led them to adopt a harsher stance towards Japan than had the Americans. This harshness often contradicted American wishes for Japan's development and led to incidents of strong disagreement between the two.

It is clear from examining postwar Australian attitudes that the racial animus of the war had not disappeared with the end of the fighting. Some historians have identified Australian postwar policies towards Japan as being *revanchist*. It is somewhat simplistic to do so but one must recognize that the attitude of many ordinary Australian towards Japan did contain a strong element of hatred and a thirst for some form of retribution.[52] In a meeting with Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP), Australian representatives reminded MacArthur that militarism was central to the Japanese character and that they had been taught to worship military strength and to believe only in that. The defeat at the hands of the Allied powers, the Australians argued, was only a minor setback in the two thousand year history of the Japanese people and would in no way erase the aggression ingrained into the Japanese character.[53]

The United States, and especially Douglas MacArthur in Japan, proved reluctant to buy into the harsh viewpoint of the Australians. Because of this, the Australian government often found that MacArthur and the American policymakers actively ignored its arguments. The Australians expressed their displeasure in areas where they had more

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[51] Millar, "Two New Worlds," 246.
[52] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 37.
[53] "Notes of Discussion With General MacArthur," May 1946, Series # A5954, Control # 3/12, NAA.

direct control, primarily over immigration into Australia. The Labor government in

Australia adopted an even stronger adherence to the White Australia policy in the

aftermath of the war. This was motivated by fears over the large numbers of dislocated

Asians brought about by the war. White workers inside Australia feared that the

expansion of the Australian economy would lead to a decline in support for the White

Australia policy.[54]

Their fears were unfounded. Australian racial attitudes towards Japan and Asians

had been hardened by the war. "Japan was not the whole of Asia," wrote T.B. Millar,

"but it was Asian, and there was in some ways a transfer to 'Asia' of the apprehension

and animosity felt towards Japan."[55] Immigrants from any Asian nation, then, found it

next to impossible to work inside Australia. The Japanese, though, were especially

targeted. Arthur Calwell, who served as Minister of Immigration in the Chifley

government, made the position of the Australian government on this question very clear

in a press conference. He stated, "We don't want to see any Japanese on Australian

shores in any circumstances or in any capacity." When asked what negative effects this

policy might have on Australian business, Calwell retorted, "I think the feelings of those

relatives of the men who were fiendishly butchered are more worthy of consideration by

a Minister of State than profits to be made from trade and laurels to be won in sports."[56]

This unyielding stance also extended to the immigration of Japanese wives of

Australian citizens. While not the norm, there were a number of Australians who had

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[54] This stance is in contrast to the United States which loosened its restrictive immigration barriers towards Asians in the aftermath of World War II.

[55] Millar, *Australia in War and Peace*, 167.

[56] "No Japs Wanted in Australia," *Canberra Times*, November 16, 1949, Series # A1838, Control # 3103/10/8 Part 1, NAA.

lived abroad prior to the war or who were taking part in the occupation of Japan and who had taken on Japanese wives. Many of these citizens hoped to move back to Australia and enjoy the postwar prosperity brought on by the expanding economy. Their plans to maintain their families were disrupted by the Chifley government's unwillingness to allow Asians, and Japanese in particular, to enter into Australia. The Australian Political Liaison office in Tokyo was inundated with requests for immigration visas for wives of Japanese descent. When the Tokyo office questioned the Department of External Affairs as to what the official policy was, they received a tersely worded telegram that stated, "Japanese wives of Australian citizens are not eligible for permanent admission to Australia under existing policy."[57] Concessions could be made if the wife were partly of European descent but then only if she were in sound health, a term that could be variously interpreted from the position of the government.[58]

This behavior on the part of the Australian government is indicative of a larger attitude concerning all things related to Japan. It might be argued that, for Australia, the war had not really ended in August 1945. Deep seated fears about Japan and a misreading of how fundamentally the defeat in World War II had shaken Japanese society led Australia to adopt a of position of obstinate refusal to comply with American plans for a postwar Japan. This would cause a definite breach in the relationship between both nations. This can be most clearly seen in dealing with the issue of the official peace treaty with Japan.

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[57] Department of External Affairs to Australian Political Liaison Office, Tokyo, September 10, 1946, Series # A1067, Control # IC46/31/1/22, NAA.
[58] Department of External Affairs to Australian Consulate, Manila, September 9, 1946, Series # A1067, Control # IC46/31/1/22, NAA.

The United States pressed for a quick, formal peace treaty with Japan. This stance gained greater urgency for the Americans after the fall of mainland China to the communist forces of Mao Zedong in 1949. The Truman administration, supported by Republicans such as John Foster Dulles, realized that Japan would have to provide the nucleus of a pro-western and anti-communistic sphere in Asia. Because of this, a formal peace treaty that would end the occupation and bring Japan back into the industrial world order as soon as possible was highly desired by the United States. Militarily, Japan was coveted by the U.S. due to its "key strategic position in East Asia" for permanent American military installations.[59] Convincing Australia of this necessity would prove to be far more difficult, however. The memories of the war lingered in the minds of many Australians, both policymakers and average Australians, as has been demonstrated by the continued anti -Asian and anti-Japanese bias in Australian immigration policies.

Australian recalcitrance to accept a formal peace treaty with Japan was also reinforced by American behavior towards the role the other Allied powers were to play in the occupation. Publicly, "participation forces of other nations that have taken a leading part in the war against Japan will be welcomed and expected."[60] Privately, American policymakers wanted to restrict the interference of the other Allied powers in Japan as much as possible. This viewpoint was greatly influenced by American desires to severely limit Soviet influence in the Far East. Due to this then, the United States adopted a policy of active resistance against all encroachments on what was seen as an American

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[59] Robert J. McMahon, "The Cold War in Asia: The Elusive Synthesis," in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 520.

[60] Department of State Radio News Bulletin, September 22, 1945, Richard K. Sutherland Papers, RG 30, Box 1, Folder 2, MML.

prerogative.[61] This stance played into traditional Australian fears of being ignored as a regional power.

An examination of records reveals that the Australian government outlined clearly what they believed their role in the peace process should be. In a speech before the Australian Parliament in January of 1945, Herbert Evatt stated, "The Australian and New Zealand Governments will have a full share in all the arrangements to be made at all stages of planning for the armistice and post-armistice period in the war against Japan. There is every reason to believe that this claim will be recognized both by the United Kingdom and the United States Governments."[62] A Department of External Affairs cable to the Australian Embassy in Washington revealed that even by 1947, Australia clung to the argument that its role in the war entitled it to a seat at the negotiating table. The cable instructed the Australian officials in Washington to make it clear to their counterparts in the American State Department that, "Because of her outstanding war effort Australia is clearly entitled to be a party principal to the settlement and that is now universally recognized."[63] American policymakers, for their part, recognized the principle of the Australian argument but felt that the strategic and political realities of the situation outweighed any such considerations. The topic was discussed in a conversation between Truman's first Secretary of State, James Byrnes, and James Forrestal. When queried by Forrestal if the exclusion of Soviet occupation troops would also mean the exclusion of British and Australian troops, Byrnes replied that the British would not care but that the

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[61] Bell, "Australian – American Disagreement Over the Peace Settlement With Japan, 1944 – 1946," 239.
[62] *Australia: A Monthly Review from the Australian News and Information Bureau*, January 1945, John Winant Papers, Box 183, Folder 4, FDR Library.
[63] Department of External Affairs to Australian Embassy, Washington D.C., August 12, 1947, Series # A3300, Control # 456, NAA.

Australians, in particular Herbert Evatt, would. Evatt, Byrnes concluded, "wants to rule the world."[64]

The quandary of how to best reach a compromise was settled by American concessions to allow a mixed British and British Commonwealth occupation force to take up a post in Japan. The British government was not keen on the idea since it represented another drain on an already taxed manpower base and economy. Because of this, the British passed most of the responsibility for the furnishing of men and maintenance of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) to Australia. Paragraph 8 of the operational plans for the BCOF outlined this arrangement and also declared Australia would be the party responsible for "providing a channel of communication on governmental matters concerning BCOF between the British Commonwealth Governments concerned and the United States Government, and through the Government with SCAP."[65] The British recognized the potential difficulties that could come out of the arrangement and chose to take a secondary role to Australia in order not to jeopardize a close postwar relationship with the United States. The Australians, for their part, seemed to have little initial concern over how their actions would be interpreted by Washington.

The American response was, in fact, mixed on the BCOF. On the one hand, the BCOF helped to ease the tension over the issue of whether or not Australia would have a hand in the occupation. On the other, SCAP and the American government saw the value of the BCOF, which was a small force and relied heavily on American material, as minor at best. The American military considered the quality of the troops in the BCOF to be

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[64] Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, 105.
[65] "Plan for a British Commonwealth Occupation Force to Participate in the Occupation of Japan," May 15, 1946, p. 4, AWM 124 5/229, AWM.

substandard and reflected some of the prejudices that the U.S. military command

structure had developed towards Australian troops during World War II. In a letter to his

wife, General Robert Eichelberger gave his impression of the Australian troops taking

part in the occupation. He wrote the Australians thought their camp at Kure to be "nice

and well fixed up but from an American viewpoint I didn't think so. The Aussies even at

their best do not look after themselves as well as Americans. Their food is not as good

and their camps are not nearly as clean."[66] It would be easy to dismiss Eichlberger's

comments out of hand as those of a man unfamiliar with the more lax attitudes that the

Australian military had in terms of appearance. However, Eichelberger had been one of

the few American commanders who had served under MacArthur and with the

Australians in the southwest Pacific who had emerged from the campaign with a

generally positive view of the Australian fighting man. Such an impression from a man

like Eichleberger certainly reveals how the level of regard in which Australian troops

were held by their American counterparts had declined.

Another point over which the two powers clashed was the role of the Allied

Council for Japan (ACJ). This was an advisory panel made up of the four major Allied

powers that had fought in the Pacific: the United States, British Commonwealth, Soviet

Union and Nationalist China. The ACJ was established to calm fears that the United

States, and more specifically Douglas MacArthur, would singlehandedly determine the

postwar direction of Japan. While the United States did plan to have the largest role in

reshaping Japan, it was decided that the establishment of a body like the ACJ was a

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[66] Robert Eichelberger to Emmaline Eichelberger, February 21, 1946, Robert L. Eichelberger Papers, Box 11, Folder 2, Perkins Library, Duke University.

necessary concession. MacArthur for his part never saw the ACJ as anything more than

an annoyance and often chose to ignore it completely.

The British Commonwealth representative was an Australian named William

Macmahon Ball, who like his immediate superior Herbert Evatt, attracted criticism from

the Americans. Ball saw the role of the ACJ, and its larger body the Far Eastern

Commission (FEC) as being more than advisory.[67] Ball hoped to use the ACJ to insure

that Australian fears concerning a revived Japan were dispelled. The Americans viewed

this push for great Australian inclusion as a violation of the principles that had been

established in the occupation by one major Allied power of other former Axis powers,

such as Romania and Hungary, by the Soviet Union. A prime example of this clash of

wills occurred during a meeting of the ACJ in which Brigadier General Courtney

Whitney, chief of the Supreme Command Allied Powers (SCAP) government section

briefed the ACJ on recent policies enacted by SCAP. Ball questioned whether it was

necessary for Whitney to give a full report, which he saw as an American delaying tactic

to keep the Council form more important work. Whitney replied he had come as a

representative of SCAP and Douglas MacArthur and intended to give his full report. Ball

fired back at Whitney to answer, "Who was running the Council – the Council or the

Supreme Commander?"[68]

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[67] The FEC was a 13 nation body that was modeled on earlier commissions such as the one that had been created to deal with defeated Axis nations in Europe and was based in Washington D.C. and provided recommendations directly to the U.S. government. The ACJ was designed to allow for direct recommendations to be made to the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur.
[68] "United Press Story Filed by Earnest Hoberecht," April 18, 1946, USAFPAC General Files, RG 4, Box 1, Folder 1, MML.

Actions such as this coupled with Ball's seeming penchant for supporting the Soviet delegation on procedural matters led MacArthur and other American officials to question Ball's loyalty and trustworthiness. In a letter to William Hassett, secretary to the President, George Atcheson, Jr., American representative on the ACJ, confirmed that Ball, acting in concert with the Soviet representative, seemed to give "… the clear impression that their principal purpose is to bring into public view any criticism they can manage to find in regard to what the American authorities have done and are doing."[69] The discord between the two parties was not hidden behind closed doors either. American antipathy towards Ball was well known as was Ball's own dislike for what he saw as the imperious behavior of SCAP and the American command structure. An editorial in *The Argus* (Melbourne) summarized what the Australians saw as the core of the clash. The Americans, the editorial concluded, viewed the conversion of the Japanese to a peaceful society in terms of "… paper plans and pious expressions of good will on the part of the Japanese." The Australians, for their part, were skeptical of "… an 'overnight' conversion of the Japanese to ways of peace."[70]

One matter that the Australian interpretation does not take into account is how deep American fears about the growth of communism in Asia had become by 1946 – 1947. This fear was a primary factor in motivating the United States to push for a quick peace treaty with Japan after the war. The Australian government resisted a hasty peace until several issues had been settled to their satisfaction. Key among these issues were the

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[69] George Atcheson, Jr. to William Hassett, May 2, 1946, White House Confidential File, State Department Correspondence 1946 – 1947, Truman Library
[70] "Clash Over Allied Policy in Japan," *The Argus*, October 19, 1946, Series # A1067, Control # ER46/15/8, NAA.

questions of reparations and Australian safety. The Australian government outlined its

demands for Japanese reparations to the United States on several occasions. Two primary

ways Australia hoped to be compensated were through the allocation of Japanese

property in territories outside of lands to be retained by Japan. Another was through the

allocation of goods and industrial equipment and facilities that were not considered

necessary for a peaceful Japan's economic survival or for the supplying of the Allied

occupation forces.[71]

The primary goal of the Australian government was to secure reparations for

Australian citizens and soldiers who had been held as prisoners of war by the Japanese.

This point was pushed especially hard by veterans' organizations in Australia. In a letter

to Prime Minister Joseph Chifley, E.V. Britnell, the secretary of the Australian Prisoners

of War Relatives' Association, informed Chifley that, "We submit that it is beyond

argument that you should place human reparations as No. 1 priority in the list of

reparations. We desire you to know that this question will not be allowed to recede to the

back of our minds and be forgotten, and we expect you to push our demands to the

utmost of your ability and power."[72] The Australian's did follow through and pressed the

American's for some accommodation on this question. Chifley's government reminded

the Truman administration that Australia had modified its claims against Germany in

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[71] Department of State Radio News Bulletin, September 22, 1945, Richard K. Sutherland Papers, RG 30, Box 1, Folder 2, MML.
[72] E.V. Britnell to Joseph Chifley, March 25, 1946, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1067, Control #ER46/13/7/1, NAA.

favor of those countries more directly affected by Nazi aggression. It was hoped that, in return, the same consideration would be extended to Australian claims.[73]

The Americans, for their part, refused to grant any concessions to the Australians, fearing that any sort of reparations payments would retard the industrial recovery of Japan, something that the Americans considered key to fighting the spread of communism in Asia. Also, the Australian calls for reparations did not take into account how devastated the Japanese economy had been by the war. For the first few years immediately following the end of hostilities the American government took on the primary responsibility for feeding the Japanese populace and rebuilding the infrastructure and economic base of the country.[74] As Richard Casey reminisced later, "… we came up against the hard fact that the Japanese economy was being supported by the United States and we clearly could not expect the American taxpayer, in effect, to provide us with reparations on behalf of Japan."[75]

While the Australians allowed the issue of reparations to fade into the background, concerns over a revived Japan and the potential threat that it posed to Australian security did not. In a speech before the United Nations, Herbert Evatt outlined Australian worries about a premature peace treaty with Japan. The first and foremost principle of Australian opposition rested on the complete disarmament and demilitarization of Japan, an ending of the Japanese capacity to produce war materials and close supervision of Japan to prevent the reintroduction of war industries after the

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[73] Memorandum from the Ministry for Post-War Reconstruction to Department of External Affairs, February 20, 1946, Control # A1067, Series # ER46/13/7/1, NAA.
[74] See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, 1999). Dower's work details the American occupation policies and its effects on both Japanese society and the economy.
[75] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 58 – 59.

signing of the peace treaty.[76] Evatt echoed this sentiment before the Australian House of Representatives. He told the assembled lawmakers that, "… the greatest care must be taken lest Japan should be given a war potential which might be of significance to the future of the Far East and the Pacific. If we permit the building up of the war potential of Japan to this we shall suffer for it."[77] This message was echoed repeatedly by members of the Australian government and also by the general population. This perception was not prevalent just in Australia. Both the newly independent Filipino government and the government of New Zealand expressed concerns over the possibility of a resurgent militarism in Japan.

A full conference of the British Commonwealth nations was called to meet in Canberra to discuss the possibility of what was seen as a piecemeal American approach to peace with Japan. The Canberra Conference was held between August 26 and September 2, 1947 to secure a general agreement among the British Commonwealth nations about their views towards a Japanese peace treaty. Several conclusions were reached by the representatives: retention of the territorial changes that occurred at the end of the war, complete disarmament of Japan, guarantees of a democratic constitution in Japan, limited reparations and supervision of the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) to ensure the treaty clauses were being met.[78]

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[76] Speech by Herbert Evatt to the United Nations General Assembly, undated, Series # A3300, Control # 456, NAA.

[77] Speech by Herbert Evatt to the Australian House of Representatives, undated, Supreme Command Allied Powers Papers, RG 5, Box 107, Folder 4, MML.

[78] "The Japanese Peace Treaty," undated, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # 539/2 Part 2, NAA.

The United States' response to the Canberra Conference was decidedly negative.

The Americans intimated that any attempt to force reparations or any restrictive

limitations on the Japanese peace treaty would be met with strong disapproval and an

almost certain veto by the United States' representatives on the FEC or ACJ.[79] The

Canberra Conference proved to be more than the American government could take. In

public officials lashed out at their Australian counterparts. "State Department officials do

not contest Australia's right to have a full say in the Japanese peace settlement," an

editorial in the *Melbourne Herald* stated, "but will not stand for 'bullying.' They are

somewhat suspicious at what they regard as the Australian Government's tendency to use

international conferences as election platforms."[80] The forcefulness of the American

response took the Australian government aback but did not encourage a significant

change in the Australian stance. The issue of a quick peace treaty with Japan proved to be

a substantial division between the two allies.

In an effort to quell these fears, the Truman administration sent leading

Republican foreign policy expert John Foster Dulles on a tour of East Asia and the

Pacific (February 1951) to garner support for a speedy peace with Japan. The Truman

administration had first broached the topic of the peace treaty with Japan starting in early

1947 but had received little positive feedback from Canberra. Dulles's tour in 1951 was a

second attempt to get the Australians on board with the American proposals. In Australia,

Dulles encountered continued opposition to a liberal peace treaty with Japan and the new

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[79] "The Long Dispute With U.S.A. Over Japan," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 10, 1947, Series # A1068, Control # A47/2/8/8, NAA.

[80] "U.S. Firm on Japan Policy: Eyes Canberra," *Melbourne Herald*, July 16, 1947, Series # A1068, Control # A47/2/8/8, NAA.

demand that any peace treaty with Japan be tied to the creation of a formal defensive alliance between the U.S. and Australia along the lines of NATO.[81] Sir Percy Spender recalled that the negotiations between Dulles and the Australians foundered on this issue. He recounted that for the Australians, "The treaty should contain provisions which would prevent the reemergence of Japanese militarism. And that, of course, involved restrictive conditions being imposed in the Treaty, whereas Mr. Dulles' view was, very definitely, that any treaty which sought to impose upon a defeated conditions were unduly restrictive."[82] Foster responded to these arguments by assuring the Australian government that the war had effectively broken the spirit of militarism that had animated Japan prior to the conflict. In fact, Dulles described the mood of the Japanese as one of "extreme pacifism" and tried to discount Australian fears as alarmist.[83]

Dulles's tour resulted in little change in the Australian attitude. This led some in Washington to mull the possibility of reaching a unilateral peace with Japan. It is clear then that the postwar period in American – Australian relations was not a simple or easy one. In many ways the period between 1946 and 1949 brought back old grievances that had never been fully addressed during the war. Economic issues, the role of Great Britain in the postwar Pacific and Japan served to strain a relationship, which strengthened by the experiences of World War II, was not unshakeable. Australia sought to walk a line between establishing itself as an independent power in the Pacific and aligning itself

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[81] Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 428.
[82] Interview with Sir Percy Spender, June 22, 1964, John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Reel 12, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994). This is a microfilm of the collection housed at the Mudd Library, Princeton University.
[83] Seigne Miyasato, "John Foster Dulles and the Peace Settlement With Japan," in Richard H. Immerman, ed., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 209.

closely with the United States. This middle road approach served more often than not to sow discord between Canberra and Washington. The alliance had become frayed but never completely unraveled. The reason for this was the emergence of a new threat in the Pacific region that both the United States and Australia saw as a primary menace to their respective nations: the growth of communism in Asia.

By 1947, American policymakers and the general public had become convinced that world communism, a monolithic entity directed from Moscow, was intent on dominating the world. The blockade of Berlin and the communist insurgency in Greece led to fears of a Soviet takeover in Europe. Communist Chinese victory over Nationalist forces in 1949 only served to strengthen American fears as now Asia became a possible breeding ground for the perceived communist peril. The ideological union of anti-communism served to revive the American – Australian alliance in the early Cold War period and provide an anchor for what would become one of the closest foreign relationships that the United States developed in the twentieth century. Coral Bell concluded that the American international anti-communist crusade was the decisive factor in the American – Australian alliance.[84] The Chifley government saw East Asia as key to its own strategic interests and the growing threat of communism among the Asian people revived fears of Australia being overrun by vast numbers of non-whites to the north.

Australian concerns were further fueled by the information being distributed from Washington. The outbreak of communist led or inspired rebellions in Indonesia, Burma

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[84] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 46. America's anti-communist stance was established in NSC 20/4 (1948) and NSC 68 (1950).

and Malaya as well as Ho Chi Minh's continued fight against the French only served, in the opinion of the United States, to help the Soviet Union by creating firestorms which the Western powers had to contend with.[85] The American decision to see these movements, which were often nationalist in nature more than international, as being controlled by Moscow became a flaw of American foreign policy during the Cold War and would lead the United States to take actions in some instance which otherwise could have been avoided. It must be recognized, though, that this was not solely an American shortcoming. Australia itself took a similar view as, "Australian alarm about 'communism' was directed mainly at the Soviet Union, the mainspring of international communist activities."[86]

Australian policymakers adopted the attitude of their American counterparts in interpreting world events between 1945 and 1950. Richard Casey wrote, "No sooner was the last shot fired in the war of 1939 – 1945 than Russia started on her attempt to capture the world for communism … the Iron Curtain has come down across half of Europe. Russian emissaries are burrowing like moles in every country."[87] Sir Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs (1949 – 51) and Australian Ambassador to the U.S. (1951 – 58), echoed Casey's views in his own writings. "Western influence has almost been removed from this part of the world," Spender wrote, "leaving the field wide open to the machinations of the Kremlin. This communist infiltration is in its strategy not unlike the

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[85] "Present International Position of the U.S.S.R.," undated, Student Research File, Box 21, Folder 2, Truman Library.
[86] Millar, *Australia in Peace and War*, 288.
[87] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 27.

Japanese infiltration of 41 – 42."[88] Spender's analogy to the Japanese offensive of World

War II is revealing because it shows an important element of the American – Australian

anti-communist crusade. The racial attitudes that had animated the bond from the

previous war allowed both nations to make transition easily into an anti-communist

attitude. Put another way, fear of the "Yellow Horde" had been replaced by fears of the

Red Menace. The occupation of Japan demonstrated how quickly perceptions about non-

whites in Asia could change, especially among Americans. The Japanese went from hated

enemy to needed ally in an exceptionally short period of time. The success of the

communists in China in 1949 allowed both the U.S. and Australia to transfer their hatred

and fears of the Japanese to a new Asian group. The foreignness of communism certainly

also contributed to this phenomenon since it was seen as being antithetical to Western, or

white, standards.

　　　　Perceptions of the communist threat had an interesting effect on that American –

Australian alliance in that it directly affected Australian domestic politics. American

military and national security organizations, as mentioned earlier, came to view the

Chifley Labor government with some suspicion. A confidential Central Intelligence

Agency report stated, "Nevertheless, it is believed that militant influences within the

Labor Party will continue to be a deterrent to a strong Government anti-communist

campaign and that the ACP (Australian Communist Party) is still capable of temporarily

crippling Australian production." The same report identified Australian trade unions as

the principal source of communist agitation inside Australia and worried that the trade

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[88] "Soviet Russia on Australia's Doorstep," July 14, 1948, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 2, Folder 11, NLA.

unions, as the principal source of the Labor party's political strength, could "apply

indirect pressure upon the Australian government."[89] These concerns over the

trustworthiness of the Labor government led to the American decision to severely restrict

intelligence and defense information that was outlined previously in the chapter.

The fears of the American government about communist influence over or

infiltration of the Chifley government did not appear suddenly. They had been building

over the entirety of the four years that Chifley held the office of Prime Minister. Long

standing American antipathy towards Australian labor unions made them easy targets for

accusations of harboring communist sympathies. In a letter to General Robert

Eichelberger in October of 1945, Lieutenant General L.H. van Oyen expressed his

frustration in dealing with Australian dockworkers. He wrote that American vessels were

often held up by Australian dockworkers "under communistic influence" and that the

Chifley government was not only powerless to help but in fact displayed an attitude

"hardly sympathetic" towards American concerns.[90] The Central Intelligence Agency

found reason to cast suspicion on high ranking members of the Labor government

including Herbert Evatt, who was singled out because his brother had served as president

of a communist front organization in New South Wales.[91]

The Australian general election of 1949 was of particular interest to the United

States. Chifley and the Labor Party found themselves hammered on the issue of

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[89] "Communist Influence in Australia," CIA ORE 9 – 49, April 11, 1949, President's Secretary's File: Intelligence Files 1946 – 1953, Box 215, Truman Library.
[90] L.H. van Oyen to Robert Eichelberger, October 18, 1945, Robert L. Eichelberger Papers, Correspondence: 1945, September – December, Box 16, Folder 4, Perkins Library, Duke University.
[91] Siracusa and Barclay, "Australia, the United States, and the Cold War, 1941 – 1951: from V-J Day to ANZUS," 45.

communism by Robert Menzies and his conservative brethren. Chifley's announced intention to nationalize Australian banks and a general strike in the coal industry in Australia in 1949 did not help Labor's position. Officially, Washington maintained a stance of neutrality, but privately American policymakers could not help but hope for Menzies's victory. It was generally acknowledged inside Australia that a Labor defeat would go a long way towards renewing U.S. confidence in Australia as a partner against the communist threat. The United States let it be known that any decision on whether or not to restart the flow of defense information to Australia would be held off until after the election was concluded. Most interpreted this as a sign that if Labor were to survive the challenge, the U.S. would continue to withhold secret information.[92]

The attacks of Menzies and others such as Percy Spender proved effective in what could be seen as an analogous development to the changing nature of American domestic politics. In a published address, Spender warned his fellow countrymen against the insidious influences of communists. He wrote:

> Communistic influences have penetrated deeply – more deeply than the average citizen knows. You will find them if you look for them in many strange places and within many apparently harmless organizations, playing a special role, but always extending the influence of the alien creed they serve. You will find them in societies for improved cultural relations with other nations, particularly Russia, in new theatre movements, in groups for scientific workers, in youth movements, as well as in the industrial labor movement. Indeed you will find them in some of our newspapers, giving a communistic twist and bias to news paragraphs.[93]

Spender's language bore an uncanny resemblance to the language being used by the growing number of conservative critics of the Truman administration's foreign policy.

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[92] "The Restoration of the Flow of United States Classified Information to Australia," October 17, 1949, Series # A5954, Control # 1831/6, NAA.
[93] "Communism: Menace to Australian Way of Life. The Labor Party Must Accept the Blame," June 18, 1946, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 2, Folder 11, NLA.

Menzies's victory in 1949 went a long way towards demonstrating to the United States that Australia was a solid ally that could be relied on in the struggle against world communism.

A second important factor that reinforced this belief after 1949 was the issue of the recognition of Communist China. The United States still recognized Chiang Kai – Shek's government on the island of Formosa (modern day Taiwan) as the legitimate government of China. The Americans made it known that they expected their allies to follow suit and to withhold formal recognition from Beijing. Great Britain, for its part, found itself in a much more tenuous position than its American counterparts. The British were concerned over possible Chinese action aimed at Hong Kong as well as the sizeable trade that the British had on the mainland of China. These factors contributed to a far less rigid stance on the part of the British, to the disappointment of the Americans.

Australia proved to be different. There was some thinking that the Australians would follow the British lead but surprisingly they instead chose to closely identify their own recognition policy with that of the United States. Several factors contributed to this decision on the part of Canberra. Perhaps key was the continued issue of race. As Australian historian T.B. Millar revealed, Chinese immigration in the nineteenth century aroused the racial antagonism of white Australians but that these had subsided due to the growing threat of Japan and China's own internal divisions.[94] However, the victory of Mao Zedong reawakened Australian fears about China. China became a central concern of Australian foreign policy in the early years of the Cold War. It was decided that all action had to be taken to limit communist China's influence on its neighbors that might

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[94] Millar, *Australia in Peace and War*, 276.

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prove detrimental to Australian security concerns.[95] Because of this then, Australia

decided to align itself closely with the United States. Australian policymakers recognized

that only the United States would have the military might to resist communist incursions

in the Pacific. It was, in many ways from the Australian perspective, similar to the

situation that had arisen in December of 1941.

Sir Keith Officer, the Australian ambassador to China at the time of the fall of the

Nationalist government, was instructed by the Department of External Affairs to offer all

assurances to the United States of Australian solidarity on the question of recognizing the

new communist regime in China. "You may assure the American Ambassador," the cable

informed Officer, "that we are not contemplating any step towards recognition of

Communists and will consult U.S. and other Governments before doing anything in that

direction."[96] Assurances of this nature were met in Washington with approval. Both

countries were rapidly beginning to see the growth of communism in Asia as a

continuation of the racial threat that Japan had posed just a few years prior.

Richard Casey commented that communism had a happy hunting ground

"wherever there are racial minorities which are dissatisfied," a message of caution for

Australians about the small Chinese population residing inside of Australia.[97] The CIA

identified several ethnic minorities as a possible internal threat to the Australian

government, among them Czechs, Jews, Russians, Italians and Yugoslavs. The

identification of these groups is particularly interesting since none of these groups were

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[95] Henry S. Albinski, *Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1964), 1.
[96] Department of External Affairs to Sir Keith Officer, June 5, 1949, Series # A4145, Control # FD6 Part 1, NAA.
[97] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 79.

still fully considered as part of the white mainstream culture of either country.[98]An editorial in *The Washington Post* attributed some of the childlike qualities that had been ascribed to the Japanese during World War II to the Chinese after the communist victory. "The Chinese," the editorial lamented, "intoxicated with their ability to 'get away with it', are giving vent to their pathological and traditional anti – foreignism with childish irresponsibility."[99]

The portrayal of the Chinese as children given to fits of anger fit easily into the traditional paternalistic viewpoint that the United States and Australia had towards their Asian counterparts. The racial ideology in both nations that World War II had helped both to see a bifurcated world of white against yellow allowed them to easily transition into a similar worldview in the early Cold War period: white against red. The perceived threat of a red Asia propelled both nations into closer alignment and would lead them to once again join forces in war against an Asian foe.[100]

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[98] "Communist Influence in Australia," CIA ORE 9 – 49, April 11, 1949, President's Secretary's File: Intelligence Files 1946 – 1953, Box 215, Truman Library.
[99] "Issues in China," *The Washington Post*, November 19, 1949, Series # A1838, Control # 494/31/7/2, NAA.
[100] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 226.

Chapter 6: The Pendulum of War: 1950 – 1953

In the early morning hours of June 25, 1950, the 38th parallel that separated Communist controlled North Korea from the pro-western south erupted with a barrage of heavy artillery from the northern side of the line of demarcation. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) used the artillery as cover for launching a full-scale invasion of the south with the intent of reunifying the peninsula under the control of Kim Il Sung, the leader of North Korea. Their northern counterparts quickly overran South Korean forces since the southern forces lacked any heavy artillery or armor of their own. The Communist invasion of South Korea sent shockwaves through the capitals of the major Western Powers, most especially the United States, which found itself ill prepared to blunt the North Korean advance.

The years between 1945 and 1949 had seen a massive demobilization program undertaken by the United States. A virtual monopoly on atomic weapons had given the nation a sense of security that allowed for a substantial scale back of all branches of the military with the exception of the newly independent United States Air Force. Many military and political thinkers espoused the idea that atomic weapons had made large conventional forces an unnecessary expense. By 1949, almost the whole of American conventional forces were directed towards defending Western Europe. In the Far East, the loss of China had provided a deep shock to the American command structure but had done little to encourage the U.S. to buttress its military forces in the region. On the contrary, "in 1949, despite knowledge of a North Korean military buildup, the United States withdrew its two Army divisions stationed in South Korea because the Korean

peninsula was outside the United States' strategic interest in the Far East."[1] Aside from a

skeletal occupation force in Japan, the U.S. found itself in a position of great weakness in

dealing with the newly begun Korean War which would subsequently affect American

diplomacy in the Pacific region.

The war itself became a new conduit for the development of Australian and

American relations. World War II has often overshadowed the importance of the Korean

War period in helping to spur a renewed commitment to the alliance from both the

Americans and Australians. An examination of the period, though, reveals that in many

ways it was the years between 1950 and 1953 that truly bound both parties together in the

alliance that has been a cornerstone of both nations' foreign policies to this day.

The three-year period between 1950 and 1953 wrought great changes in the

American and Australian relationship. The war itself, as well as issues that became

intimately tied with the war, would help to reverse the downward trend that had

characterized relations between the two powers in the period between 1946 and 1949.

These issues would securely bind Australia to the United States and help to ensure that

the American – Australian alliance would become a cornerstone of American foreign

policy in the Pacific for the remainder of the Cold War and the twentieth century.

Relations between both powers had begun to improve in late 1949 with the

ousting of the Labor Party and the election of Robert Menzies and the Liberal – Country

Party coalition. Menzies was no stranger to the position of prime minister. He had served

in the same position between 1939 and 1941 and his administration had been marked by a

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[1] Eric D. Sweeney, *The United Nations Landing at Inchon: Operation Chromite* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), 1.

strong commitment to Great Britain and the imperial relationship. But the Menzies of

1949 was not the same man who had left power in 1941. He had come to recognize that

the security of the Pacific region and Australian interests in the region rested squarely

with the United States.[2] This point was certainly recognized even in Washington. Prior to

a meeting with Menzies, President Truman received a background memorandum

prepared by the State Department to brief him on the major issues affecting the U.S. –

Australian relationship. "The government of Prime Minister Menzies," the memo

highlighted, "has made the achievement of close relations with the United States a

cardinal point of Australian foreign policy. Leading members of the government have

repeatedly stated it was essential for Australia to maintain the best possible relations with

the United States and, in so far as possible, to initiate and carry out Pacific policies in

cooperation with this country."[3]

For Australia, a closer relationship with the United States offered not only

security but also a new avenue to increase Australian industrial output, a key program in

the postwar period. Sir Richard Casey, who succeeded Sir Percy Spender as Australian

Foreign Minister upon the latter's dispatch to Washington as ambassador, continued his

long push for a strong American – Australian alliance. In a meeting with Liberal Party

leadership, Casey outlined the important role that the U.S. had to play if Australia was to

expand its industrial base. For Casey, it "was essential to get the United States interested

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[2] Robert O'Neil, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol. I Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1981), 21.
[3] Background Memoranda on Visit of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, OF 48d, Australia, Folder 2, Truman Library.

in our development and expansion and get substantial American money invested in Australia."[4]

American officials went out of their way to cultivate this newfound goodwill towards the U.S. on the part of the Australian government. Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated in a nationwide broadcast on the BBC – Australia that among the many friends the U.S. had in the world, Australia maintained a special place because "you can count on them sticking with you when the going is tough."[5] Even John Foster Dulles, who had encountered strong resistance from the Australian government for an early peace treaty with Japan, came to see Australia as one of the few countries in the Pacific region that the U.S. could fully count on in facing down the growing threat of communism.[6] American ambassador Pete Jarman noted in a letter to Senator Alexander Wiley that even though Australia was a small nation in terms of manpower and industry, it had grown ever more important "because of this threat we have from the Far East."[7] These views represent a drastic departure from the previous three years when the United States government had looked on the Australian government with suspicion and sometimes even outright dislike. The new attitude towards the relationship from both sides was

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[4] T.B. Millar, ed., *Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R.G. Casey 1951 – 1960* (London: Collins, 1972), 83.
[5] Remarks on Australia Made by Dean Acheson on BBC-Australia, August 7, 1952, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 77, Truman Library.
[6] Memorandum of Conversation Between John Foster Dulles and Robert Taft and Eugene Millikin, November 30, 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers Microfilm Collection, Reel 13, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1976). This is a microfilm of the personal papers collection housed at Mudd Library at Princeton University.
[7] Pete Jarman to Alexander Wiley, February 1, 1951, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 2, Folder 18, ADAH. Jarman's appointment to the position of ambassador has often been cited as evidence of the low importance the U.S. placed on its relationship with Australia. Jarman was considered by many to be a party hack who had begged President Truman for the position in order to earn an income.

certainly a change but it hid the fact that certain fundamental differences between the two

sides remained.

The temptation exists to argue that Australia, in its continuing search for security,

simply bound itself to the U.S. forfeiting its independence of action in the international

arena. Many would agree with Pete Jarman's estimation that "it is natural for a long

friendship to have existed between us, even if no war had occurred."[8] This is a highly

oversimplified reading of U.S. and Australian relations and discounts the continued

struggles that arose between the two nations as Australia struggled to find its own voice

in its relationship with the United States. It became easy for Americans to be seduced by

the speeches of men such as John Bostock, the president of the Australian – American

Association, who identified Americans as "kith and kin, our cousins in blood and natural

affinity and in usage of the fruits of the good earth," or in the writings of Australian

newspaperman Sir Lloyd Dumas who informed Sir Percy Spender that he had "never

come across any signs of anti-Australian feeling" in the United States.[9]

Points of disagreement still existed between the two parties, a number of which

were based on continued Australian anxiety over exactly how much say the United States

had in Pacific affairs as well as concern over the loss of market revenue to American

businesses. Australians wanted the U.S. to realize that they were "not content to be hair

on the tail of the dog. They felt they, at least, should be part of the hide of the dog

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[8] "An Ambassador Looks At . . . Liaison With America" by Pete Jarman, *The Journal of Industry*, Vol. 20, p. 29, October 1952, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 2, folder 27, ADAH. The war Jarman references here is World War II.
[9] Address by John Bostock to the Australian – American Association, May 3, 1951, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 2, Folder 16, ADAH; Sir Lloyd Dumas to Sir Percy Spender, April 12, 1951, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 1, Folder 3, NLA.

itself."[10] From the United States' perspective, Australia was certainly growing in importance but there was still a tendency to not recognize the growing rift between the Australian and British governments.

A major problem of the post war period was the planning of major policy issues with Great Britain, who then filtered the information to the other British Commonwealth nations. This continued to cause headaches for Washington during the Korean War. American officials often found themselves in a conundrum where they initiated talks with the British on a confidential matter only to discover that the British passed the information along to other countries like Australia. Two possible explanations exist for this phenomenon. First, it is possible that the Americans did not fully understand the workings of British Commonwealth relations, especially in defense planning. What the Americans thought to be information of value only to the British, the British thought to be of value to the whole of the British Commonwealth and hence would pass it along. The second possible explanation is that the British simply did not understand that the United States wanted to deal directly with the British Commonwealth countries only on issues that pertained directly to them. Dean Acheson made this point very clear to Lord Hastings Ismay, the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. Acheson chided Ismay for passing along information the U.S. believed to be confidential and pointed out that "we had enough difficult points without adding the wholly unnecessary one of prestige. They [the British Commonwealth governments] resented deeply having

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[10] Memorandum of Conversation Between Robert Menzies and Dean Acheson, May 19, 1952, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 70, Truman Library.

to deal with us through London."[11] This problem had been a longstanding one in U.S. – Australian relations and would not be fully solved until 1967 with the British withdrawal of forces from east of the Suez.

Continuing economic difficulties between the United States and Australia hounded the relationship during the period as well. Much of the rancor centered on the debate in Australia over how much reliance should be placed on U.S. investment to help expand Australian industry. Proponents argued that Australia lacked the resources to fund any major expansion of the Australian economy and thus foreign investment was necessary, particularly American investment. Opponents maintained that allowing American capital into Australia would give the U.S. too much leverage over the Australian economy and government. The pro-labor newspaper *Queensland Guardian* remarked that the Menzies government had become so beholden to American economic interests that "it doesn't see how it can do anything but agree."[12]

Another point of contention was over the effect of American military purchases on the international wool market. At the onset of the Korean War the American government made it known that it would seek to purchase large amounts of both raw and refined wool in order to meet the clothing needs for the rapidly expanding forces called up to meet the threat on the Korean Peninsula. This pushed wool prices to twice their pre-war levels and touched off a speculative frenzy in Australia, where wool still maintained its place as the prime export of the nation. Australian framers began to turn croplands into

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[11] Memorandum of Conversation Between Harry Truman and Winston Churchill, January 5, 1952, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 69, Truman Library.
[12] "U.S.A. Moving In To Loot Our North," *Queensland Guardian*, August 27, 1952, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 3, Folder 10, ADAH.

grazing lands for sheep in order to meet the perceived demands. However, by March 1951 it was apparent that American needs were far below the high levels that had been announced in the summer of 1950. This caused the price of wool to collapse and Australian farmers were left with an oversupply of wool that would depress prices for several seasons.[13] The Australian populace quickly blamed the United States for the collapse of the wool market.[14]

Events like these helped make it more difficult for Menzies and his government to make a strong argument for increased American investment. The reality of the situation was that Australia badly needed American capital investment inside of their nation. The postwar dollar gap between the two countries had been widening at an alarming rate and the Menzies government came to see this as one of the most pressing economic problems facing Australia. The topic of increased American capital flow to Australia was an important issue for Menzies during his first visit to the United States in July 1950. He met with Dean Acheson to discuss American support for Australia's efforts to secure a loan from the International Bank to fund internal improvement projects.[15] The Truman administration was certainly sympathetic to the Menzies government's plight. President Truman concluded that American policy towards countries like Australia should be to help them "achieve sound economic growth without the necessity for special financial aid."[16] The reality was, however, that continued resistance from some corners of

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[13] World Bank Appraisement of Australia, p. 2, July 1952, Pete Jarman Paper, Box 3, Folder 29, ADAH.
[14] For a comprehensive discussion of the post – World War II wool issue see A. Imtiaz Hussain, *Politics of Compensation: Truman, the Wool Bill of 1947, and the Shaping of Postwar U.S. Trade Policy* (New York, 1993).
[15] Memorandum of Conversation Between Robert Menzies and Dean Acheson, July 28, 1950, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 67, Truman Library.
[16] Harry Truman to Gordon Gray, March 31, 1950, OF 426N, Truman Library.

Australian society and politics as well the American government's inability to regulate overseas investment by American companies led to a continued dollar gap throughout the period of the Korean War.

American – Australian relations were also troubled by an increased awareness of racial issues. The Truman administration showed itself more amenable to openly confronting issues of race in the US than had been the Roosevelt administration. Particularly, the Truman administration and some portions of the American public became more critical of the treatment of non-whites in South Africa. These points should not imply that issues of race no longer resided at the center of American life. The late 1940s and early 1950s brought about openly aggressive claims from certain segments of American society concerning the superiority of whites over non-whites. In fact, Australian leaders noted that if the issue of white and black relations in the U.S. was brought up, Americans tended to change the topic of conversation.[17] Even so, these debates greatly heightened Australian fears about the future of the White Australia policy.

Australian leaders were particularly concerned that the White Australia policy would be brought before the United Nations where Australia would be castigated by the numerous non-white countries of the world. Sir Richard Casey, serving as the Australian Minister for External Affairs, revealed in his personal diary that this issue was almost constantly at the forefront of his mind. Casey believed that the apartheid program of South Africa revealed not the evils of racial discrimination but rather "an argument in itself against two or more races of different origins trying to live together in the same

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[17] Richard Casey Personal Diary, December 19, 1951, Casey Family Papers, MS 6150, NLA.

country – but this argument is likely, in this congregation of nationalities and races, to be swamped by the racial discrimination argument."[18] Australian support for American policies in the Pacific and Asia as well as prompt help in stemming the tide of the North Korean advance in 1950 helped to ensure that Australia's immigration policy did not receive the same scrutiny as did apartheid. The Australian government recognized that playing the role of the loyal partner in the American anti-communist crusade assured that the White Australia policy remained inviolate.

The American – Australian alliance benefited from the rising fears of communism that engulfed the Western nations starting in the late 1940s. Communism, tinged by a continued insistence on seeing the world in racial terms, proved to be the key ideological idea that finally securely bound both parties together in both a formal and informal alliance. During the years of the Korean War, American and Australian relations became dominated by a general fear of the growth of communism, specific concerns over Red China and the Korean War itself, which produced two subsidiary issues: ANZUS (Australia – New Zealand – United States Tripartite Agreement) and the Treaty of San Francisco which established a formal peace treaty with Japan and its opponents in World War II.

General American fears concerning communism simply did not appear in 1945. An examination of American history back to the 1880s and 1890s reveals a longstanding

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[18] Richard Casey Personal Diary, November 5, 1952, Casey Family Papers, MS 6150, NLA. Some works to consult on the intersection of race, the United Nations and the U.S. include Hugh Tinker, *Race, Conflict and the International Order* (New York, 1977), Ozdemir Ozgur, *Apartheid, the United Nations & Peaceful Change in South Africa* (Dobbs Ferry, NY, 1982), Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights 1944 – 1955* (New York, 2003) and Andrew DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Civil Rights Ambassador* (Wilmington, DE, 2003).

American distaste for what was considered the radical or anarchist principles of communism and socialism. The first Red Scare of 1919 – 1920 established a model for what would become the communist hysteria of the late 1940s and 1950s.[19] In a radio address to the nation on April 11, 1950, President Truman warned his fellow countrymen that "the communists in the Kremlin are engaged in a monstrous conspiracy to stamp out freedom all over the world. If they were to succeed, the United States would be numbered among their principal victims."[20] Because of this finding reliable allies abroad to blunt the growth of communism became a key preoccupation for the United States. American foreign policy in the late 1940s established a general litmus test by which allied nations were judged. Very simply, the more anti-communistic a nation was, the greater the level of support it received from the United States. An example of this approach can be found in the American relationship with Iran in the 1950s. In speaking before the United States Senate, Prime Minister Robert Menzies signaled Australian acceptance of this litmus test by telling the assembled senators that "it is concerted defense that is needed against concerted aggression; that we must think together, we must work together, we must so far as possible plan together."[21]

Australia also was deeply troubled by the spread of communism into Southeast Asia. As British and British Commonwealth forces fought against communist rebels in Malay starting in 1948, Australian officials began to note the possible direct threat

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[19] See Robert Feuerlicht, *America's Reign of Terror: World War I, the Red Scare, and the Palmer Raids* (New York, 1971), H.W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York, 1993), Regin Schmidt, *Red Scare: The FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States, 1919 – 1943* (Copenhagen, 2000) and Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth Century America* (New York, 2003).
[20] Transcript of Radio Address by Harry Truman, April 11, 1950, OF 544, Truman Library.
[21] Address by Robert Menzies to United States Senate, August 1, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/7/3/1 Part 1, NAA.

communism posed to Australia. In fact the use of Australian forces against communist

insurgencies in Southeast Asia became one of the five major ways in which Australia

sought to enhance its security in the Cold War period.[22] The Australian government made

its views on the spread of communism well known, especially to Washington. In a set of

background notes to U.S. journalists, the Australian Department of External Affairs noted

if Southeast Asia fell then Indonesia and possibly even New Guinea might fall as well.

This would place Australia "under a rather hostile umbrella."[23] Prime Minister Robert

Menzies expressed a similar line of thinking in a personal meeting with Secretary of State

Dean Acheson in 1952. Menzies pointed out that for Australia, holding Southeast Asia

was key. If the Western powers failed then this would bring "Asian Communist forces to

the very doorsteps of Australia."[24]

It is worth noting here Menzies's qualification of the communists as Asian. This

is revealing in that it demonstrates that a strong racial element persisted in the Australian

mindset. Traditional Australian fears about Japan after the end of the war in the Pacific

were easily transferred to the whole of Asia after 1950. The same fears that Menzies

articulated to Acheson bear a striking resemblance to the fearful language used by Prime

Minister John Curtin and others during 1941 – 1942. This phenomenon was certainly not

restricted to Australia alone. American policymakers and the American public also saw in

the rise of communism in Asia the renewed threat of the "Yellow Horde." An

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[22] O' Neil, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol I*, xvi. The other four included collective security, a military alliance with the U.S., retaining as much control as possible over future Japanese rearmament and a strengthening of the Western position in the Middle East.

[23] "Background Talk to U.S. Reporters", May 20, 1952, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 2, NAA.

[24] Memorandum of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and Robert Menzies, May 19, 1952, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 70, Truman Library.

examination of the personal papers of General George Patton reveals how, in the

immediate aftermath of the war, Soviet forces, and hence communism, became connected

with race. In a letter to his wife Beatrice on May 13, 1945, Patton wrote that the Soviets

"are a scurvy race and simply savages."[25] In a later letter dated July 21, 1945, Patton

lamented that "We have destroyed what could have been a good race [the Germans] and

we [are] about to replace them with Mongolian savages. And all of Europe will be

communist."[26] Secretary of Defense George Marshall received a letter from a private

citizen named Kernan Robinson that touched on this subject. Robinson's letter

highlighted the racial aspect that communism in Asia had brought back into focus for

Americans. He stated:

> Personally, as a long time resident of the Pacific Coast, I am strongly of the
> opinion that the old talk of the "Yellow Peril" is as new and pressing a subject as
> it has ever been. Viewing these matters in their deeper light, to-wit: As problems
> of almost physical nature, there can be little question that the loss of China to
> Russia, complete or not complete as it may be, turns the faces of the hordes of that
> vast Asiatic nation to the Western Hemisphere.[27]

The reoccurring use of the phrase "Asiatic" to describe communists in Asia reveals that

both parties believed that some racial characteristic or trait made the people of nations

such as China or Malaya or Indonesia more susceptible to the encroachments of

communism.

Discourse on the connection between race and communism also appeared in the

public forums of newspapers. A prime example of this is found in an article from *The

Washington Post* that ran just after the start of the Korean War. The article makes explicit

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[25] Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers 1940 – 1945* (New York: De Capo Press, 1996), 713.
[26] Ibid., 731.
[27] Kernan Robinson to George C. Marshall, September 18, 1950, OF 544, Truman Library.

use of racial terminology and seeks to place the Soviet Union on the same level as the nations of Asia, an implicit denigration of the U.S.S.R. "Most Asiatics are woefully ignorant of political consciousness," the article stated, "Soviet Russia is pictured as a half – Asiatic nation whose sole interest in the struggles of Koreans and Chinese is to see that they are given a fair opportunity for political advancement. Stalin, say the Red propagandists, wants Asia for the Asiatics. What they fail to add is that Stalin has often stated that he, too, is an Asiatic."[28] The article certainly is intended to point out that the altruism of Soviet involvement in Asia had a self-serving end. But even this point is reminiscent of American perceptions of Asian races as untrustworthy or sneaky. The end effect is to tie the Soviet Union, and hence communism as a whole, to the racial parodies of Asians that proved both understandable and comforting to Americans and Australians.

Another point that must be raised when discussing American and Australian reactions to the general growth of communism in Asia was how poorly both nations managed to read communist movements in the region. Neither the U.S. nor Australia appeared willing to view movements such as Ho Chi Minh's fight against the French in Vietnam as being truly nationalist movements. Communism became, for the Western world, a monolithic structure without variation and controlled directly by the Soviet Union. This view would blind the U.S. and Australia to the subtle nuances of communism in Asia and certainly contributed greatly to the outbreak of conflict between the West and pro-communist forces in the region.[29]

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[28] "Korean Reds Using Wartime Jap Propaganda Line," *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5/1/1 Part 1, NAA.
[29] An excellent discussion of the relationship between Ho Chi Minh and the United States which demonstrates how American anticommunist ideology curtailed any possibility of working with the

Secretary of State Dean Acheson voiced this opinion in a letter to Clarence

Moulette, whose son was serving with the Marines in Korea. Acheson maintained that it

was the Kremlin who directly controlled events in Korea and that this had contributed to

the denial of the Korean people's natural right to self-development.[30] It is difficult to

judge if Australian perceptions on the solidarity of the communist movement were

influenced by estimations coming out of Washington or were those ideas truly believed in

Canberra. It is certainly clear from an examination of the writings of government leaders

that the communist threat to Southeast Asia was under the guidance of the Soviet Union.

In a speech before the Australian Senate, Prime Minister Menzies concluded that the

current Cold War mentality that gripped the globe had been perfected in Moscow as an

effort to "prevent or impair defense preparations in the democracies."[31] In an undated

essay concerning the fight to dissolve the Communist Party of Australia, Menzies

maintained this view. He wrote that communism the world over was the same and its

primary means of growth was through the "fifth column, small in numbers, but led and

directed by men many of whom have actually been highly trained in the Soviet Union

itself."[32] Menzies's point does have some validity. Men such as Ho Chi Minh and Kim Il

Sung had indeed spent time in the Soviet Union and had certainly received ideological

training there. However, by simply seeing these men as stooges of Stalin, Menzies and

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Vietnamese communists can be found in Dixie Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War Against Japan* (Lawrence, KS, 2006), 300 – 320. Bartholomew-Feis makes note of how American fears over French threats to forge a stronger relationship with the Soviet Union contributed to the American decision to support the reestablishment of French colonial rule in Vietnam.

[30] Dean Acheson to Clarence Moulette, February 23, 1951, John B. Moulette Papers, Box 1, Truman Library. Moulette had initiated the conversation with Acheson in a letter asking for justification of the American war effort in Korea that by early 1951 had become a bloody stalemate.

[31] Address by Robert Menzies to Australian Senate, April 27, 1950, Sir Robert Menzies Papers, MS 4936, Box 436, Folder 4, NLA.

[32] "Constitution Alteration," undated, Sir Robert Menzies Papers, MS 4936, Box 437, Folder 15, NLA.

others like him in both Australia and the United States unknowingly blinded themselves to the varied nuances of the international communist system that they faced.

For the average American or Australian events such as the Korean War actually had little effect on their day to day to day lives, especially since the governments of both nations worked hard to insulate their respective publics from the war as much as possible.[33] This, however, did not stop communism from being a public worry. Fears of communist infiltrations in high government offices as well as fears about fifth columnists within communities were reflected in the Red hysteria of the late 1940s and 1950s. American fears were heightened by events such as the Alger Hiss trial in 1948, the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1951 and the supposed discovery of communist agents within the State Department by Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1950. Similar fears were present in Australia and had been used as a powerful political tool by Robert Menzies during the general election of 1949 that saw the ouster of the Labor Party. The issue of communism within Australia was of particular concern for both Menzies and the American government because American concerns over the trustworthiness of the Australian government had led to the decision to restrict the flow of sensitive military information to Canberra.

Menzies made the issue of communism a centerpiece of his electoral platform in 1949. The Communist Part of Australia (CPA) had long been a target of the Australian government. Even during World War II with a more sympathetic Labor government in control, the CPA had been declared illegal due to its unwillingness to support the British

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[33] This point is raised by Adrian Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (New York, 2007).

Commonwealth war effort between 1939 and August 1941 on orders from the Soviet Union.[34] American officials feared that the potential threat of communism was not fully appreciated by the Australians or that they simply turned a blind eye to it. In a letter to American Senator Alexander Wiley, Ambassador Pete Jarman confided that "the average man in Australia has not awakened to the danger which confronts the world and particularly this part of it."[35] American journalist Esther Van Wagoner Tuffy commented on the same issue in a radio interview broadcast in Australia and New Zealand. When asked about what Australians saw as an American overreaction to the issue of communism, Van Wagoner Tuffy replied:

> In the kindest and most gentle criticism I have been told we [Americans] are hysterical about communism. McCarthyism is being cited to prove it. I am willing to agree that we are a little hysterical about communism in the United States … but let me add I think this part of the world is a little too sanguine … Se we can learn from each other. We can become less emotional in our fears and do better in the U.S. and perhaps you can become more alert.[36]

The Menzies government interpreted statements such as these that the U.S. still was not completely convinced that internal communism did not pose a threat to Australian security. In order to demonstrate that Australia was worthy of being a trusted partner in the fight against world communism, Menzies and the Liberal Party took the fight against internal communists to a new level.

In 1951, Menzies introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill that said the CPA was to be declared an unlawful organization and that the party's property could be seized and disposed of. Any other organizations that were suspected of being affiliated

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[34] Darian – Smith, *On the Home Front*, 28.
[35] Pete Jarman to Alexander Wiley, February 1, 1951, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 2, Folder 18, ADAH.
[36] Radio Address by Esther Van Wagoner Tuffy on New Zealand Broadcasting Services, October 11, 1953, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # 532/13/1, NAA.

with the CPA would also be dissolved. Anyone who carried on the work of the party after it was declared illegal was to be jailed for five years. In addition, as soon as someone was declared to be a communist, they were to be suspended from their job if it were in the federal government, the defense forces, or in the unions. In the words of the bill, a communist was a person who supports or advocates the objectives, policies, teachings, principles or practices of communism, as expounded by Marx and Lenin.[37]

The introduction of the dissolution bill had been a major campaign pledge of Menzies in 1949 but he moved slowly in introducing it due to fears that it would cost the Liberal Party support among the unions and possibly cause disorganization in Australian industry. Menzies, in a speech designed to garner support for the Communist Dissolution Bill, chided listeners that internal communism was not simply something that could be ignored. He argued that "to deal with the Australian Communist as if he were an offending motor-car driver, and with exactly the same legal procedures, would not only be unreal, but suicidal."[38] Menzies received strong support from the Australian public, especially from rural areas and smaller towns. He was flooded with letters in support of the dissolution bill from across Australia. One citizen thanked Menzies for his actions because she "wondered what kind of society our children would inherit; if they would ever know freedom."[39] Another letter pointed out that for most Australians communism was something they only heard about but rarely saw but that every time the writer visited

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[37] Robert Menzies, *Communist Party Dissolution Bill 1950: Second Reading Speech by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies, K.C., M.P* (Sydney: Publicity Press, 1950), 1 – 31.
[38] "Special Notes by the Prime Minister on the Communist Dissolution Bill 1950", undated, Sir Robert Menzies Papers, MS 4936, Box 436, Folder 1, NLA.
[39] E.A. Stevens to Robert Menzies, May 1, 1950, Sir Robert Menzies Papers, MS 4936, Box 41, Folder 40, NLA.

Melbourne she could see it in the "coal and tram strikes and everything decent thrown in to confusion."[40]

Menzies also had a personal political objective in mind with the dissolution bill. The Labor Party had maintained control of the upper house of the Australian Parliament in the 1949 election. Menzies hoped that the Labor Party would defeat the dissolution bill that would have allowed him to call for a new general election in which he was confident his Liberal Party would seize control of the Australian Senate. The Labor Party refused to cooperate though and allowed the bill to pass through the Senate. Eventually it was brought before the Australian High Court where it was ruled unconstitutional. However, Menzies's fight for the bill as well as the introduction of a new governmental security service designed to eliminate potential leaks of secret information assured Washington that Australia, under Menzies, was a trustworthy partner in the fight against international communism.

Towering above these general issues related to communism was the issue of China. The victory of communist forces in 1949 provided a sobering wakeup call not only for officials in Washington but in Canberra as well. Both nations came to be fixated with Communist China. At the root of this fixation were two very different rationales. For the Americans, China had long held a special place in the minds of American foreign policy makers dating back to the mid nineteenth century. This perceived special relationship between China and the U.S. had convinced Americans that China was key to American interests in East Asia. There was also a strong cultural attraction to China.

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[40] Doreen Gard to Robert Menzies, April 27, 1950, Sir Robert Menzies Papers, MS 4936, Box 41, Folder 40, NLA.

American missionary work stretched back to the early nineteenth century and many Americans of the late 1940s and early 1950s were familiar with the works of authors such as Pearl S. Buck that portrayed China in an exceptionally positive light.[41] For Australians, China loomed in the imagination as home to an enormous group of non-whites who, after the defeat of Japan, represented the greatest threat to the racial homogeneity of their island nation. Even though both nations came at the issue of China's loss to the communist camp from differing viewpoints, both countries found common ground in dealing with the new China that would help to again bind both the United States and Australia together.

The first issue that faced the Western powers was the question of recognition. The United States, despite internal debate, adopted a course of non-recognition of the new communist regime in Beijing, instead continuing to recognize the defeated Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek on the island of Formosa (modern day Taiwan) as the legitimate leader of the whole of China. Washington hoped that their western allies, especially Great Britain and the other British Commonwealth nations, would adopt a similar posture. The American decision was certainly driven by an ideological conviction stemming from a longstanding antipathy towards communist nations. Since the 1917 Russian Revolution, the American government had chosen non-recognition of communist regimes as a standard response, arguing, as Woodrow Wilson did in 1918, that the communist

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[41] See George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 330 – 334. See also Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938 – 1945* (New York, 1979), Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York, 1983), Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China and the Soviet Union, 1948 – 1972* (Stanford, 1990) and James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China from Nixon to Clinton* (New York, 1999).

governments that came to power through violent revolution were illegitimate, and they did not represent the will of the whole of the people. Because of this, then, they could not be considered legitimate governments.[42]

The United States did not recognize that the decision facing the British government was not as black and white. While the British certainly did not wish to antagonize their American allies and jeopardize the crucial economic lifeline that the U.S. had extended to Britain and Western Europe in 1947 with the Marshall Plan, they had to balance the fact that antagonizing the new communist Chinese government could have dire consequences for British holdings in the Far East, especially Hong Kong. Also British merchants still had lucrative trade interests in Chinese markets and London feared that China would block access to those markets. The British finally decided that recognition of the government of Mao Zedong represented the only way to ensure the safety of their interests in China and East Asia and accordingly established diplomatic relations in January 1950.

Canberra thus found itself between two divergent views on the issue of recognition. Great Britain had laid down the British Commonwealth policy favoring recognition but the Americans made their displeasure clear over what was viewed a breach of Western solidarity against the communist threat. The Australians certainly thought that the stark choice that the Americans had presented their allies did not recognize the potential power of China in Asian affairs or the potential threat China

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[42] See Melvyn Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917 – 1953* (New York, 1994).

represented to nations in the region.[43] Despite these reservations, Menzies's government, with its emphasis on a strong security relationship with Washington, chose to follow the American lead and adopt a position of non-recognition. A State Department report prepared for President Truman upon his first meeting with Prime Minister Menzies highlighted that "both the anti-communist attitude of the Menzies government and the desire to achieve a closer cooperation with the United States in the Far East explains this stand."[44]

The Australian decision was not without its critics. British authorities viewed the Australian decision as further proof of the tightening bond between the Americans and Australians and this helped to place a further strain on inter-British Commonwealth relations. Menzies's decision was viewed by domestic opponents as yet another sacrifice of Australian sovereignty to American interests in the hopes of fetching some consolation in the form of a formal security arrangement between the two powers. Herbert Evatt, the former Minister for External Affairs and leader of the Labor opposition, pointed out that Australia's decision to not recognize Communist China ran counter to almost the whole of the British Commonwealth. He went on to argue, "I think that it will be found in the long run, that the view taken by the governments of British Commonwealth countries, other than the Australian Government and the New Zealand Government, is the wiser."[45] These reactions appear to be without consideration of the question of why Australia

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[43] In his personal diary Australian Minister for External Affairs Richard Casey recognized that while the Korean War raged the issue of recognition had to be put aside "but that at some appropriate time after the fighting ended, recognition of Communist China and her admission to the United Nations seemed a necessary and logical step," in Millar, ed., *Australian Foreign Minister*, 63.

[44] Background Memorandum on Visit to the United States of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, p. 9, OF 48d, Folder 2, Truman Library.

[45] Address by Herbert Evatt to Australian House of Representatives, November 28, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/7/3/1 Part 1, NAA.

chose to follow the American position and ignore the British one. The primary underlying

rationale for Menzies and his government was the security that a close relationship with

the U.S. offered. This was something which the old imperial relationship with Great

Britain could no longer present. They also dismissed very real fears the Australian

government held about a communist China expanding in the Pacific region.

Many of these Australian fears, according to T.B. Millar, had been based

primarily on fears of what Communist China might do rather than on what they actually

had done by 1949. This changed with the Chinese entrance into the Korean War in

October 1950. For Australia, this action provided a justification for their fears. The

Australian government was shocked by reports of mistreatment of Australian prisoners of

war as well as an orchestrated campaign to galvanize support of Australian communists

against the Menzies government.[46] In a letter to the Department of External Affairs,

Walter Crocker, the Australian High Commissioner in India, had attempted to forewarn

Canberra about the new regime in Beijing. He stated, "I myself believe that Mao Tse-

Tung's [sic] China will in the outcome subordinate its communism to its nationalist, one

might also say racial, expansionism."[47] It was, according to Crocker, only natural for

people like the Chinese, just as it had been for the Japanese, to seek to expand their

power and holdings in the region. This fear drove Australia to align itself so closely with

American policy. Memories of 1941 certainly were in the minds of leaders in Canberra in

October 1950. The potential threat of a new Asian power sweeping down from the north

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[46] Millar, *Australia in Peace and War*, 285; Henry S. Albinski, *Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1964), 7, 24.
[47] Walter Crocker to Department of External Affairs, January 30, 1951, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5 Part 8, NAA.

to overthrow White Australia would have overshadowed almost all other concerns for Australian officials as well as the public. Because of this, Australia turned again to the United States, just as it had done in 1941, believing that only the U.S. could provide adequate security from the new racial threat to the north.

During World War II, American officials had not considered the Korean peninsula to be of any great significant strategic or tactical importance to the defeat of Japan. Soviet entrance into the Pacific theatre, as had been promised at Yalta, served to change this thinking. The new Truman administration proved to be less inclined to allow the Soviet Union to spread its sphere of influence any further into East Asia. This was driven mostly by American concerns over the future of the Japanese occupation. The U.S. hoped to prevent communist influences from spreading to Japan because of the American hope to reintegrate Japan into the world system as a pro-western democratic nation. In September of 1945, American forces were hastily dispatched to the peninsula south of the 38th parallel in order to receive the surrender of Japanese forces there.[48]

At the Potsdam Conference, the Big Three reached a decision to unilaterally divide Korea along the line of the 38th parallel, in direct contradiction to the decision that had been reached at the Cairo Conference in 1943 where it had been decided that Korean independence would be restored after the war. Growing tension over the division of Europe led many within the American political and military structure to believe that the Soviets had little intention of meeting the pledges made at Potsdam. The situation in

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[48] Australian concerns over Korea before the late 1940s were minimal. The main avenue for interaction between the two states had been the work of Australian missionaries. In 1947 Australia was selected as one of the members of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) which was established to negotiate the merging of the Soviet and American zones of occupation. See O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 1953 Vol. I*, 4 – 20.

Korea was hardened further by the imposition of an artificial deadline, March 31, 1948,

imposed by the United Nations to hold national elections. The U.S. used this as an

opportunity to convene elections that were boycotted by the Soviet Union. This resulted

in the election of a conservative, anti-communist government in the south under the

leadership of 70 year-old Syngman Rhee, an ardent nationalist but one who believed in

the reunification of Korea under his vision only. In the Soviet zone of occupation, a new

pro-communist government headed by Kim Il-Sung, a young communist insurgent who

had gained a reputation fighting alongside Mao Zedong in China against the Japanese

during World War II, came into existence to challenge the pro-western regime to the

south. Korea had become, for all intents and purposes, an Asian Germany.[49]

Between the years 1948 and 1950 sporadic fighting along the border between the

two states was a constant fact of life. American officials began to develop a concern over

the possibility that the U.S. would be dragged into a war by the provocative actions of

Rhee. To this end the Truman administration decided to provide no heavy military

material to the South Korean government and in 1949 President Truman ordered the

removal of all U.S. occupation forces from South Korea. The growing tension over

Europe drew American attention away from Asia. In fact, in a much publicized speech in

January 1950, American Secretary of State Dean Acheson famously refrained from

listing Korea as a region integral to American security planning. These two events, along

with the seeming American unwillingness to support Chiang Kai-Shek's collapse in

China in 1949, led Kim during the winter and early spring of 1950 to push for Soviet

acquiescence in an invasion of the south. Soviet Premier Josef Stalin gave a qualified

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[49] Smith, *American Diplomacy During the Second World War*, 175.

agreement but warned Kim that the Soviet Union would not openly help North Korea if the invasion went awry.[50]

The North Korean invasion began on the early morning of June 25, 1950 when 231,000 members of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th parallel supported by heavy artillery, tanks and air power. The lightly armed South Korean defense forces proved to be no match and were quickly overrun. The North Korean invasion caught many within the Truman administration off guard but they responded with surprising speed. Just a few hours after the invasion, the American delegation to the United Nations Security Council secured Council approval of a resolution denouncing the North Korean invasion and asking for U.N. member nations to provide assistance to the South Koreans. Only the absence of the Soviet delegation, which had been boycotting Security Council meetings over the refusal to seat the new Communist Chinese regime as the legitimate government of China, made the passage of the resolution possible. On June 27, 1950, Truman ordered American ground, air and naval forces into battle to help stem the tide of the North Korean onslaught but by the late summer of 1950, American and South Korean forces were trapped within a small perimeter around the southern port of Pusan.

The American decision to counter the North Korean invasion directly was almost certainly driven by the need to "demonstrate to the Soviet Union as well as to America's

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[50] For literature on the Soviet involvements in Korea and the Sino – Soviet alliance in Korea see David Allen Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: US Policy Against the Sino – Soviet Alliance, 1949 – 1955* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1986), Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking in the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), Sergei Goncharov, John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, 1993), William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, 1995) and Alan Levine, *Stalin's Last War: Korea and the Approach to World War III* (Jefferson, NC, 2005).

allies that the United State would respond decisively to any Communist challenge."[51] The reaction of American allies was of great importance to the Truman administration. Many in Washington were convinced that the North Korean invasion had been undertaken at the behest of Moscow and was simply a distraction for the opening of a general offensive in Europe. The U.S. could ill afford to have the whole of its attention focused on Asia at this time and also wanted to the use the war in Korea as a way to test the effectiveness of the United Nations as a peacekeeping entity.

While Australia was caught equally off guard by the North Korean invasion, the reaction in Canberra was milder than in Washington. This is explained by the fact that the early Cold War had brought a plethora of security issues to Australia's attention. The burgeoning communist insurgency in Malaya, growing threats to British Commonwealth interests in the Middle East, the continued struggle to conclude a formal peace with Japan and the pursuit of a formal security alliance with the U.S. all served to divide Australia's attention in 1950.[52] Elements within the Menzies government argued that the outbreak of war gave Australia an opportunity to deal with at least some of the pressing security issues facing the nation. Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender recognized the need for Australia to make some sort of commitment to the American call for aid. He argued that not to do so could jeopardize Australian – American relations and he pointed to the criticism by the Americans of the British government who had taken a cautious approach

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[51] Rosemary Foot, "Making Known the Unknown War: Policy Analysis of the Korean War Since the Early 1980s," in Hogan, ed., *American in the World*, 276.
[52] Foot, "Making Known the Unknown War," in Hogan, ed., *America in the World*, 283.

to committing themselves to the war. Australia, Spender warned, could ill-afford to be too closely identified with London at the time.[53]

A confidential report prepared for the Prime Minister's office highlighted this issue further. The British government intimated to the Australians British caution "about becoming too involved in a situation which might develop beyond the boundaries of Korea. In these circumstances there is a strong presumption that, should the Americans require some support for their unilateral action, they will turn to Australia."[54] A separate report prepared by the Department of External Affairs highlighted the importance of responding to the Korean crisis in light of Australia's commitment to the United Nations. As a member Australia should at least make "a token contribution to the efforts being made."[55] It was clear that Australia would benefit from answering the American call for aid in Korea but the question of the degree of aid was one that was more difficult to answer. The Australians, much like the Americans, had embarked on a demobilization program in the postwar period and had focused their efforts on increasing the domestic population through immigration from Europe as well as supporting the British fight against communist insurgents in Malaya.

It was decided that the Australian 77th Fighter Squadron, stationed in Japan as part of the skeletal BCOF, as well as vessels of the Royal Australian Navy would be placed at the disposal of the United Nations command. The 77th Fight Squadron saw almost immediate action in providing ground support for retreating American and South Korean

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[53] O'Neil, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53*, 68.
[54] "American Action in Korea," June 28, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5 Part 1, NAA.
[55] Department of External Affairs Dispatch No. 14/50, June 30, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5 Part 1, NAA.

forces in July 1950. This initial offering by the Australian government was met with gratitude by officials in Washington. A cable from the Department of External Affairs to the Australian embassy in Washington related that the State Department was genuinely gratified with the promptness of the Australian response and that there was a heightened sense of Australia's worth as an ally within the State Department.[56] Menzies's government quickly discovered, however, that the American demand for military support in Korea would not be satisfied by a squadron of Mustang fighters or a few naval cruisers. American military planners pressed for the commitment of ground forces from the other United Nations members, Australia among them. The Australians faced a distinct quandary, namely how to balance the demands of the United States with their own security plans.

Robert Menzies used his appearance before the U.S. House of Representatives to address this issue head on. His speech articulated an Australian position that sought to please all parties while offending none. He told the assembled American lawmakers:

> We, as you know, in Australia are not rich in manpower. We feel that our people when they go to war are first class fighters. But we are not rich in manpower. We are not rich in standing armies or immediately available resources … As far as ground forces are concerned, I think I can say this to you: our capacity is limited. We have no substantial standing army, and troops for service abroad must therefore, in the normal course, be specially enlisted, trained and equipped. But in my talks with your leaders here it has been completely agreed that the time factor is so important in Korea that a comparatively small force, speedily trained, equipped and dispatched, is better than a larger force postponed for many months.[57]

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[56] Department of External Affairs to Australian Embassy, Washington D.C., June 29, 1950, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # 539/2 Part 2, NAA.

[57] U.S. Congress, House, Australian Prime Minister Robert G, Menzies Address to the House of Representatives, 81st Congress, 2nd sess. *Congressional Record* 151, vol. 96 (August 1, 1950): 11657 – 11658. Australia would eventually provide three infantry battalions for the United Nations' effort in Korea.

It should be noted that this stance was not one that Menzies initially favored. He had

hoped to limit the Australian commitment to air and naval forces, especially since

London had indicated no willingness to provide ground troops of their own. However,

when he left for his trip to the United Kingdom and the United States in July 1950,

Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender used this opportunity to hound Arthur

Fadden, Menzies's deputy, to provide for Australian ground forces. This move was

prompted by intimations of a change of position in London. Spender wanted to avoid

being upstaged by his British counterparts and to make sure that Australia got in first to

receive the whole of American gratitude. Menzies was informed by radiogram of the

decision of the Australian cabinet shortly before he arrived in New York City. Faced with

this fait accompli, Menzies had little choice but to publicly endorse the Australian

position in Washington.

Privately, Menzies continued to gripe about the level of Australian commitment,

which he felt was limiting Australia's ability to respond to new global crises. He wrote to

Truman expressing Australia's commitment to the Korean operation but also took the

opportunity to point out "frankly that to us it would seem a serious mistake to impair, by

sending additional ground forces to Korea, our prospects of full readiness to carry out

responsibilities in the event of global war. It is impracticable to supply such additional

forces without impairing our training program and our capacity to assist as planned in the

Middle East."[58] As Robert O'Neil points out, Korea, for Menzies, remained a relatively

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[58] Robert Menzies to Harry Truman, May 15, 1951, SMOF: Korean War Files, Box 5, Truman Library.
Menzies here is referring to the Australian program of universal military training. It was felt that a large
commitment in Korea would slow the training program by not allowing the utilization of experienced
combat troops in training centers in Australia.

minor affair that could not be allowed to interfere with Australian efforts to develop its strength to meet threats elsewhere around the globe.[59] Truman responded to Menzies's arguments by pointing out that any failure in Korea would almost certainly lead to increased danger of communist aggression in the Pacific. Because of this, Truman reasoned, a maximum effort had to be made in Korea to beat back communist aggression once and for all. This clearly meant that the United States expected a continued commitment from Australian ground forces in combat.[60]

The Australian military was faced with the dilemma of how many troops it could supply and how fast. Longstanding Australian legal precedent only allowed for the use of volunteer troops outside of Australia. This hampered the push to get Australian troops on the ground quickly. It was decided that volunteers from the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) stationed in Japan as part of the BCOF would be sought. Even though the battalion was underequipped, the Australian Army put the troops through a rapid period of training and in late September 1950, the 3rd RAR landed in South Korea. It was almost immediately folded into the 27th Commonwealth Brigade under UN command and saw immediate action in helping to push North Korean forces back across the 38th parallel. In 1952 the 1st RAR was dispatched to Korea and was followed in 1952 by the 2nd RAR which generally provided reinforcements for the 1st and 3rd RAR.[61]

Australian officials continued to press the point throughout the war. In January 1952, the Australian Army requested the withdrawal of two of its three infantry battalions to return to Australia to take part in the universal training program. General Matthew

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[59] O'Neil, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53* Vol. I, 108.
[60] Harry Truman to Robert Menzies, May 29, 1951, SMOF: Korean War Files, Box 5, Truman Library.
[61] See O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol. I*, 62 – 96.

Ridgway, the commander of U.N. forces who had replaced General MacArthur in the spring of 1951, vehemently argued against any such move and requested that the State Department also not support any such maneuver by the Australians. Ridgway argued that such a move could not be undertaken during the armistice talks because of the unreliability of the Communist Chinese and North Koreans, who might seek to take advantage of a reduction in U.N. ground forces to reinitiate a ground offensive.[62]

Such episodes reveal that, even at the height of the war, Australia sought to exert its rights as an independent actor in the alliance. And while tensions were raised by the question of Australia's commitment, they never reached the same high levels that had happened during World War II. The primary reason for this was, even with concerns over Australian security interests, the Menzies government fully believed in and utilized the strident anti-communist language used by the United States. American officials observed their Australian counterparts as being fellow cold warriors, intent on defeating the spread of communism in Asia. Much of the language used by the Australian government was as much for domestic consumption as it was for international audiences, another similarity shared between the two countries.

The Argus (Melbourne) printed an ominous editorial entitled "It Can Happen Here …" that warned Australians of the valuable lesson being taught in Korea. "Australians had to realize," the editorial posited, "that they are now witnessing in aggressive Communism a movement which was as grave in its implications as the movements which preceded the last war. Korea was the perfect illustration of what could happen here if we

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[62] Dean Acheson to Robert Lovett, January 22, 1952, SMOF: Korean War Files, Box 5, Truman Library.

were not prepared."[63] The attempt to link communism in the postwar period to Nazism or

Japanese militarism was an effort to garner public support for an aggressive policy of

preventing communism from spreading further, something which the Allies had failed to

act vigorously on in World War II. The loss of Korea or any other region in Asia to

communism would have drastic consequences for the Western world in the minds of both

American and Australian officials as well as the general public.

An editorial in the *New York Times* attempted to explain exactly what the young

American men in Korea were fighting for. "One filthy, bleary-eyed boy firing a bazooka

at a Russian-built North Korean tank is defending the freedom of his country and

everything Americans hold dear as surely as if he were defending the shores of California

or Virginia against Communist hordes."[64] The idea of possible communist invasion was

one that was certainly more real for Australians than their American partners and as such

the language of containment was especially effective in providing a rationale for the

Australian support of the American position in Korea. In a broadcast on the Australian

Broadcasting Corporation in March 1951, General Edmund Herring urged Australians to

understand the simple facts of geography. Herring agreed that Korea appeared far away

on a map to the average Australian. But, he urged, "look at your maps and you will see

that Indochina is the gateway to Siam, Burma, Malaya, and so on to Sumatra, Java and

New Guinea. And we know only too vividly from the last war just what New Guinea

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[63] "It Can Happen Here …," *The Argus* (Melbourne), August 24, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/7/3/1 Part 1, NAA.

[64] "What We Fight For," *New York Times*¸ August 20, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5/1/1 Part 1, NAA.

means to Australia."[65] The reference to New Guinea again was a reminder to Australians of the fear that the nation had lived under during World War II and was a tactic often employed by the Australian government. A dispatch from the Department of External Affairs highlighted this point by drawing a comparison between Korea and the Rhineland. "As we stated before," the dispatch stated, "we feel that just as in the case of Hitler and the Rhineland, the Russian venture in Korea is a gigantic trial balloon to test Western reaction."[66] The harkening back to World War II also allowed the Americans and Australians to reintroduce another ideological factor that had proven to be central to their burgeoning relationship between 1941 and 1945: race.

The Korean War could not help but bring back memories of fighting the Japanese a mere eight years earlier. Of course, for the Americans the Japanese had become central allies in the Cold War in Asia and the U.S. had proven itself adept at quickly putting the animosity of the war behind it.[67] Australians were still not convinced that the spirit of militarism which had animated the Japanese during World War II had been completely broken by the American occupation but they, just as the Americans, quickly transferred their long standing racial fears concerning the "yellow peril" to the North Koreans and more importantly, after October 1950, to the Chinese. Stories of atrocities carried out against U.N prisoners by the Communist Chinese brought back memories of Japanese

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[65] Transcript of Broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 23, 1951, Edmund Herring Papers, Box 14, Folder 1, State Library of Victoria. Records hereafter cited as SLV. Herring had been among the most prominent Australian generals of World War II and had earned a good reputation among his American colleagues. Because of the esteem in which Herring was held, the Menzies government appointed him as head of the national military training program that sought to bolster the size of Australian military forces by providing a ready source of well-trained men.
[66] Department of External Affairs Dispatch No. 14/50, June 30, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5 Part 1, NAA.
[67] See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (/New York, 1999).

atrocities. A wounded American soldier, Jackie Brooks, recounted the story of how his

convoy was attacked by Chinese forces during the December withdrawal by U.N. forces

from North Korea. Brooks recalled that, "They'd [the Chinese] pour petrol and set it on

fire and run around the truck yelling like a bunch of wild Indians. I could see their faces

lit by the flames. All were grinning and laughing. They turned over one truck and ran

over the wounded."[68]

American and Australian papers were filled with stories similar to this throughout

late 1950 and into early 1951 as the war see-sawed back and forth between the two sides.

Atrocity reports stoked furor in both nations, leading some American lawmakers to call

for breaking off peace negotiations at Panmunjom "with the 'sub-barbarian'

communists."[69] Another interesting intersection of race and the Korean War centered on

communist propaganda that painted North Korea and Communist China as liberators of

the Asian peoples from white domination. This line of reasoning had been a prominent

part of the rationale that Japan had used during its expansion in World War II. Western

observers were quick to make note of this fact and actually used it against the

communists, arguing that it was they, and not the Western powers, who were fighting a

race war. [70]

One Australian lawmaker, Senator E.B. Maher, wrote to Percy Spender in July

1950, arguing that the war in Korea might possibly provide an outlet for future Japanese

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[68] "Wounded Set on Fire by Chinese," *Daily Telegraph*, December 4, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5/7/2 Part 1, NAA.
[69] "Atrocity Reports Anger U.S.," *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 16, 1951, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5/7/2 Part 1, NAA.
[70] "Korean Reds Using Wartime Jap Propaganda Line," *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5/1/1 Part 1, NAA.

aggression. Maher suggested that Japan be encouraged to attack Manchuria, as it had in

1931. The reason, Maher concluded, was "the Japanese population is expanding at the

rate of one million new Japs every year. If they do not spill over into Manchuria, then

inevitably they will look southwards sooner or later."[71] The latent fear of Asian

encroachment towards Australia was something that had not vanished by 1950 or even by

1952 – 53. Proposals like Maher's were discounted within government circles but

underscore a final point on the role of race in the Korean War, namely how newly

independent non-white nations of the world viewed Western actions in the war.

       Of primary concern was the reaction of India, which by 1950 under the leadership

of Jawaharlal Nehru had become the leading proponent of neutralism in the Cold War

and a leading voice for the non-aligned nations of the globe. India had offered its services

as a mediator between the U.S. and Communist China but had consistently been rebuffed

by Washington, which viewed Nehru with distrust. Initially, Indian reaction to the United

Nations response in Korea had been positive but by 1951, with the emergence of a

protracted stalemate, Indian popular opinion began to turn. Key to this was increased

reliance by American and UN forces on heavy firepower in the form of artillery and

bombing, the infamous "meat grinder" tactics developed by Matthew Ridgway. Both

American and Australian foreign policy officials noted the change in the mood of India.

A special report prepared by the Office of Intelligence Research highlighted the changes

in the Indian press's coverage of the war. The report cited claims that American and UN

tactics had "been carried out in a vengeful, terrorist spirit," and asserted that Western

powers had shown "special solicitude towards the European enemy" during World War II

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[71] E.B. Maher to Percy Spender, July 1, 1950, Series # A1838, Control # 3123/5 Part 2, NAA.

but demonstrated no such restraint in dealing with an Asian people.[72] Reactions such as

this contributed to a growing division between the Western powers and the emerging

Third World nations who would find themselves torn between the two poles of the Cold

War.[73]

The bloody fighting in Korea brought the U.S. and Australia once again into close

cooperation. The combined effort of both nations was not without contention, especially

over the strategic approach used by the U.S. However, the Korean War provided

Australia with a unique opportunity to expand its relationship with the U.S. and to

achieve a favorable outcome to two key security issues that had dominated the American

– Australian alliance since World War II: a formal peace treaty with Japan and the

signing of a formal security alliance between the two powers. Both of these issues were

intimately linked together for both countries. It would be in the search for a successful

conclusion to these issues that Australia and the United States would become inextricably

bound together for the remainder of the twentieth century.

The issue of the formal peace with Japan was something that had been broached

by the Americans prior to the Korean War but had been rebuffed by the Australian

government. The two primary reasons for the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the

Australians were that the proposed treaty contained no mechanism to limit the possible

rebirth of Japanese military aggression and did not address the issue of reparations for

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[72] "World Reactions to Korea Developments," No. CS 4.65, Office of Intelligence Research, August 31, 1950, SMOF: Korean War Files, Box 4, Truman Library.

[73] India's role in the Korean War is still an understudied area which requires further attention. A few monographs on the topic are Ran Paul Kaushik, *The Crucial Years of Non-Alignment: The USA, Korean War, and India* (New Delhi, 1972) and K.S. Thimayya, *Experiment in Neutrality* (New Delhi, 1981).

those nations who suffered because of Japanese aggression.[74] Both of these issues had to be addressed by the U.S. if any progress were to be made on the peace treaty. Initially, though, Washington felt little reason to give in to what were seen as inordinate demands by the Australian government.

Washington policymakers consistently assured their Canberra counterparts that the American-led occupation of Japan had succeeded in rooting out the spirit of militarism that had guided the Japanese war effort during World War II. This point was met with skepticism by many Australians, both in government and among the common people. Richard Casey confided to his personal diary that, "It must be remembered that the Japanese have shown themselves to be a traditionally warlike and vigorous people and it is hard to believe that this will disappear in a short time."[75] The issue of reparations was a far more delicate one. The U.S. wanted to revive the Japanese economy as quickly as possible in order to ensure the country did not fall under the sway of communist influences. Any reparations paid would detract from that and so the U.S. proved unwilling to even discuss such an issue with Japan. The Korean War however, changed all of this. American need for Australian political and military support began to outweigh their reluctance to address these issues with the Australians.

The settlement of the issue of a resurgent Japan capable of striking out against its Pacific neighbors became irrevocably linked to discussions concerning a wider general security arrangement between the U.S. and Australia. A memorandum prepared by the State Department pointed out to President Truman that, "There is a continuing strong

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[74] Casey, *Friends and Neighbors*, 56.
[75] Millar, ed., *Australian Foreign Minister*, 32.

distrust of Japan in Australia and the Treaty was not popular with the rank and file voters of any party because of the absence of restrictions on Japanese rearmaments."[76] Australian reminders about this worry were commonplace through the discussions over the ratification of the peace treaty. Percy Spender reminded Prime Minister Menzies of this during the latter's talks with President Truman in 1950. Spender pointed out that the Australian people felt "great bitterness" towards the Japanese for what were seen as their barbarous acts during World War II.[77] An editorial from *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) mocked American assurances about a new spirit of pacifism that had developed in Japan and sought to defend Australian worries about Japanese resurgence. "But is it asking too much of human nature," the editorial queried, "to expect them to assume that in five years the Japanese have become democratic and peace-loving and are now in a mood, as Mr. John Foster Dulles said recently, 'to reject militarism in all its aspects and to enter into a fellowship with those nations which genuinely seek peace through collective security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations'."[78] The seeming leap of faith that the U.S. was asking of Australia was something which seemed impossible. During the formal treaty meeting in San Francisco in 1951, the Australian delegation consistently raised this point time and again with their American counterparts. Australians believed only when Americans acknowledged that their fears were well grounded would any progress be made on the treaty.

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[76] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Luncheon for the Australian Prime Minister, the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies, undated, PSF Subject File, Foreign Affairs, Australia, Truman Library.
[77] Percy Spender to Robert Menzies, January 12, 1950, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # 539/2 Part 2, NAA.
[78] "Japanese Peace Treaty," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), July 16, 1951, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 1, Folder 5, NLA.

American officials would eventually begin to make attempts to assuage Australian

fears and to demonstrate that the United States was as keenly concerned with Australia's

security as were the Australians themselves. During a meeting with Assistant Secretary of

State for Far Eastern Affairs John Allison on December 11, 1951, Richard Casey inquired

as to why the U.S. was so sure that Japan would not pose a threat to Australia. Allison

pointed out two main reasons why the U.S. felt Australian fears were ungrounded. The

first was economic. The Japanese, Allison pointed out, worried that rearmament might

impair their ability to raise their own standard of living. The second point Allison made

was that the Japanese people were every bit as afraid of a revived militarism as were the

Australians. The dire consequences that World War II had for Japan had convinced the

vast majority of the people that their nation's military exploits in World War II had not

been worth the military punishment the nation had received.[79] The Japanese government

itself sought to ally fears about a resurgence of militarism within that country. Japanese

leaders argued that nations like Australia had little reason to fear aggression from Japan

because it was Japan itself that was most in fear of aggression by communist regimes in

China and North Korea.[80]

Other American officials also sought to calm Australian worries. In a

conversation with interim ambassador to the UN, Philip C. Jessup, General Omar

Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wanted it made clear to the Australian

government that the U.S. intended to always hold the line of Okinawa and the Philippines

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[79] Millar, ed. *Australian Foreign Minister*, 66.
[80] Reactions to Announcement of Pacific Security Arrangement, May 17, 1951, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 1, NAA.

"come hell or high water."[81] In a radio address carried over the Australian Broadcasting

Corporation, John Foster Dulles admitted that Americans perhaps had a difficult time

understanding Australia's preoccupation with a rearmed Japan but that he and other

leaders in the U.S. had come to recognize the fear that Australia had was a real one.

Australia, Dulles stated, "had felt the hot breath of Japan's war effort" and "the

possibility of another Japanese invasion seemed a reality to those who had recently

experienced that danger first hand."[82] Dulles's recognition of the importance of this issue

for the Australians led him to conclude that "Australia and New Zealand will give way if

we can find some formula for assuring them of U.S. protection in the event of attack."[83]

The formula that would emerge at the urging of the Australians was a formal defensive

alliance, something that Australia had been seeking from the U.S. since the 1930s. Only

such an agreement would make a lenient peace with Japan palatable to the Australian

people whose support was necessary for the passage of any such treaty in the Australian

parliament.[84]

But before any such agreement could move forward the thorny issue of

reparations had to be settled. The Menzies government, much like its Labor predecessor,

pushed for Australian claims to reparations payments for Australian citizens who had

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[81] Memoranda of Conversation Between Gen. Omar Bradley and Ambassador Philip C. Jessup, July 12, 1950, SMOF: Korean War Files, Box 4, Truman Library.
[82] Radio Address by John Foster Dulles, March 1, 1951, John Foster Dulles Papers, Microfilm Collection, Reel 18, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1976).
[83] John Foster Dulles to Douglas MacArthur, November 15, 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers, Microfilm Collection, Reel 16, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1976).
[84] Memorandum for the President, Subject: Luncheon for the Australian Prime Minister, The Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies, undated, PSF Subject File, Foreign Affairs, Australia, Truman Library. This point is echoed in Thomas –Durrel Young, *Australia, New Zealand, and United States Security Relations, 1951* – 1986 (Boulder, CO, 1992) and W. David McIntyre *Background to the Anzus Pact: Policy-Making, Strategy, and Diplomacy, 1945 – 55* (New York, 1995).

suffered in Japanese prison camps as well as for the destruction of Australian property by the Japanese. Ambassador Percy Spender emphasized this point in a conversation with John Foster Dulles. Spender remarked that Australia found American emphasis on the resurrection of the Japanese economy at the expense of payments to prisoner of war to be somewhat bewildering.[85] When the United States proved unwilling to accommodate the Australian demands for reparations, the Menzies government took the step of seizing Japanese assets in Australia and liquidating them. The profits from the sale of these holdings would be distributed among former prisoners of war with a small percentage being set aside to provide for Australian citizens who had also suffered at the hands of the Japanese.[86]

Actions like this caused consternation in Washington. Unlike their Australian counterparts, American officials had a first-hand understanding of how tenuous the Japanese economic recovery of the late 1940s and early 1950s was. In many ways it was an economic recovery being funded primarily by the American government. Most in Washington held that to force reparations payments from Japan would be to simply have the U.S. pay the bill, albeit indirectly. American officials were also suspicious of Australian claims for reparations for a separate reason. Some observers felt that the Australian protests over the issue were not motivated by altruism but rather by a craving for lessened economic competition in the Pacific region. One of several background memorandums prepared for President Truman prior to his first meeting with Menzies

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[85] Percy Spender to Richard Casey, May 31, 1951, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 1, NAA.
[86] "Australia in Facts and Figures," p. 13, 1952, Pete Jarman Papers, Box 4, folder 4, ADAH. It was estimated that the sale of the Japanese holdings would raise £730,000 of which £25,000 would be sued for civilian reparations.

underscored this American suspicion. "In principle," the memo stated, "Australia accepts the need for permitting Japan to again become self-supporting through revived industrial production and trade. At the same time the fear of commercial competition with Japan has caused Australia to oppose steps which we have believed necessary to make the Japanese economy self-supporting."[87] This view was reminiscent of the same suspicions that had clouded the relationship between the two powers during World War II over lend-lease materials being used by the Australians to develop a competitive economic advantage for the postwar period.

It was only the exigencies of the Korean War that forced the U.S. to come to an accommodation of Australian demands. Australia's willingness to be one of the first nations to offer military aid, especially ground forces, had served the Menzies government well. Opinion in Washington had begun to swing in favor of establishing a more formal defense relationship with Australia in order to gain what the U.S. saw as an important step in constructing a strong defensive perimeter in the Pacific against the spread of communism. Robert O'Neill declared that both nations recognized what they had to gain from putting aside their sometimes obstinate support for their own positions and reaching a middle ground.[88] What emerged from the discussions between American and Australian representatives during the 1951 San Francisco Conference represented a step forward in the relationship between the U.S. and Australia. Article 14 of the treaty is most representative of this forward movement. It stated:

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[87] Background Memoranda on Visit to the United States of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, p. 10, OF 48d, Australia, Folder 2, Truman Library.
[88] O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol. I*, 131.

It is recognized that Japan should pay reparations to the Allied Powers for the damage and suffering caused by it during the war. Nevertheless, it is also recognized that the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient, if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparations for all such damage and suffering and at the same time meet its other obligations.[89]

Both the Australian and the American viewpoints are encapsulated in Article 14. For the first time, Australia had achieved a longtime goal, equal treatment for its viewpoint from the U.S. and had gained the promise of a formal defensive alliance between the two nations. The U.S. for its part had gained the Japanese the time and resources necessary to reestablish their economy on sound footing without the specter of reparations payments.

The ANZUS (Australian – New Zealand – United States) tripartite agreement that emerged from the debates over the Japanese peace treaty was at once the culmination of Australian aspirations but at the same time it fell short of being the all encompassing alliance that had been worked for by a generation of Australian leaders. Many critics have looked at ANZUS as a simple diplomatic quid pro quo, an example of pragmatic choices being made by both sides. But this rather simplistic viewpoint hides the subtleties of the debate that went on between Canberra and Washington in fashioning such an agreement. Factors related to the Korean War, the growing threat of Communist China, plus concerns over the West's ability to meet communist threats around the globe all played an important role in the creation of ANZUS.[90] In an interview in 1964, Percy Spender addressed the issue of the supposed quid pro quo directly. "So often I've heard this so-called deal spoke about by people who want to write their stories – or have written their stories in newspapers and elsewhere," Spender stated, "I think it's even been

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[89] Article 14 of the Treaty of Peace With Japan, September 1951, SMOF: Naval Aide Files, Box 12, Truman Library.
[90] Albinski, *Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War*, 28.

repeated in some of the published books about it. Nothing was further from the truth. It was a matter of cold, hard politics – that's all. No deal was made of that kind at all."[91] Spender's claim that ANZUS was not a backroom deal struck to secure Australian support for the lenient peace with Japan holds up upon examination. The alliance was warmly received in Canberra but would come to cause several major headaches for both the Australians and their new American allies.

Two key factors came to complicate the ANZUS relationship and contributed to the alliance never truly fulfilling the role that Australian policymakers envisioned for it. The issue of how Australia's relationship with Great Britain would be affected vis-à-vis ANZUS was the largest problem. Almost from the beginning the question of membership in ANZUS became a point of contention between the U.S. and Australia. For their part, the U.S. hoped to include the Philippines as a member state, something which Australia opposed for fear of the loss of American focus on their nation. In return, the U.S. clearly made it known that they would not support British membership in ANZUS, even though the British could make the argument that they held as great an interest in the Pacific region as did the Philippines. The decision to exclude Great Britain also certainly represented a continuation of American post-World War II fears concerning economic competition from the British in the Pacific.

The Australian government proved amenable to the exclusion of Great Britain, partly because ANZUS provided an avenue to focus American attention on the Pacific region at the expense of Europe. In many ways, the situation that arose mirrored that

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[91] Interview with Sir Percy Spender, June 22, 1964, John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Microfilm Collection, Reel 12, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994).

which had come to exist during World War II when both the British and Australians fought over a finite amount of American aid. The Menzies government accepted that in order for the Pacific to maintain a place of prominence in American planning than certain sacrifices were to be made, among them a more contentious relationship with London.[92] Australia would have to play a careful balancing game between London and Washington. Menzies and his government could ill afford the anger Washington at this moment but also did not want to permanently harm British Commonwealth relations.

To the British, the Australians presented their exclusion from ANZUS in terms of its effect on the Americans. An editorial in *The Sydney Morning Herald* outlined this rationale for its readers, "Unfortunately, any widening of the Pact which would have extended America's military commitments to territories on the mainland of Asia was unacceptable to Washington for purely strategic reasons."[93] To the Americans, Menzies made the argument that ANZUS actually served to strengthen the American anti-communist wall in Europe because it allowed Great Britain to focus its few resources there rather than have to worry about providing for the defense of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific.[94] In many ways, Australia practiced the diplomatic equivalent of throwing their hands in the air and telling both the British and Americans that they could not be blamed for the position that they had adopted concerning Britain's membership in ANZUS.

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[92] Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 50.
[93] "Britain's Interest in the ANZUS Pact," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 15, 1952, Myron M. Cowen Papers, Box 8, Australia File, Truman Library.
[94] Background Memoranda on Visit to the United States of the Right Honorable Robert G. Menzies Prime Minister of Australia, July 1950, p. 14, OF 48d, Australia, Folder 2, Truman Library; Richard Casey to Max Beaverbrook, December 16, 1952, Max Beaverbrook Papers, Reel 1, SLV.

Such arguments, though, fell on deaf ears in London. Winston Churchill, who had returned to power as Prime Minister in Great Britain in 1951, began to push Canberra on this issue of British exclusion from ANZUS.[95] The ANZUS alliance for the British represented a threat to the British Commonwealth relationships that had become a cornerstone of British foreign policy in the post World War II period. Australia, and New Zealand to a lesser extent, could now look outside of the British Commonwealth for aid. Churchill and other British leaders were also worried about how Australia's dalliances with the U.S. might affect India's own views about how it should interact with the British Commonwealth. If Australia could turn to the U.S. for security in the Cold War then the policy of neutralism pursued by Jawaharlal Nehru certainly could not be criticized by London.[96]

The possibility of a security alliance between the U.S. and Australia had first been broached at the British Commonwealth meeting in Colombo in January 1950. The reaction from the British delegation was immediately negative but could not be termed confrontational in any real sense.[97] The tone of the debate, though, had changed greatly by late 1951. Many within the Australian government came to see British opposition as being not so much about Britain's interest in Pacific affairs than being an attempt to reestablish imperial control over a former colony. Richard Casey posed the question in his personal diary whether "one might well ask whether membership of the [British]

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[95] It can be argued that Churchill's aggressive stance can be explained from his own personal dislike for Robert Menzies going back to their interactions in 1939 – 40. See David Day, *Menzies and Churchill at War* (New York, 1994).
[96] Barclay, *Friends in High Places*, 41.
[97] O'Neil, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol. I*, 192.

Commonwealth precludes any of us from having any friends outside."[98] A government report on the British reaction to ANZUS highlighted the fact that by 1953, Australia had come to see Great Britain as an antagonist when it came to ANZUS. "The United Kingdom," the report stated, "<u>desires</u> to circumscribe Australia's influence in the Pacific and growing closer relationship with the United States of America."[99] British opposition, in Australian opinion, had moved from being about British interests to a clear attempt to curtail Australia's role as a Pacific power. Australian leaders had fought since the 1930s to have London view them as the leader of British Commonwealth interests in the Pacific. As Percy Spender told John Foster Dulles in a conversation during the ANZUS negotiations, "We live in the Pacific."[100] The debate over ANZUS only represented another chapter in the long on going battle between the old imperial center and the former colonial outpost.

Washington for its part found itself in an unenviable position of trying to mediate between two powers that were deemed essential to the growing fight against world communism. Because of this, the American government generally adopted a position of neutrality in the fight between London and Canberra. Many American leaders secretly welcomed the Australian position concerning not wanting to further expand the possible commitments entailed by ANZUS by allowing the British to join in. This three way fight over membership helped to undercut the effectiveness of ANZUS because it drew attention away from practical matters that the alliance could have focused on in favor of

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[98] Millar, ed., *Australian Foreign Minister*, 103.
[99] "The United Kingdom Views of ANZUS and ANZAM," October 1953, Series # A5954, Control # 1425/7, NAA. Underlined emphasis added by author.
[100] Percy Spender to John Foster Dulles, March 8, 1951, Sir Percy Spender Papers, MS 4875, Box 1, Folder 5, NLA.

dealing with more procedural issues.[101] The membership question also tied into the

second factor that helped to lessen the effectiveness of the alliance.

Two major wars in the eastern Pacific against Asian forces and the close

relationship that had been forged with Australia had served to make American

policymakers more cognizant of race and the role it played in American foreign policy.

Race had become a sore spot for American leaders by the early 1950s. The internal racial

problems of the U.S. provided the Soviet Union and Communist China with an almost

endless source of propaganda material by the mid 1950s. Critics of American claims to

be the champions of liberty and democracy pointed out that large segments of the

American domestic population could not claim to enjoy those same rights that America

sought to bring to the wider world. The problem became so acute that American

ambassador to the U.N. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. famously remarked that racial

discrimination was the U.S.'s "Achilles heel before the world."[102] The issue of race had

become central to American foreign policy by 1951 – 52 and because of this ANZUS

came under intense scrutiny by American policymakers and their Australian counterparts.

H.W. Brands, Jr. highlighted the problem that American policymakers faced in

dealing with ANZUS. The alliance, to many in Asia, was seen as "an alliance of

predominantly white nations" and highlighted for the newly independent nations of Asia

and Africa the continued intent of white nations to control their foreign policy with no

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[101] The question of membership in ANZUS provided a blueprint for the issue during the formation of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1955.
[102] Quoted in George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 656.

acceptance of the existence of these new Third World nations.[103] American policymakers were deeply aware of this perception, however, and sought to counter the perception of the alliance as a white man's pact. The first measure proposed by the U.S. was to convert ANZUS from tripartite agreement into a more loosely affiliated, regional alliance including the Philippines and even Japan. However, such a move was strenuously opposed by Canberra. There are two possible explanations for this stance. First, it must be kept in mind that ANZUS was the culmination of nearly twenty years of foreign policy maneuvering by Australia. The development of a more reciprocal relationship with the U.S. that provided for both Australian security as well as recognition of Australia's role as a regional power was central to both ends of the political spectrum in Australia. Any expansion of the alliance would serve only to dilute that special relationship and influence. A second rationale was the pervasive racial fear that Australia continued to display towards the non-white nations of the region. The end of colonialism in Southeast Asia served to heighten Australian concerns over the future of White Australia. In reality, both factors contributed to the Australian stance. The U.S., though, chose to focus solely on the racial aspect, demonstrating how deeply race had become bound up in the American – Australian bond.

The American State Department continually pushed the idea of including nations like the Philippines in ANZUS as a way to undercut criticism of the pact by non-white nations. The American government highlighted what it saw as the political value for Australia in participating in such a regional organization but for the Australians the idea

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[103] H.W. Brands, Jr., "From ANZUS to SEATO: United States Strategic Policy Towards Australia and New Zealand, 1952 – 1954," *International History Review* 9 (1987): 251.

of expanding ANZUS "served no immediate political purpose."[104] In meetings with

Australian ambassador Sir Percy Spender, American officials such as Assistant Secretary

of State for Far Eastern Affairs Dean Rusk continually stressed the American thinking on

the subject, pointing out to the Australians that the U.S. "would not wish an exclusively

white association and regarded participation of Asiatics as essential."[105] One point that is

important to understand is that the American push for including non-white nations into

ANZUS was not motivated by any sort of altruistic attitude about the relationship

between the white powers of the Pacific and the newly independent non-white states. It

was in fact motivated by far more selfish reasons, namely to keep those new states from

slipping into the Soviet sphere. The neutrality of nations such as India was already

disconcerting for the U.S. and it was worried that an agreement like ANZUS would

provide more propaganda for the Soviet Union and Communist China to use to sway

opinion in the region. Washington even enlisted the aid of Great Britain in trying to

persuade Canberra of this point.[106]

The issue of the Philippines inclusion in ANZUS in particular caused dissension

between Washington and Canberra. With the longstanding relationship that existed

between the Philippines and the U.S., Australian concerns over their own position in

ANZUS were certainly understandable. But observers in Manila found it difficult to

separate Australian protectiveness of their place in ANZUS from the issue of race.

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[104] Pacific Section, Department of External Affairs to Richard Casey, October 10, 1952, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 2, NAA.
[105] Australian Embassy, Washington D.C. to Department of External Affairs, August 3, 1950, Series # A1838, control # 3123/5 Part 3, NAA.
[106] British High Commissioner to Australia E.J. Williams to Arthur Fadden, February 8, 1951, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 3, NAA.

Tempers flared and there was talk of severing ties between the two nations over

Australia's resistance to allowing the Philippines to join the alliance. Reports from

Australian embassies throughout eastern Asia gave widespread testimony to the growing

anger aimed at Australia by the Filipinos. A cable from the Australian embassy in Tokyo

revealed just how far the Filipino government had allowed anger within the country to

boil up. A motion had been presented in the Filipino Senate to close their legation in

Canberra, thus severing diplomatic relations with Australia. This move, the cable stated,

was a direct "Filipino reaction to reports that Australia bitterly opposed any alliance with

non-Caucasian nations for racial reasons."[107]

Washington reacted in much the same manner as they had to the issue of allowing

Great Britain to join. In some ways, the imbroglio over the Philippines provided the U.S.

with the opportunity to shape the alliance into a form which was much more comfortable

for Washington. The perception of ANZUS as a "white man's pact" provided another

tool for the U.S. to use to keep Great Britain out of Pacific affairs and ensure one less

economic competitor in the region.[108] It also allowed the U.S. to maintain some distance

from the alliance, to not commit to the relationship as fully as Canberra would have liked.

ANZUS became for each party something different. For Australians, the formal treaty

represented the promise of security from a revived Japan and acceptance of its role as a

[107] Australian Embassy, Tokyo to Department of External Affairs, May 20, 1952, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # TS686/1 Part 2, NAA.
[108] Brands, Jr., "From ANZUS to SEATO," 261.

Pacific power. For the U.S., the alliance became another block in the growing defensive wall being erected to contain the spread of communism.[109]

ANZUS represented the culmination of a twenty year courtship between two powers who often found themselves more often at odds than in agreement. The relationship between Australia and the U.S. between 1950 and 1953 was a microcosm of the relationship as a whole. Race, which had formed a cornerstone of how each nation came to see and understand the others position, was again put on display during the Korean War and the creation of ANZUS. This three year period also demonstrated how seamlessly race bled over into an ideology of anti-communism. These two factors had, by 1953, become indispensable to the American – Australian bond but still did not make it a relationship devoid of friction. Both parties still insisted on pursuing their own aims in the Pacific but by 1953, through both rational choices and irrational fears, had come to rely on each other as central pillars of both their Pacific and world wide foreign policy. The relationship between the U.S and Australia had radically changed both nations' foreign policies.

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[109] "The Pacific Pact," March 1952, Department of External Affairs Records, Series # A1838, Control # 532/13/1, NAA.

Chapter 7: Epilogue

The twentieth century wrought great changes in how the U.S. approached its interactions with the wider world. The nation moved from a position of reserved unilateralism, as evidenced by Woodrow Wilson's decision to fight in World War I as an associated rather than an allied power, to by 1953 being one of the world's two great superpowers. One of the central explanations for this change was the move towards a multilateral approach to dealing with the wider world. World War II fundamentally altered American military and foreign policy thinking about the country's ability to pursue a vigorous foreign policy alone. U.S. policymakers found that alliances were not just something for wartime expediency and that the new world order that came into existence post-1945 forced the U.S. to actively pursue the creation of alliance systems.[1] It is worth noting that John Foster Dulles, one of the principal architects of American Cold War foreign policy and nuclear deterrence, cited alliances even ahead of deterrence as "the cornerstone of security for the free nations."[2]

The topic of alliances and alliance building has received some consideration from historians, generally within the context of the creation of wartime alliances or the larger alliance systems of the twentieth century, NATO being a prime example. This historiography, though, still has several areas that need to be filled in with more examination. Namely, the issues of American alliances with individual British Commonwealth nations and a deeper examination of the role of ideology in alliances are

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[1] For works that discuss the shift in American alliance strategies see Arnold Wolfers, ed., *Alliance Policy in the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1959), Robert Osgood, *Alliances and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, 1968), Alan Sabrosky, *Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO, 1988), and Ted Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances After the Cold War* (Washington D.C., 1992).

[2] Quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 152.

prominent areas which require further study. This work has attempted to add to our understanding in both areas. First, it is clear that American policymakers themselves often struggled with the question of how to approach Australia, whether as an independent actor or as part of the larger association of the British Commonwealth. Examining the period between 1933 and 1953 it is clear that more often than not, it was the Australian government and people who took the lead in establishing their own independent alliance with the U.S. It must be acknowledged that Great Britain played a role the development of this bond but more often as a foil against which the Australians presented themselves to the U.S. as a more appealing partner in the Pacific region. The U.S. slowly over the twenty year period acceded to the fact that Australia was a nation that had to be included in any American plans in the Pacific region as well as recognition of Australia's important global role in any possible armed conflict with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.[3] The American – Australian bond forged in this period demonstrates the complex interplay between diplomatic pragmatism on the one hand and ideological conviction on the other.

Over the past twenty-five years, American diplomatic historians have granted more attention to the powerful role that ideology has played in American foreign policy. Often, these studies focus on a strain of ideology in American diplomacy that is labeled as "Wilsonianism."[4] This term has never been well defined by historians and has served

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[3] Australia was to be a principal supplier of troops to any Western military actions in the Middle East if war broke out with the Soviet Union.

[4] The historiography on Wilson and his long term effect on American foreign policy is prolific. Some more recent works to consult include Amos Perlmutter, *Making the World Safe for Democracy: A Century of Wilsonianism and its Totalitarian Challengers* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997), Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900* (Chicago, 1999), Steven Bucklin, *Realism and American Foreign Policy: Wilsonians and the Kennan – Morgenthau Thesis* (Westport, CT, 2001), John Milton Cooper, Jr.,

as a catchall phrase that includes varying elements of the American progressive

movement, itself an amorphous term, internationalism as well as religious and racial

aspects. It is this last point that stands out most in this study. Race as a distinct element

within American foreign policy has been noted by numerous historians, among them

Michael Hunt, Akira Iriye and Michael L. Krenn to name a few. Often though, the issue

of race has been presented strictly in terms of American interactions with non-white

groups. While this road of inquiry has contributed much to our understanding of

American views on race and how this translates into action in the foreign policy sphere it

has overlooked an equally important aspect of race as an ideology in foreign policy,

namely how race was used to construct relations with other predominantly white nations.

Some might argue that this topic has not been deserving of study because there is

no real complexity in the relationship between the U.S. and other white nations. It is

assumed that simply because both nations are primarily white or European then any

relationship that develops will not be focused on race. This is a somewhat narrow sighted

view. First, it must be kept in mind that to identify the U.S. as a wholly "white" nation

ignores the realities of historical development in the country.[5] The evolution of the

American nation has been the result of complex and contentious relationships between

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Reconsidering Woodrow Wilson: Progressivism, Internationalism, War, and Peace (Baltimore, 2008), John
Ikenberry, *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton,
2009) and Ross Kennedy, *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and American Strategy for
Peace & Security* (Kent, OH, 2009).
[5] Some works to consult on the multi-racial formation of the United States include Gary Nash, *Red, White,
and Black: The Peoples of Early North America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1982), James Axtell, *The Invasion
Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, 1985), Roger Daniels, *Not Like
Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890 -1924* (Chicago, 1997), Thomas Gossett, *Race: The
History of an Idea in America* (New York, 1997), Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and
Nationalism in Nineteenth Century America* (Princeton, 1998), Arnoldo Vento, *Mestizo: The History,
Culture, and Politics of the Mexican and the Chicano: the Emerging Mestizo – Americans* (Lanham, MD,
1998) and Frank Wu, *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White* (New York, 2002).

numerous racial groups. While European whites have maintained a dominant position in the economic and political spheres through much of the country's history, the society that surrounded them drew as much on African, Latin American, Native American and Asian sources as it did on Europe. This approach also ignores the fact that for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the question of who exactly was white was open to debate in the U.S. and the wider Anglo-Saxon world. The U.S. – Australian friendship demonstrates that race was used by Americans, and Australians, to help define themselves and their relationship with each other every bit as much as it was used to define the Other.[6]

A study of the U.S. – Australian relationship between 1933 and 1953 also gives several insights into the broader topic of alliances and alliance building. One must keep in mind when considering the American – Australian alliance that it was as much about the internal relations between the two nations as it was about external relations.[7] The growing American orientation towards the Pacific in the twentieth century meant that

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[6] Whiteness as a concept was created by English settlers in colonial America to help solve the problem of economic labor and associated societal upheaval related to that labor. The use of indentured white servants in colonial America created a landless class of workers who felt ignored by the economic elites. It was believed that this landless class presented a threat to established society because they were in no way tied to that larger society. Economic elites sought ways to create bonds between themselves and this landless class. One way was through the introduction of slave labor and the accompanying ideas about whiteness. Economic elites could point out to poor whites that despite their own poor economic condition they enjoyed the benefits of being free men in comparison to the African and Native American slaves being used. This system helped elevate poor whites in a social hierarchy while still preserving the economic dominance of elites. This same concept was used by the minority slave holding elite in the antebellum South to ensure cooperation with the majority poor white population of the region. In the North, whiteness became tied to political representation as first Catholic Irish, but later Eastern European Jews and Southern Europeans were barred from taking an active part in government till they had become assimilated enough to meet the standards of whiteness set by the ruling Anglo – Saxon elites. The concept of whiteness also helped to foster a far more simplistic view of race as it sought to define racial order as either white or non-white.
[7] Patricia Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2.

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eventually the U.S. and Australia would come into contact, and almost certainly conflict,

over economic resources and political influence in the region. By crafting a bond between

the two states, American and Australian policymakers helped moderate those levels of

conflict. It also helped ensure that the U.S. could maintain a tighter control over the

development of events in the Pacific, most especially after the end of the Pacific War in

1945. The union between both powers also helped fulfill a crucial function of alliances,

the maintenance of international order.[8] This one factor has been a central theme

throughout American diplomatic history but became especially crucial in the twentieth

century.[9]

Examining the alliance also reveals an insight into alliance cohesion, specifically

that alliances that face low levels of internal threat generally have a greater chance to

maintain their cohesiveness after the external threats that had brought the alliance into

being had passed.[10] This is true in the case of the U.S. and Australia. Even though the

relationship was a contentious one for long periods and was marked by heightened levels

of suspicion and even dislike for the other by both parties, at the basic level neither

country saw the other as a threat. This fact allowed for both countries to maintain

exceptionally close dealings after the pressures of World War II had subsided. One could

argue that those pressures were almost immediately replaced by the Cold War but this

would be an overstatement. Between 1945 and 1950, the Soviet Union or its client states

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[8] Robert Osgood, *Alliances in American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 21.
[9] See George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford, 2008) for an insightful survey of the sweep of American foreign policy history. Herring places the quest for security as one of the primary drivers of American diplomacy in the twentieth century.
[10] Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, 7.

posed no direct threat to the South Pacific region on the same level as the Japanese threat of 1941 – 1942. This is evident in the U.S. – Australian relationship as one sees the resurfacing of points of contention between the two states as each sought to define its role in the postwar Pacific between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. However, the relationship flourished in spite of those periods of contention and acrimony.

This examination also provides some insight into the nature of coalition warfare. Jehuda Wallach's study of the Triple Entente of World War I detailed the numerous shortcomings of fighting a war as part of a multi-state organization. He listed several key areas where coalitions often fail during times of war: a divergence of war aims, the political – military relationship, a language barrier, amalgamation of forces, development of a unified command structure and the role of public opinion.[11] In each of these areas, both the U.S. and Australia overcame the inherent difficulties of coalition warfare. A study of the bond between both nations provides a possible blueprint to construct a sound partnership in times of war.

On the issue of war aims, there was some divergence between Australia and the U.S. over the Europe first strategy favored by Roosevelt and George Marshall. Australian fears about the Pacific being abandoned to the mercy of Japan were constantly overstated by Canberra, even after the strategic victory achieved at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942. The American decision after 1942 to pursue a limited, but highly effective, offensive in the Pacific kept the issue from rupturing the relationship between the two

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[11] Jehuda Wallach, *Uneasy Coalition: The Entente Experience in World War I* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 170 – 172.

powers as well as providing an avenue for the U.S. to maintain a position of dominance in the Pacific over the Australians. The political – military relationship that developed between the two powers was exceptionally close. The prime example of this was the symbiotic relationship that emerged between General Douglas MacArthur and Australian Prime Minister John Curtin. Both men worked closely together during the war to maintain an active front against Japan while still allowing their own particular national interests to be met. Claims that Curtin surrendered Australian national sovereignty to MacArthur or the Americans do not stand up upon closer examination. Curtin and others within his government, most notably Herbert Evatt, struggled to maintain a separate identity from the Americans as well as their British cousins. The language or cultural barrier that did exist between Americans and Australians did create some conflict. However, this study has shown that a larger cultural concept, race, served to bridge those cultural divides which did exist between the two peoples.

World War II and the Korean War demonstrated that the U.S. and Australia had learned the important lessons of World War I concerning combined forces and a unified command structure. Australian troops under the overall command of Douglas MacArthur performed brilliantly in Papua and New Guinea, though often with little gratitude from MacArthur. In Korea, Australian and American forces demonstrated again their ability to be part of an effective multi-national force. This should not be taken to mean that no disagreements arose between the two states, especially in Australia's opinion of MacArthur. Both nations initially had low opinions of the other's ability as a military force. However, in each instance the Americans and Australians were able to overcome

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these differences. The real credit for the effective way in which American and Australian forces cooperated must go to those immediate subordinates of MacArthur. Men like Robert Eichelberger and George Kenney on the American side and Edmund Herring and George Vasey on the Australian smoothed over numerous disruptions between the two sides. The importance of individual actions in forging history is amply demonstrated by the association of the U.S. and Australia in World War II and Korea.

Public opinion never became a major issue between the two powers. The Australian government and press did a highly effective job of presenting an image of their nation as an effective, and more importantly, indispensable partner in the Pacific to the American public. The use of racial and familial language that was so prevalent through the 1940s and early 1950s helped to create an image of Australia as another America, a place where Americans were wanted and would immediately find a place both understandable and welcoming. In the end, the American – Australian alliance worked because it met the central criteria of alliance building, namely that "an alliance must enhance a nation's security, or at least not undermine it."[12] This point was of central importance to Australia and represented the greatest possible reward of a close relationship with the U.S. The seemingly never ending search for security was abated for Canberra by the development of the trans-Pacific bond with the U.S.

The prime trophy of this Australian quest for security was ANZUS. The pact though never quite lived up to the expectations of Australian policymakers who hoped it would provide the final shield to defend their island nation. Instead, the ANZUS

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[12] Alan Ned Sabrosky, *Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy: Issues in the Quest for Collective Defense* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 2.

relationship initially languished due to the U.S.'s unwillingness to commit fully to the

alliance and Washington's insistence on developing other regional alliance partnerships.

A study of the ANZUS pact that emerged from the U.S. – Australian alliance also

provides an important starting point for discussing the creation of the other major alliance

bloc in Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). SEATO

became in many ways what Australia hoped ANZUS would be: a counterpoint to the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Unlike ANZUS, SEATO provided a more

structured understanding of collective defense and military cooperation. Another

difference was that SEATO was a clearly aimed defensive organization aimed at halting

the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. The U.S. hoped that SEATO would help to

provide both political legitimacy as well as active military support for U.S. initiatives in

growing trouble spots such as Vietnam.

The debates over membership in ANZUS between the U.S. and Australia helped

to pave the path for a more expansive collective security body in the region.

Washington's dissatisfaction with the exclusion of countries like the Philippines and

Japan made the U.S. more interested in the creation of a far broader alliance system in the

region. Eventually SEATO would come to include Australia, Bangladesh, France, New

Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Great Britain, France and the U.S. SEATO

may have been seen as a potential threat to Washington's special relationship with

Canberra by Australian leaders. However, they chose to look at SEATO as a way to

reengage with their Asian neighbors as well as to further demonstrate Australia's

leadership position among British Commonwealth nations in the Pacific and Asia. It is

worth nothing that Australia also played a key role in another blueprint organization for SEATO, the Colombo Plan that was established out of a British Commonwealth Conference of Foreign Minister held in Ceylon, Sri Lanka in 1950. The Colombo Plan, like SEATO, was focused primarily on Southeast Asia and the south Pacific. SEATO and the Colombo Plan have one striking similarity: both organizations' primary goal was to challenge the spread of communism, SEATO through military power, the Colombo Plan through economic and human resource improvement in the region.[13]

SEATO was by no means a direct offshoot of ANZUS or the discussions that had taken place between the U.S. and Australia in 1951. SEATO was much more directly intended to be an anti-communist pact, aimed at curtailing the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia and possibly the Pacific basin whereas ANZUS was a security guarantee against the resurgence of a militaristic Japan. However, provisions within the SEATO charter virtually insured that the organization would be unable to meet the security demands that both the U.S. and Australia had hoped it would. Unlike NATO, an attack on any SEATO nation would not automatically be considered an attack on all members. Because of this limitation, the defensive reliability of SEATO was in question from the beginning of the organization's existence. The crises in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in the late 1950s and 1960s demonstrated the limitations of SEATO in providing collective security for the region. By the late 1960s it had become evident to Washington that ANZUS and not SEATO would have to be the primary way through which the U.S.

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[13] Some works to consult on the Colombo Plan include Sir Percy Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (New York, 1969), P.R. Chona, *The Colombo Plan, 1951: Vision Into Reality* (Colombo, 1976) and David Lowe and Daniel Oakman, eds., *Australia and the Colombo Plan: 1949 – 1957* (Barton, ACT, 2004). Spender's work is highly useful since it provides insight from one of the principal architects of the Colombo Plan.

approached political developments and military challenges in the Pacific.[14] And with these growing crises in the region, American and Australian forces would find themselves once again drawn into combat against another opponent in Asia.

The Korean War did not mark the last time that American and Australian forces fought together in Asia. The close ideological relationship that had come out of the period between 1933 and 1953 and supplemented by the political bonds of ANZUS brought both nation's fighting men together in the jungles of Vietnam. The American experience in Vietnam has been well documented.[15] However, the sheer size of the material available creates the impression that Vietnam was only America's war and ignores the fact that Vietnam had an equally significant effect in Australia. Out of a population of almost 12 million, over 50,000 Australians served in Vietnam during the course of the war with just over 500 dead. These numbers, in comparison to the American commitment of just over 2.7 million servicemen during the whole of the American commitment, may seem insignificant but hide the fact that the war was just as important in transforming Australian society as it was for America.[16]

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[14] The literature on SEATO is minimal and the system is often examined within the context of other issues such as American and Australian involvement in Vietnam. For works dealing with the establishment of SEATO and effectiveness see George Modelski, *SEATO, Six Studies* (Melbourne, 1962), Justus van der Kroef, *The Lives of SEATO* (Singapore, 1976) and Leszek Buszynski, *SEATO: The Failure of an Alliance Strategy* (Singapore, 1983).

[15] Some works to consult include Ronald Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941 – 1960* (Washington D.C., 1983), James Olson and Randy Roberts, *Where the Domino Fell: America and Vietnam, 1945 to 1990* (New York, 1996), Robert Buzzanco, *Vietnam and the Transformation of American Life* (Malden, MA, 1999), David Kaiser, *American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), Robert Mann, *A Grand Delusion: America's Descent into Vietnam* (New York, 2001), George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950 – 1975* 4th Ed., (Boston, 2002) and George Donelson Moss, *Vietnam, an American Ordeal* (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2010).

[16] Works to consult on the Australian experience in Vietnam include Henry Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia: The Impact of Vietnam and Conscription* (Durham, NC, 1970), Glen St. John Barclay, *A Very Small Insurance Policy: The Politics of Australian Involvement in Vietnam, 1954 – 1967* (St. Lucia,

The Australian and American experiences in Vietnam highlight a unique parallel with the relationship the two parties had forged during World War II and the Korean War. Just as in the previous conflicts, both the U.S. and Australia came to the table with very different conceptions of what the war meant to them. For the U.S., as the superpower, the fighting in Vietnam was simply another brick in the wall holding back the sweep of communist expansion in Asia. Concerns over maintaining France as a stable party in Asia and in helping to reintegrate Japan as a viable economic force also played roles for the U.S. Australian policymakers, at least initially, took this as the starting point for their commitment. However, Australia was also much more concerned with the effect of the war on, and a possible communist victory in, the immediate region.[17] Australian willingness to send troops into Vietnam was also colored by the memories of the communist insurgency in Malaya in the late 1950s.[18] These strategic differences would lead to increased friction between the two powers over the direction of the war as well as Australian fears that America's increasing frustration with the direction of the war might lead to the employment of American nuclear weapons.[19] Culturally, the war proved to be

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QLD, 1988), Jeff Doyle, Jeffrey Grey and Peter Pierce, *Australia's Vietnam War* (College Station, TX, 2002), Andreas Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach, eds., *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (New York, 2003) and Bruce Davies, *The Battle at Ngok Tavak: Allied Valor and Defeat in Vietnam* (Lubbock, TX, 2008).

[17] Peter Edwards, "The Strategic Concerns of a Regional Power: Australia's Involvement in Vietnam," in Andreas Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner and Milfried Mausbach, eds., *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 223 – 224.

[18] Jeff Doyle, Jeffrey Grey and Peter Pierce, *Australia's Vietnam War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 7.

[19] Edwards, "The Strategic Concerns of a Regional Power," in Daum, Gardner and Mausbach,, eds., *America, the Vietnam War, and the World* , 227. This was also a serious point of worry for the Australian government during the Korean War. In fact some in Canberra referred to the possibility of the "MacArthur option" by the United States in reference to General Douglas MacArthur's suggestion of using nuclear weapons against China during the Korean War.

a divisive element in both nations, although the scars of Vietnam have persisted far longer in the U.S. than in Australia.[20]

The shared experience in Vietnam built upon the previous decades of the American – Australian relationship. It highlighted how effective the strident anticommunism of the 1950s had been in conditioning a generation of American and Australian policymakers to see communism as an absolute threat. Even while Canberra sought to convince the American government that it could offer no further direct military support due to growing budget concerns and the growing anti-war movement in Australia, Australia policymakers urged the U.S. to stand firm in Vietnam. In fact, the Australian pressure actually served to help convince Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford to begin to scale back the U.S. commitment in Vietnam. Clifford wrote that if Australia could send 300,00 men overseas to fight during World War II but was reluctant to send an additional 7,000 men to Vietnam, then perhaps the communist threat had been overblown all along.[21] With the beginning of the drawdown of American forces that was accelerated under President Richard Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization," support for a continued Australian presence in Vietnam collapsed. By the end of 1971, the last Australian forces had been removed from Vietnam.

The shared experience of Vietnam highlights how one of the major ideological factors that had been used to construct the relationship between 1933 and 1953, anti-communism, continued to play an important role even twenty years afterwards. But what of the other major ideological underpinning, race? It would be folly to think that race as

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[20] Doyle, Grey, and Pierce, *Australia's Vietnam War*, xvii.
[21] Edwards, "The Strategic Concerns of a Regional Power," in Daum, Gardner and Mausbach,, eds., *America, the Vietnam War, and the World*, 232.

an influencing factor on either nation's foreign policies disappeared after 1953. Race, though, as a major factor in the U.S. – Australian alliance decreased in importance over the years after 1953. This was driven by two differing factors, one American and one Australian. American policymakers became far more cognizant of how racial issues were perceived by the wider world in the last half of the twentieth century. Oftentimes, this cognizance failed to be translated into positive action but the increased awareness helped the U.S. understand that the continued appearance of being a pro-European or pro-white power in Asia and the Pacific served only to hinder American progress in those regions. Much of the increased racial awareness within the U.S. was driven by the American Civil Rights movement and the work of men such as Andrew Young, who served as American ambassador to the United Nations under President Jimmy Carter, and drew heavily on his experiences in the civil rights movement. Young attempted to highlight the importance of Third World nations, especially in Africa, for U.S. foreign policy and to convince American policymakers of the shortsightedness of continuing to hold to what appeared to be a rather one-sided dialogue with the wider world. And while the effectiveness of people like Young in changing American perceptions of non-white nations can be debated, their work unquestionably influenced how American policymakers thought about the perception of the U.S in the wider world.

Changing Australian perceptions about race can best be examined by following the career of the White Australia policy after 1953. One must keep in mind that oftentimes, the whole of Australian foreign policy between 1933 and 1953 was aimed at defending the final bastion of white rule in the Pacific. The commitment to White

Australia immediately after the war did not waver but it did undergo some modifications as Australian concerns over increasing the population of their country became more prevalent. During the war, a large number of Asians had fled to Australia to escape the Japanese onslaught. Many had been granted temporary entrance with the understanding that they would return to their home after the war ended. When that time came, however, many refused to do so.

One famous incident revolved around Annie O'Keefe, an Indonesian whose family had been rescued from the jungles of that nation and brought to Australia where she eventually met and married an Australian national. After the war, the Ministry of Immigration, headed by Arthur Caldwell, attempted to force O'Keefe to leave, arguing that her marriage did not confer any special status on her. Supported by a public outcry she appealed to the Australian High Court who overturned the Immigration Ministry's decision in 1947. This decision in effect allowed hundreds of Asians to avoid deportation after the war and led the Immigration Ministry to propose new, more stringent standards that would give that department greater control over the alien populations who had come to Australia during the war.[22] This attempt to shore up White Australia, however, was too little too late as the tide of racial awareness in Australia was moving in favor of a more open and diverse society.

In the 1950s many both inside and outside of Australia noticed a gradual easing of the White Australia policy. Asian immigrants found it easier to enter into the country. Importantly, whites from southern and eastern Europe, such as Italians and Greeks, were

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[22] H.I. London, *Non-White Immigration and the "White Australia" Policy* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 16 – 17.

more openly welcomed than they had been before the war indicating a change in view on who counted as "white" in Australia. Previous to World War II, only immigration from the British Isles and northern Europe had been supported by the Australian government. The softening of perspective on Asians has been attributed to the interactions that had occurred between Australians serving abroad during World War II and groups such as the Filipinos and Malayans.[23] The policy was also weakened by the Colombo Plan which allowed for the first time a large number of Asian students to study in Australian universities, further exposing more of the white population of Australia to Asians and helping to lessen previously held conceptions about non-whites.

The major factor that contributed first to a slackening of White Australia and then its eventual repeal was continued fear about the military security of Australia. This was especially true in light of the rabidly anti-colonial statements emanating from some of the newest nations in the Third World in Asia and Africa in the late 1950s and 1960s. The Australian government recognized that only a more sizeable population would allow the nation to expand its economy and create a more sizeable defense force to shield Australia from possible attack. In March 1966, Immigration Minister Hubert Opperman proposed a change in Australia's formal immigration system that would evaluate petitioners for immigration solely on their suitability as settlers and what contributions they could make to Australian society and the economy.[24] This led to almost 3,000 persons of Asian

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[23] Ibid., 18.
[24] Ibid., 26 – 34.

descent being accepted for Australian citizenship between 1966 and 1968. This was

almost equal to the number that had gained citizenship between 1957 and 1966.[25]

The end of the White Australia policy began under the Labor government of

Gough Whitlam, who in 1973, proposed three major changes designed to end race as a

factor in Australian immigration policies. First, all emigrants would be able to obtain

citizenship after three years. Second, the issuance of policy instructions to overseas posts

ordering that race not be considered as a factor when examining an application for

immigration and finally, ratification of all international agreements relating to race and

immigration would be carried out by the Australian government.[26] These three factors

contributed to an important reorientation in how the Australian government and people

looked at immigration by non-whites. The official end of White Australia came in 1975

with the passage of the Racial Discrimination Act by the Australian Parliament which

forbade race to be used as a factor in any official purpose. The end of White Australia did

not necessarily spell the end of racism in Australia but it did demonstrate the

establishment of a far more nuanced and subtle understanding of how important a factor

race was not just in domestic politics but in foreign affairs as well.

Even though the U.S. and Australia effectively overcame many of the

shortcomings inherent in alliance or coalition warfare this should not be interpreted to

mean that it was an association without complexity. The relationship that developed

between the U.S. and Australia presented both nations with positives and negatives. For

Australia, their position as a Pacific power had been recognized and fortified through

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[25] Ibid., 51.
[26] Department of Immigration and Citizenship, "Fact Sheet 8 – Abolition of the 'White Australia' Policy," <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm>, September, 2009.

their relationship with the U.S. The existence of the White Australia policy had been assured thanks to American aid in World War II and would continue to survive through much of the Cold War. Even when the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s began to attack the South African system of apartheid, White Australia was never targeted by American policymakers. For the Americans, the relationship with Australia provided a strong and stable partner in a region of the world that would take on increasing importance in the fight against communism. By the end of the twentieth century the U.S. had become a Pacific oriented nation, focused on challenges from an economically revived Japan, a growing China and most notably the twenty year war in Vietnam which haunted American military and foreign policy thinkers even into the twenty-first century. The relationship with Australia also brought the role of ideology in American foreign policy back into focus. One sees many of the discussions occurring between the two powers being framed in ideologically driven language, primarily about race and anti-communism. For the U.S., this dialogue helped to, over time, heighten awareness of how important race was to American foreign policy, especially by the late 1970s.

The alliance was also not without its drawbacks. Arguably the most important was one that affected both nations. Both Australia and the U.S. by the mid-twentieth century, found themselves blinded to the nuances of world affairs. A relationship built on race served to only reinforce both nation's leaders wish to see the world in black and white terms. Both countries failed to recognize that the emergence of the Third World starting in the 1950s was driven by nationalist impulses. Rather, leaders in Washington and Canberra chose time and time again to view their interactions with these new nations

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through the lens of race. Challenges from leaders like Nehru and Ho Chi Minh were not, in Australian and American opinions, nationalist impulses. Rather they represented challenges to the established racial order of the world or were part of a larger communist plot, itself tinged with race, to overthrow the white, western world. By committing themselves to an ideological worldview, both powers failed to see the divisions within the supposedly monolithic communist world structure that contributed to events such as the Korean War and later crises such as the Taiwan Straits.

The bond between the two powers was also one that never developed smoothly. Both Australia and the U.S. had strong preconceptions about how the relationship was supposed to work. For Australia, they believed they would be seen as an equal in Pacific affairs. In reality, Australian leaders from John Curtin and Robert Menzies onwards came to recognize that "small partners in an alliance had little influence over larger ones."[27] Australian self-interest in the economic and security spheres led to numerous clashes with their American counterparts who believed that often Australian leaders used world events to their own advantage. The U.S. never intended to have as close a relationship as the one that developed. The U.S. sought to use Australia only as part of its arsenal to defeat Japan in World War II and contain communism in the decades after the war. A consistent theme throughout the twenty year period in question was the American attempt to lessen their commitments to Australia and avoid anything resembling a formal alliance. However, in the end that is exactly what occurred.

The primary reason for this alliance was that both nations, regardless of the numerous differences that often existed between them, found a common worldview, one

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[27] O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950 – 53 Vol. I*, 314.

based on the ideological twining of race and anti-communism. The roots lay in World War II but the bond would not have flourished if not for the events of the early Cold War period. Between the years 1946 and 1953, the American – Australian alliance was cemented by the shared experiences of two wars and the often misunderstood challenges presented by non-white nations in the Pacific and Asia. After 1953, American and Australian policy aims often dovetailed with little questioning from either party and would lead Australia to become one of the principal supporters of American ventures in the twentieth century. The relationship between the two powers would change over time but the ideological underpinnings put in place in the twenty years between 1933 and 1953 would remain central to both parties understanding of the bond that had come to exist between them.

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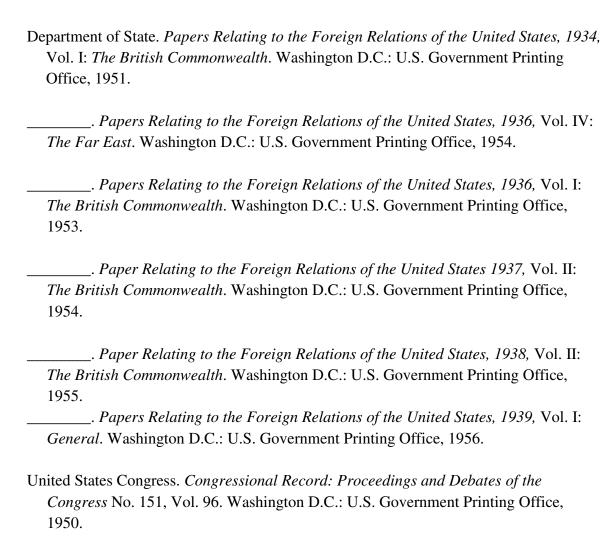 Sir Ronald Heymanson Papers

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Vita

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