

In February 2013 the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) held a one-day Forum to examine the achievements of Australia's foreign ministers between 1960 and 1972. The Forum brought together some of Australia's most eminent academics and experts in international relations, former senior diplomats and government officials to explore the major issues that confronted foreign ministers during this period.

The Forum and this publication follow on from R. G. Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-1960, the first book in the AIIA's Australian Ministers for Foreign Affairs series. Whereas the 1950s were a period of relative stability, with only one foreign minister, there were seven during the next decade, including Prime Minister R. G. Menzies.

This volume examines the rise of China and Japan, the withdrawal of colonial powers from Asia, the conflict in Vietnam and Australia's relations with the United States. It offers lessons from the past for the issues facing us today.

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Ministers for Foreign Affairs 1960-72



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Edited by  
Melissa Conley Tyler, John Robbins and Adrian March

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**ISBN: 978-0-909992-98-9**

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Cover Image: Menzies-McEwen Cabinet in the Cabinet Room in 1963. Seated left to right: Paul Hasluck, Senator William Spooner, John McEwen, Robert Menzies, Harold Holt, Athol Townley, Charles Adermann, and William McMahon. Standing left to right: Alick Downer, Reginald Swartz, Senator John Gorton, Hugh Robertson, John Cramer, Allen Fairhall, Senator Norman Henty, Senator Harrie Wade, Garfield Barwick, Hubert Oppermann, David Fairbairn and Senator Shane Paltridge. (NAA: A1200, L45498).

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*Robert Furlonger CB, former Director-General, Office of National Assessments*

*Pierre Hutton, former Head of Mission to Burma, Nigeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, The Sudan and Switzerland, Delegate to UN General Assembly 1956 to 1958, Representative on UN Development Program Council 1966; Representative on World Food Council 1980 and Representative on UN Human Rights Commission 1982-1983*

*James Ingram AO FAIIA, former senior diplomat, Director-General of the Australian Development Assistance Bureau and Executive Director, UN World Food Program .*

*Moderator: Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA, former senior Australian diplomat, former National Vice- President, AIIA and former President AIIA NSW*

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## Foreword

### *Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs*

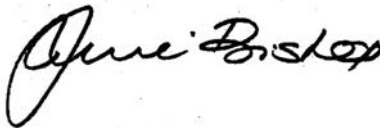
It gives me great pleasure to welcome this account of the contribution to Australian foreign policy of Australia's Ministers for External Affairs between 1960 and 1972. The publication is the second in a series that examines the role and influence of Australian Foreign Ministers (called Ministers for External Affairs before 1970). This second volume examines the contribution to Australian diplomacy of Sir Garfield Barwick, Paul Hasluck, Gordon Freeth, William McMahon, Leslie Bury, and Nigel Bowen. It has been produced by the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The publication presents the proceedings of *Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs, 1960-1972* hosted by the AIIA at Government House, Canberra, on 19 February 2013.

In the 1950s, Prime Minister Robert Menzies entrusted the Ministry of External Affairs to two of the most significant men ever to hold the portfolio: Percy Spender and R. G. Casey. Spender was the architect of both the ANZUS Treaty with the United States and New Zealand and the scheme under which bilateral aid would flow to developing countries in South and Southeast Asia dubbed the 'Colombo Plan'. Casey's foreign policy legacy, which was examined in the first publication of this series, included Australia's continuing engagement with the newly independent nations of Asia. Menzies held the portfolio of External Affairs between 1960 and 1961 before assigning it to his Attorney-General, Garfield Barwick. Two of Barwick's most significant achievements were to help reconcile Australia to Indonesia's incorporation of Netherlands New Guinea (Irian Jaya) and Indonesia to the establishment of a Malaysian Federation including the British

Borneo territories and Singapore, though the latter would leave the federation in 1965.

In the difficult years of Indonesia's 'Confrontation' with Malaysia, Barwick supported a dialogue between the leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines that helped pave the way for the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN came into being on 8 August 1967 during Paul Hasluck's tenure in the portfolio. As Western Australians, Hasluck and his immediate successor Gordon Freeth brought to the portfolio an appreciation of the importance of Australia's position in the Indian Ocean and of the role of Australia's mineral resources, particularly in their home state, would play in Australia's continuing engagement with Asia. Like the first three Ministers examined in the volume, McMahon, Bury and Bowen were engaged closely in Southeast Asian affairs, particularly the Vietnam War and the Five Power Defence Arrangements between the United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore that followed the British decision to withdraw 'east of Suez'. All of the Ministers, as the volume shows, grappled with the issue of recognition of the People's Republic of China, recognition that was eventually accorded in December 1972.

I congratulate the Australian Institute of International Affairs and all the authors involved in this publication and commend it to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Julie Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.

The Honourable Julie Bishop MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

## **Editors' Note**

*Melissa Conley Tyler, John Robbins CSC and  
Adrian March*

We are pleased to present the second book in the Australian Institute for International Affairs' (AIIA) *Australian Ministers for Foreign Affairs* series. Following on from the R. G. Casey Forum and publication, the AIIA hosted a forum at Government House in February 2013 examining the next decade in Australia's foreign policy. This publication brings together the papers and discussions from this event.

The AIIA is deeply committed to preserving a record of Australia's foreign policy history and we hope that this publication will provide an insight into this fascinating era. As well as the four papers presented at the event by Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA, Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIIA, Professor James Cotton FAIIA and Dr David Lee, this volume includes transcripts of the discussion following each paper by Forum participants. The insights uncovered by these discussions and personal reminiscences are valuable and well worth reproducing.

An additional panel discussion of personal reminiscences from the era by Andrew Farran, Robert Furlonger CB, Pierre Hutton and James Ingram AO FAIIA is also included in this volume.

In these discussions minor edits were made for clarity, consistency and ease of reading. As such, it should be noted that the discussions reproduced in this book do not in all instances constitute a 'word-for-word' transcription of proceedings. They do, however, aim to accurately reflect and preserve the intent of the speaker.



This publication could not have been completed without the generous support of many individuals and organisations. The *Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs, 1960-1972* was kindly supported by the AIIA's patron, The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO. We thank her and the staff at Government House.

A number of former and current AIIA leaders were crucial to the success of this event, including National Vice-President Zara Kimpton OAM, former National President Garry Woodard FAIIA and former National Vice-President Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA. We also warmly thank the AIIA's Research Chair, Associate Professor Shirley Scott for her tireless work on AIIA research and publications. We warmly thank all speakers and participants for sharing their expertise.

We thank the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Historical Publications and Information Section, in particular Dr David Lee for supporting the production of this historical record and Dr Moreen Dee for sourcing the archival photos used within this publication.

An excellent team of AIIA interns assisted with great enthusiasm in both organising the Forum and producing this book. We would like to thank interns Georgina Horsburgh, Matt McDonald and Rachelle Saad and work experience students Alia Huberman and Claire Paton for their help on this publication. We also thank interns Robert Ware, Chelsea Jacka, Rachel Davies and Max Feng for their work in organising the Government House event.

Finally, we note with sadness the passing of Mr Pierre Hutton (16.7.1928–20.7.2014). Mr Hutton served with distinction in a number of overseas posts and contributed with great insight and humour to AIIA events.

Melissa Conley Tyler, John Robbins and Adrian March



*The Australian Institute of International Affairs' Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs 1960-1972, Government House, Canberra, 19 February 2013. Left to Right: Governor-General the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO; National Executive Director Melissa Conley Tyler; Adrian March; Rachel Davies; National Vice-President Zara Kimpton OAM; Chelsea Jacka; and former National President Garry Woodard FAIIA. (Australian Institute of International Affairs).*



## **Welcome Remarks**

*Zara Kimpton OAM*

As National Vice-President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), I would like to welcome you all here today to the *Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs from 1960 to 1972*. Unfortunately, our National President, John McCarthy, was unable to be present today but he sends his best wishes for a successful day. As many of you know, in 2010 a similar forum was held (in this same meeting room) which focused on the preceding Casey era from 1951-1960 – and today we are launching the book which brings together papers and discussions resulting from that discussion.

This is the second forum in what we hope will be a continuing series looking back over specific periods in the history of Australia's engagement with the world. This time we will be looking at a period which covers a fairly similar length of time to that of the first forum but instead of just one foreign minister, Richard Casey, who worked with just one prime minister, Robert Menzies, we will be reviewing an era where there were seven foreign ministers – Robert Menzies, Garfield Barwick, Paul Hasluck, Gordon Freeth, William McMahon, Leslie Bury and Nigel Bowen who served under four prime ministers, Menzies, Holt, Gorton and McMahon, although all were of the same political persuasion. I think one of the most famous comments made by any prime minister or foreign minister during this era was what Holt said on a visit to Washington in June 1966 – “All the Way with LBJ” – which underlined Australia's commitment to the war in Vietnam. No doubt we will hear more about this during today's discussions.

Today's forum has three aims, which are to:

- reflect on the work and achievements of the individual Ministers of Foreign Affairs during this time;
- assemble a group of distinguished diplomats of the era and beyond to discuss the challenges faced during that time;
- provide a forum for papers by distinguished historians of the era.

We have been delighted at the response to our invitation by so many distinguished diplomats, historians and academics who will participate in today's event, many of whom were also present two years ago. There are so many long-term associates of the AIIA among our guests today that I can't even start trying to name you all. In some ways this is like a reunion of old friends. However, I would like to particularly welcome the AIIA's Life Members and Fellows and single out one specific person – our immediate Past National President Clive Hildebrand. Clive was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the recent Australia Day Honours and I hope you will all join with me in congratulating him on this well-earned honour.

While talking of past National Presidents of the AIIA, I was looking through the list of former presidents in John Legge's history of the Institute – I recommend this book to those of you who haven't read it and at the same time pass on John's apologies for not being here today; he was really hoping to make the trip from Melbourne to join us but in the end it was just too difficult. I was interested to see that one of the people we are focusing on today, Sir Garfield Barwick, later became the AIIA's National President from 1972 to 1983. Eleven years was a long time and I'm not sure whether anyone would

Zara Kimpton

take on the role for such a long time these days. However, further reading of the book provided additional insight, as Legge wrote that although Barwick brought “considerable lustre to the office” as a former Minister for External Affairs and “presided” over its affairs “he maintained for the most part a ‘hands off’ posture with regard to the day to day handling of its affairs”, which is not surprising as for most of that time he was the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia!

We would particularly like to thank the Historical Publications and Information Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which has partnered with the AIIA in this project and has helped fund the publication of the book *R.G. Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-60*.

We are also grateful to Government House for again allowing us to hold this forum in the Sir David Smith Meeting Room. We especially value the contribution made by our Patron and Honorary Visitor, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, and we are delighted that she will attend part of today’s proceedings.

2013 is an important year for the Australian Institute of International Affairs, as it is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation as a national body. As a membership-based organisation, with branches in each State capital and the A.C.T., it has played an important role in creating awareness of international issues over many years. Last year alone the AIIA held over 180 events around the nation. Publications are also an important way for the AIIA to achieve its mission of disseminating ideas and educating the public. The *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, which is now published five times a year, is the Australian leader in its field. In addition, our regular Policy Commentaries serve a useful purpose – the most recent one being on Australia and the Security Council.

We are also proud of our continuing “Australia in World Affairs” series which has been published every 5 years since 1950, with the most recent, *Middle Power Dreaming*, on the 2006-2010 period. I was recently reading, in an article reprinted from *The Times of London*, that “the only thing more dangerous than forgetting history is to misremember it” and publications such as *Australia in World Affairs* help us recollect events accurately. It is also important to hold forums like these where people who were closely involved in the events of the time are able to reflect on how they saw things – even if discussion may reveal that another participant may have come away with a different interpretation of events and outcomes.

So today I would like formally to launch another AIIA publication which will provide an additional tool for those seeking to learn about an accurately-recorded past, even if there are differences in interpretation of events by those involved. This publication brings together papers and discussions from the forum held two years ago under the title *R.G. Casey as Minister for External Affairs 1951-1960, Fifty Years On*. This has been edited by AIIA National Executive Director, Melissa Conley Tyler, our National Deputy Director, John Robbins and Adrian March, who was an AIIA intern at the time of the first forum. The book includes contributions by others who participated in discussions on the day – and many of you are here again today. Congratulations and thanks are due to all those involved. I read it over the weekend and found the papers, as well as the recording of personal insights and reminiscences, were easy to read and should be of interest both to scholars and the general public. Of course there were different opinions about many aspects of Casey’s career, as I expect will happen again during today’s discussion. There is so much more I could say about the book but we don’t have time for that today, and it is much better for you to read it all

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for yourselves. I think one of the main points I have learnt from it is that Casey was a product of the era in which he was born. However, by the end of his career the world was becoming a very different place, which we will look at further today.

So I would now like to welcome another past National President and Fellow of the AIIA, Mr Garry Woodard, to make some opening remarks about the period from 1960 to 1972 and the transition from the Casey era. It was originally Garry's idea to commence this series and we particularly value his ongoing contribution to its success.





## Opening Remarks

### *Garry Woodard FAIA*

My assignment is to contribute continuity in the Australian Institute of International Affairs' admirable foray into re-assessing Australian foreign ministers.

At the end of Casey's day, from which Melissa, John and Adrian have brought forth a notable and, thanks to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), strikingly-illustrated book,<sup>1</sup> there was informal discussion about a follow-up. I recall that former Secretary of DFAT Michael L'Estrange suggested the next volume on Sir Garfield Barwick.

The Forum on Casey could not reconcile all the differences in opinion on his career. As Bob Furlonger, Bill Pritchett and Jim Ingram can attest, a vigorous correspondence ensued, amongst the old Foreign Affairs officers. Yet now the organisers have issued the formidable challenge of dealing with six foreign ministers.

It could be seven. Excluding Menzies as foreign minister means ignoring a hiccup in the 70-year orientation of Australian foreign policy towards Asia. Barwick has written that he did not think Menzies' "years as Foreign Minister had weakened" his "longstanding attitudes towards change, towards developing countries in general and Asians in

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<sup>1</sup> Melissa Conley Tyler, John Robbins and Adrian March (eds), *R G Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-1960*, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra, 2013, viewed 12 October 2014, <<http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/publications/r-g-casey-minister-for-external-affairs-1951-1960/>>.

particular, added to our traditional associations with Europe.”<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur Tange’s aspiration that the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs should be the government’s principal adviser on foreign affairs ended in this period.

Had Barwick accepted the foreign ministership in 1959, as Menzies and Casey wished, foreign policy post-Casey would have been a seamless web.

Barwick was so much Casey’s choice that he wanted him to go to Washington in October 1959 to conclude the Antarctic Treaty, which we noted was dear to Casey’s heart. It was not until he read Bill Hudson’s biography that Barwick learned this.<sup>3</sup>

Hasluck, who clearly had claims, was passed over in 1959 and again in 1961. Further, with anti-colonialism at its height, unwelcome international pressures were impinging on his private fief of Papua New Guinea, notably the Foot Mission in 1962, with which Barwick chose to associate himself closely.

Hasluck took solace, whiling away the nights in his duplex in Deakin Bottom after cooking a beef bourguignon, by penning character sketches, amounting, in Barwick’s case, to assassination, published posthumously as *The Chance of Politics*.<sup>4</sup> His anecdotes suggest that a shared loathing of Billy

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<sup>2</sup> Garfield Barwick, *A Radical Tory*, Federation Press, Leichhardt, 1995, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> W. J. Hudson, *Casey*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Hasluck, *The Chance of Politics*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1987.

McMahon was the only tie which united Casey, Barwick and Hasluck.<sup>5</sup>

The seismic 60s and the contrasting characteristics of the main characters – Barwick the pragmatist and self-styled “radical Tory” compared to Hasluck, the maximal realist and intellectual – provide a broad base for tracing continuities through to the present.

The Indonesian lobby was deflowered and flowered again.

A rising Asian power, projected by Herman Kahn to be the economic superstate by 2000,<sup>6</sup> loomed large for Australia and displaced traditional trading partners. Peter Drysdale can tell us how much Ken Henry’s *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper Committee took into account how we came to terms with Japan when considering policies for the Asian Century.

Hasluck’s mission to Moscow in 1964 to call in the old to redress the balance with the new, the rising politico-security power, China, was a logical outcome of his doctrinal and theoretical realism. A similar approach of ignoring officials and a penchant for the big stage seem to appear in Malcolm Fraser’s idea of a China-based four-power pact *against* Russia in 1976 and in Kevin Rudd’s 2008 Asia-Pacific Community. The Beaumont/Woodard defence of Hasluck’s Moscow initiative earned plaudits from Nick Hasluck<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Hasluck, *The Chance of Politics*, pp. 87, 95 & 185-9.

<sup>6</sup> Herman Kahn, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate: challenge and response*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Garry Woodard & Joan Beaumont, *Paul Hasluck as Minister for External Affairs: Towards a Reappraisal*, AIIA, Canberra, 1998, pp. 1-52.

But this was nothing to compare with the plaudits from Arthur Tange when we wrote that “by striving officiously to keep the Westminster tradition alive [Hasluck] may well have helped to kill it.”<sup>8</sup>

The trend begun by Hasluck’s famous rebuke of Ambassador to Vietnam, David Anderson, in September 1964 and the exclusion of departmental (and Defence Committee) advice from the decision to go to war on 17 December 1964 reached its nadir in the Howard years, when frank and fearless advice was forbidden. (Alexander Downer’s claim to the contrary at Tange’s memorial service should have brought down a thunderbolt from on high – or even two, as I like to think that up there, where the saints go marching in, the two old foes have been reconciled).

The 1960s was also a warring period in Southeast Asia. It is fitting that the cream of Australia’s war historians are at this forum to reflect on political, military and politico-military aspects: on how we went (and go) about making decisions on war, and justifying them; on the differing experiences of the British and US ways of war; and on alliance management and the seeming continuity in Australian Prime Ministers wanting US ‘boots on the ground’ (in Laos in 1961, *maybe* in Borneo in 1963, certainly in Vietnam in 1964-5, and later, curiously, in Timor in 1999). And now Darwin? We shall not learn the full story of the decision on marine rotations to Darwin before 2062, which makes it so important that we get right the history of the 1960s, for which the paper trail is better.

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<sup>8</sup> Garry Woodard & Joan Beaumont, ‘Paul Hasluck and the Bureaucracy the Department of External Affairs’ in Tom Stannage, Kay Saunders & Richard Nile (eds), *Paul Hasluck in Australian History*, Queensland University Press, St Lucia, 1997, pp. 143-151.

Analysis by many historians and political scientists of the Vietnam War has helped us to understand Iraq, an ongoing exercise, as the Chilcot Inquiry shows<sup>9</sup>. John Winston Howard attempted a pre-emptive strike here by dismissing comparisons as politically inspired, historically inaccurate and designed not to help but to hinder.

Howard's invocation of George Santayana when inaugurating the Hasluck Foundation recently should not be interpreted as a change of heart – he thought he was quoting Winston Churchill. Santayana also provides a motto for this splendid AIIA series: “a man's feet should be planted in his country, but his eyes should survey the world.”



*Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick (left); Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, T. K. Critchley (centre); and the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman at the Prime Minister's Residence in Kuala Lumpur during Malaysia Day celebrations in 1963. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0270).*

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<sup>9</sup> The Iraq or Chilcot Inquiry chaired by Sir John Chilcot, is a British study on Britain's involvement in the Iraq War. See <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/>.



## **The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1960-1972: An Overview**

*Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA*

In the early 1960s the Soviet bloc and the West had entered into an erratic process of détente punctuated by moments of crisis, such as the Hungarian rising of 1956 and the controversy over American spy aircraft in 1960. Gravest of all was the Cuba crisis of 1962, after which there seemed to be an international recognition that the United States and the Soviet Union were unlikely to push their differences to the point of a Third World War. Tension, punctuated by crises, defined the relationship between the West and the communist states during the era.

However, there was also a growing recognition that the communist bloc was not monolithic and that the People's Republic of China under Mao Zedong was a new and unpredictable factor. Whereas the Russians usually went through the accepted forms of diplomacy (though they played it very tough), China, especially after its demonstration of a nuclear capacity in 1964, was an unknown. This was, of course, partly due to the fact that Australia, like the United States, had missed the opportunity of establishing diplomatic relations with China when Mao first came to power. By the 1960s general mistrust had hardened into suspicious certainty.

In reality, in the fifteen years since Mao took power in 1949, China's record was less aggressive than either Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia in their heydays. The Korean War of 1950-53, when communist North Korea invaded the South, could be seen as a Chinese try-on, using North Korea as a cat's-paw. When the United Nations intervention pushed the North Koreans back towards the Chinese frontier, the Chinese were



quick to intervene; but they later supported the truce that left the two Koreas divided in roughly the same proportions as before.

Since that time, China's expansive tendencies had been limited to a successful invasion of Tibet, over which China had claimed suzerainty since long before the Communist regime, and to consolidating a hold on the inland around Mongolia though in the process causing friction with the Soviet Union. Years of tension with the Nationalist regime in Taiwan, the survivors of Chiang Kai-shek's regime, who still claimed to be the legitimate government of China, never quite escalated into warfare. A clash at the Himalayan border between China and India caused international alarm in 1962, but after a few days the dispute subsided into a diplomatic wrangle. Although these incidents did not escalate into international conflict, the language of international revolution employed by Mao's China against what it took to be a hostile Western world was dismayingly belligerent and had to be taken seriously.

While hindsight might suggest that these fears were unfounded, they were understandable among a generation of Australians who had expected a Japanese invasion in 1942 and whose population had been reinforced since 1945 by an influx of British migrants who remembered the fall of France and the battle for Britain, as well as continental Europeans, many of whom were fugitives from communist regimes. Nor were Australians unique in eyeing China nervously. Cambodia's leader Norodom Sihanouk expected that China would come to control the whole of Southeast Asia. Yet, paradoxically, from 1957 onwards Australia was building up an export trade in wheat and other commodities with China. The Chinese might be potential invaders, but they could still be trusted to pay their bills.

## **Decline of the Colonial Empires**

Other international trends fed Australia's sense of uncertainty. Although Prime Minister Menzies set great store by Australia's British connections, his government took out insurance by allying itself with the United States through the ANZUS Treaty of 1951 and becoming a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. Between 1961 and 1963 the United Kingdom, facing economic decline, was seeking admission to the European Economic Community. Fearing that some Australian exports to Britain would be disadvantaged, the Menzies government protested vigorously but ineffectually until, fortuitously, France's veto on Britain's admission in 1963 provided a reprieve. Throughout the 1960s, however, Britain's once-dominant share of trade and investment in Australia would steadily fall, the decline accelerating after 1967.<sup>1</sup>

Politically and economically the Empire was shrinking. The end of the Second World War ushered in a period of decolonisation. Britain led the way by withdrawing from India and Pakistan in 1947 but retaining them within the British Commonwealth, though India and before long Pakistan owed no allegiance to the British Crown. Other former colonies in Asia and Africa followed, so that by 1961 the meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers had ceased to be a "white man's club." Instead, South Africa was obliged to quit the Commonwealth in 1961 because of its unacceptable apartheid policies. Menzies was only the most prominent of the Australian politicians who felt discomfort at the new and, at times, emotional debates of a multiracial Commonwealth.

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<sup>1</sup> For details see 'Trade since 1900' in Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia 2001*, no. 83, cat. no. 1301.0 ABS, Canberra, 2001, pp. 1035-1039.

Decolonisation had an impact on Australia's regional interests and exposed the Australian Government to the attention of the United Nations, with its growing membership drawn from newly-independent Asian and African nations, as well as an increasingly independent-minded Latin America. After the Second World War, the United Nations confirmed Australian trusteeship of the eastern half of New Guinea. At first Australian policies seemed based on the expectation that it would take many decades to weld the clans and tribes of Papua New Guinea into a unified nation with a common language and values. The ancient Romans in Britain seemed a model.

However, during the 1950s pressure built up in the United Nations for the colonial powers to shed their burdens. Of the two super-powers, the Soviet Union was happy to support the push for decolonisation and the United States could never quite forget its own origins in a colonial revolution. By 1960 the Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, was speaking in terms of thirty to fifty years in Papua and New Guinea, only to find Menzies, returning from a meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers, convinced that in such cases it was "best to go sooner, rather than later."

Australia's near neighbours, Indonesia and West New Guinea, were a complicating factor. After four years of post-war struggle, the Netherlands had been obliged in 1949 to yield the Dutch East Indies to an independent Indonesia. Because of the attitude of the Chifley Labor Government, Australia was seen as sympathetic to the new regime. During the 1950s its leader, the wily but volatile President Sukarno, balanced two powerful sources of support, the Indonesian Army and the Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI). Part of his strategy involved appealing to nationalist sentiment by insisting that Indonesia was still incomplete, though his definition of

unfinished business was conveniently flexible: at times, it included the entire Indonesian archipelago, including Portuguese Timor and British North Borneo; at others, all the territory formerly governed by the Netherlands pointing to West New Guinea.

When Indonesia became independent in 1949, the Dutch retained the western half of New Guinea, which was arguably ethnically distinct from the rest of Indonesia. During the 1950s some Australians speculated that the two halves of New Guinea might be federated into a single political unit, perhaps with the addition of the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). The Australian Government was properly cautious about encouraging any such speculation or the equally fanciful notion that the territories of Papua and New Guinea might someday become the eighth state of the Australian Commonwealth. Instead, the Australian Government entered into practical measures of co-operation with Dutch New Guinea on issues such as customs duties and border control.

The Australian Government clearly considered the Dutch safer and more predictable neighbours and, in 1957, reached an understanding that they would aim to develop the two halves of New Guinea towards self-determination at a similar pace. However, the Department of External Affairs under the veteran minister R G Casey was still careful not to antagonise Indonesia; indeed, after a goodwill visit by the Indonesian foreign minister in 1959, the Menzies Government issued a declaration that if the Netherlands and Indonesia could reach agreement about the future of West New Guinea, Australia would do nothing to oppose it.



*Paul Hasluck and Norman Makin in conversation at the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in London, January 1946, in a scene from the 1946 film 'AUSTRALIA at UNO'. Makin, who was a sitting Labor member, was the leader of the Australian delegation. Hasluck, who had been recruited to the Department of External Affairs in 1941, would enter politics at the 1949 election. In the scene Hasluck is telling Makin "We should get the telegram tonight," referring to the Cabinet's decision on New Guinea and Nauru. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-1139).*

### **The Post-Casey Department of External Affairs**

Thus matters stood at the beginning of 1960 when Casey, in his seventieth year, decided to retire from politics. The Department of External Affairs, of which he had been minister for nearly nine years, was staffed at the senior level by men who had been recruited from various backgrounds during the Second World War and the post-war settlement that created the United Nations. After the often chaotic, if at times creative, period with Dr H. V. Evatt as minister in the

1940s, the department's officers found Casey a safe pair of hands under whom they could develop a shared sense of professionalism. This was enhanced in 1954 when the 40-year-old Sir Arthur Tange became the departmental head. Unfortunately, for all his experience, Casey was curiously ineffective in presenting a viewpoint in Cabinet, especially after the 1956 Suez crisis, when he was understood to have disagreed with Menzies' gung-ho imperialism but resigned himself to acquiescence: "suffering in silence", as one observer put it.<sup>2</sup>

A possible successor to Casey was the Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, who had been all too successful as a diplomat in the formative years of the United Nations, arousing Evatt's jealousy and eventually resigning under pressure. Encouraged by his wife, who believed that he would make a better Minister for External Affairs than Evatt, Hasluck somewhat reluctantly entered politics as member for a Western Australian seat in 1949. Since 1951, he had been a highly competent Minister for Territories, with Papua and New Guinea among his responsibilities. However, Hasluck was not offered the External Affairs portfolio; instead Menzies took it himself.

Hasluck's own explanation was that he had unfinished business in Papua and New Guinea and it would have been the wrong time for him to make the move. But Garry Woodard in *Asian Alternatives* offers another story: one in which Menzies consulted Sir Arthur Tange, who assured him

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<sup>2</sup> This period is covered in the AIIA's previous book in the *Australian Foreign Ministers* series: Melissa Conley Tyler, John Robbins and Adrian March (eds), *R G Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-1960*.

that Hasluck would not be welcome in the Department.<sup>3</sup> Some have questioned whether Menzies would have allowed himself to be swayed by a public servant, even by one as powerful as Tange, and I have found no confirmation elsewhere. However, even if the story was no more than credible Canberra gossip, it must have got back to Hasluck; this would explain why his relations with Tange were so dysfunctional when he eventually became minister in 1964.

With Hasluck out of contention, the Prime Minister turned to the Attorney-General Sir Garfield Barwick, an outstandingly successful Sydney barrister who had entered politics in 1958 and was regarded in some quarters as leadership material. His biographer David Marr states that “from early 1961 all major cablegrams on external policy were automatically routed to Barwick.”<sup>4</sup> When a sharp swing of the electoral pendulum almost unseated the Menzies Government in December 1961, Menzies decided it was time to formalise the handover of External Affairs to Barwick. From Perth, Alexandra Hasluck reported to a friend that Paul was “very disappointed” and “more fed up with Menzies than ever. He is in a very restive mood.” For a while he expressed interest in appointment as Ambassador to Rome, but he eventually knuckled down to labour on in Territories.

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<sup>3</sup> Garry Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> David Marr, *Barwick*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980.



*Dr H. V. Evatt (left) with the Indonesian foreign minister, Subandrio (centre), and Prime Minister Robert Menzies (right) at Parliament House, Canberra on 11 February 1959. (C of A/DFAT : HIS-0245).*

## **Sir Garfield Barwick**

Barwick was Minister for External Affairs from December 1961 to April 1964 and historians have varied in judging his performance. Writing in 1969, Trevor Reese deemed him “not a strong and impressive political figure” who held office “for too short a period to make a durable imprint on Australian policy.”<sup>5</sup> But Barwick’s biographer David Marr tells a different story. During 1960 and 1961, Australia, confronted

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<sup>5</sup> Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States : a survey of international relations, 1941-1968*, Royal Institute of International Affairs by Oxford University Press, London & New York, 1969.



by increasingly provocative Indonesian behaviour over West New Guinea, had tended to slide back into urging the Netherlands to stay, although it was known that the Dutch were pessimistic about their prospects. Soon after the Kennedy administration came to office at the beginning of 1961 it became clear that the United States would not support the Dutch in continuing. According to Marr, it was not until January 1962 that Menzies finally accepted these “hard facts of international life” after a confrontation with the newly appointed Barwick. “The task,” says Marr, “was not something another Liberal minister could have succeeded in and survived.”<sup>6</sup> Barwick could be seen as the pilot of a return to Casey’s policies of accommodation with Southeast and East Asia, but more effective than Casey because he was less ingrained in old party prejudices.

Barwick was helped by building up an excellent working relationship with his departmental head, Sir Arthur Tange. Although there was a convention that no individual should stay head of department for more than about five years and Tange had now served seven, including two uneasy years with Menzies, Barwick was in no hurry to get rid of him and dodged the issue. Barwick and Tange were like a first-class barrister taking briefs from a skilled and experienced solicitor. If, in dealing with foreign officials, Barwick was sometimes inclined to take on too much the aggressive manner of a cross-examining counsel, Tange was there to restrain him. Within the office Barwick’s informal and gregarious style sometimes softened the impact of Tange’s formidable persona.

Barwick was unable to give his full-time attention to foreign policy, as he was still Attorney-General with contentious trade practices regulations to steer through Parliament. He had also

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<sup>6</sup> Marr, *Barwick*.

come to politics too late to be a skilled parliamentarian. But he deserved credit for patient and restrained handling of relations with Indonesia. In 1962, the Netherlands finally yielded West New Guinea to the United Nations for handover to Indonesia in 1963, subject to what turned out to be a hollow commitment to consult the inhabitants of West New Guinea at a future referendum.

Assuaged on one front, Indonesia immediately found a new source of grievance to the North. Having borne the brunt of suppressing Communist insurgency in Malaya in the 1950s, Britain sought to strengthen an autonomous Malaya by joining it, in 1963, to a Malaysian federation including Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah (formerly British North Borneo). Sukarno soon proclaimed a wish to crush Malaysia as a neo-colonial stooge. Britain, although already wishing for financial reasons to reduce its responsibilities east of Suez, felt obliged to maintain a military presence in the region. Both Malaysia and Britain looked to Australia for help, but Australia was tardy in response because Barwick did not want to antagonise Indonesia unnecessarily.

Barwick's biographer Marr, however, argues that Menzies and other senior members of Cabinet were gradually pushing for a stronger response, so that by the beginning of 1964 Barwick was losing ground.<sup>7</sup> This has a bearing on Garry Woodard's conjecture that if Barwick had remained at External Affairs he, with the support of Tange, might have resisted successfully his colleagues' pressure to send an infantry battalion to Vietnam in 1965.<sup>8</sup> We shall never know whether Barwick could have turned the outcome, because

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<sup>7</sup> Marr, *Barwick*.

<sup>8</sup> Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*.

suddenly in April 1964 he resigned to become Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia.



*Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies shaking hands with Indonesian President Sukarno during the first Australian prime ministerial visit to Indonesia, 1959. Indonesia foreign minister Dr Subandrio can also be seen in this image (centre) on Menzies' right. (C of A/DFAT : HIS-1166).*

### **Sir Paul Hasluck**

A successor had to be found quickly. Some of the Victorian Liberals lobbied in favour of Harold Holt, arguing that after five years as Treasurer a spell at External Affairs would enhance his already considerable qualifications for the prime ministership. But Menzies took the view that Hasluck, who had at last moved from Territories to become Minister for Defence in December 1963, could not be passed over.

Hasluck assumed the External Affairs portfolio in April 1964. In his place as Minister for Defence another Western Australian was appointed, Shane Paltridge. Paltridge was the kind of 'plain-blunt-Aussie' character who tended to appeal to Hasluck. They were to work together closely during the next year and a half.

Historians have not dealt kindly with Hasluck's five years as Minister for External Affairs. Michael Sexton has cast him as an eager promoter of US and Australian involvement in an unnecessary Vietnam War.<sup>9</sup> This view was also endorsed by Gregory Pemberton, who, like Sexton, had worked on sources in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Malcolm Booker, who served in both Territories and External Affairs, complained that: "Since Hasluck had made up his mind on all the basic issues there was no scope for developing new strategies to deal with the changing international environment."<sup>11</sup> He also criticised Hasluck's avoidance of personal contact and insistence on making decisions only on the basis of written submissions and minutes. It was impossible, he claimed, to "engage Hasluck in a genuine dialogue on policy."<sup>12</sup>

Hasluck would not have minded it that staff in the Department of External Affairs found him aloof. As an officer of the department he had suffered too much from Evatt's capricious and personalised style of leadership. In reaction, Hasluck went

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Sexton, *War for the Asking: How Australia Invited Itself to Vietnam*, New Holland, Frenchs Forest, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam* Allen & Unwin, Sydney & Boston, 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Malcolm Booker, *The last domino: aspects of Australia's foreign relations*, Collins, Sydney, 1976, pp. 191.

<sup>12</sup> Booker, *The last domino: aspects of Australia's foreign relations*, pp. 191

to the opposite extreme of insisting too rigidly on formal procedures. After ten years in his service, his secretary, Miss Dusting, had become a formidable guardian of her employer's privacy, protecting him sedulously from unplanned callers. Hasluck felt that he needed this privacy, as he had brought with him from Territories the habit of giving personal attention to as many as possible of the departmental files. Barely possible in Territories as that department's responsibilities grew, it was an impossible aim given the wide-ranging ambit of External Affairs. Eventually Hasluck hampered his capacity for constructive analytical thought about the problems of foreign policy by his insistence on mastering the day-to-day detail of departmental issues, not allowing himself time for wider strategic considerations or for reading and consultation.

It might have been otherwise if his relations with his departmental head, Sir Arthur Tange, had been easier. It did not help that one of Hasluck's first actions was to inform Tange that his time as departmental head would finish and that he would exchange positions with the ambassador to New Delhi, Sir James Plimsoll. Hasluck had a high regard for Plimsoll, whom he had tried to entice to the Department of Territories a few years earlier. Many, including Tange himself, believed that Hasluck was getting rid of a too-powerful departmental head to make way for a more pliable successor. Hasluck was too reticent to explain that he was merely the messenger reporting a decision already made by Menzies. Unfortunately, Plimsoll did not come to Canberra for nearly a year so that during that time Hasluck and Tange were yoked together, for what Tange considered "the most frustrating and unproductive era in his career."

Tange's resentment smouldered for decades. In 1969 he told McMahon, then the newly-appointed Minister for External

Affairs: “Men who for years had been encouraged to apply freshness of thought to problems created by Australia’s environment, and who happily gave up more leisure than most to do it, found themselves shut off, discouraged, from expressing themselves and frequently rebuked.” Some members of the department, such as Garry Woodard, found it easier to identify with Tange than with their remote minister.

Yet others formed a different impression of Hasluck. Plimsoll wrote: “With you as Minister there was a genuine two-way traffic of ideas and the formation and enunciation of policy have very much your imprint.” Walter Crocker wrote: “I, like most of our Ambassadors, valued your firm and masterly control of your subject and your Department.” Perhaps that was the trouble. Where Barwick had been content to fire the bullets that Tange moulded, Hasluck wanted to mould his own bullets. The want of confidence between the two men crippled their ability to work together during one of the most critical years in Australia’s diplomacy.

Yet, in most important respects, Hasluck’s policies showed continuity with those pursued by Barwick and Tange. He gave priority on his first overseas tour to Southeast Asia, visiting Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. In Jakarta he had an hour’s conversation with Sukarno and several hours with Subandrio and Nasution, the foreign and defence ministers respectively. “Djakarta was depressing in many ways but very illuminating,” he told his wife, “We talked plainly, but they seemed to set themselves out to be friendly.”<sup>13</sup> Apparently Sukarno afterwards said that

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<sup>13</sup> Letter from Paul Hasluck to Alexandra Hasluck, 8 June 1964, from the collection of Hasluck’s papers held by his son and daughter-in-law, Nicholas and Sally-Anne Hasluck, Claremont, Western Australia.

Hasluck (unlike Barwick) did not lecture him: “He tells me what he thinks and lets me tell him what I think.” At the end of their session Sukarno presented Hasluck with a large stuffed Sumatran tiger.

On returning to Canberra, Hasluck was confronted with the problem of disposing of the beast. He remembered that he was the Number One ticket-holder of his local Australian Rules football club, Claremont, who by a happy coincidence are known as the Tigers. Protocol forbade him to dispose of an official gift into private hands, but with a minimum of publicity the tiger could be placed on permanent loan with the Claremont Football Club.

The problem of freighting the tiger from Canberra to Perth was solved when Sir Robert Menzies offered to take it as cargo in the VIP aircraft on his next visit to Western Australia. Unfortunately, nobody thought to inform Dame Pattie Menzies about the arrangement and during the journey, while visiting the powder room, she was startled to be confronted by the snarling fangs of a ferocious beast. Hasluck was abject in his apologies, but Dame Pattie was “very facetious about the whole business.” On the day of its arrival, Claremont won the Western Australian premiership by four points, and Hasluck wrote: “I dared not give it to Claremont that night as it would have been hugged to death by the stampeding thousands.” Despite this agreeable episode, he told his wife: “I do not feel optimistic about Indonesia.”

For Hasluck, the surest way of ensuring that Indonesia and other neutral or friendly countries in Southeast Asia did not fall into the communist camp was through forward defence in Vietnam. The Vietnam War was not merely a civil war but a clash of international power groupings. He told the House of Representatives in August 1964: “North Vietnam, which possesses the largest army on the Southeast Asian mainland

and which has behind it the even greater power of mainland China, has been active in war, infiltration and subversion,” leaving “no alternative to using force as necessary to check the southward thrust of militant Asian communism.”<sup>14</sup> The phrase “militant Asian communism” sat oddly with his recent instruction to Tange that departmental communications should refer to threats from a specific country rather than a generalised communism.

In practice, Hasluck was hopeful that Sino-Soviet disagreements might induce the Russians to take a role in helping to contain China. This was the message which he brought in October 1964 to the leadership who had just taken over in Moscow – Alexei Kosygin as Premier and Leonid Brezhnev as First Secretary – and Andrei Gromyko, who had been foreign minister since 1957 and was his old sparring partner from the first years of the United Nations. He was half right. The Soviet Union wanted to contain China, but it was to be as patron to North Vietnam rather than widening the breach with China by cosying up to the West.

Shortly after visiting Moscow, Hasluck went to Paris. There he had a good reception from the French foreign minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, who regarded him as a great improvement on Barwick and was so impressed with Hasluck’s love of French literature that he arranged for Hasluck to have a conversation with General de Gaulle, at which Hasluck wisely spoke English. Given this respectful relationship, it is odd that Hasluck did not pay more attention

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Hasluck, Ministerial Statement in Australia, House of Representatives 1964, *Debates*, no. 33, 11 August, 1964, viewed 12 October 2014, <[http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/hansard80/hansardr80/1964-08-11/toc\\_pdf/19640811\\_reps\\_25\\_hor43.pdf](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/hansard80/hansardr80/1964-08-11/toc_pdf/19640811_reps_25_hor43.pdf)>.



to the French Minister's advice. Couve de Murville poured cold water on Hasluck's idea of using the Russians to contain the Chinese. When Hasluck argued that China's aggressive postures were exerting pressure through fear on its weaker neighbours, Couve de Murville disagreed. China, he said, "has three aims, to protect herself from external aggression, to achieve international acceptability and to develop its resources." He rejected the domino theory and with the wry realism of a defeated colonial power suggested that "although North Vietnam was receiving help from China, if peace were achieved by a process of neutrality, North Vietnam would be resistant to China. The Chinese would be eager for a settlement with the United States."

Events were to justify Couve de Murville, but Hasluck was unable to heed his insights, or to ease the path for dialogue with China. Writing privately to an old friend in Perth he said: "My own feeling is that we should not rush to admit China to the United Nations on terms which China dictates unilaterally, but that the terms on which China should be admitted should be laid down by the United Nations itself."<sup>15</sup>

Peter Edwards, in his chapter in this volume, discusses the next twelve months in Southeast Asia, so it is here sufficient to note that Hasluck in December 1964 supported the decision, in principle, to commit an infantry battalion to Vietnam. This disregarded the reservations of his departmental advisers, although in April 1965 when it came to the actual decision to send the battalion, he was alone with

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<sup>15</sup> Letter from Paul Hasluck to Geoffrey Burgoyne, 16 December 1964, from the collection of Hasluck's papers held by his son and daughter-in-law, Nicholas and Sally-Anne Hasluck, Claremont, Western Australia.

McMahon in urging delay, in this case following departmental advice. He was almost certainly perturbed about the need to secure South Vietnam's consent to the move, as well as asserting civilian authority over the pushy defence chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger.

During 'the year of living dangerously' in Indonesia (1965) Hasluck continued the policy of restraint and was rewarded when in October 1965 an army counter-coup removed the communists from influence in Jakarta and reduced Sukarno to a figurehead. This paved the way for a fresh and constructive relationship with Indonesia, which Hasluck was to pursue.

With the departure of Tange for New Delhi and the arrival of Sir James Plimsoll in April 1965, there were easier working relationships within the Department of External Affairs – partly, according to Canberra legend, because Plimsoll kept a capacious bottom drawer into which inconvenient communications disappeared.

Hasluck's performance as foreign minister has been overshadowed by his involvement in the Vietnam War. A major reason that this war became contentious, far beyond Australia's involvement in Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan, was because it was fought partly by conscripts selected in a ballot. This broke with the convention that only volunteers should serve overseas.

It was twenty years since the end of the Second World War, and the younger generation was used to living with threats of a Third World War that never materialised. There was not the pool of unemployed there had been in 1939 when many enlisted for financial security. Television brought the realities of war into everyday households and the visits of celebrities like The Beatles demonstrated that crowds of young people could not easily be controlled.

Men of Hasluck's generation found it hard to come to terms with the outlook of the young in the 1960s. When he tried to reason with them, as at the Monash University teach-in of 1965, Hasluck's words seemed pedestrian and lame against the rhetoric of a Jim Cairns. Hasluck could only stick resolutely to Australia's commitment, feeling much of the time, as he said in his autobiography, that he was "the wrong driver in the wrong truck."<sup>16</sup>

He tried to fight free of the impression that Australia was meekly subservient to the United States, despite the need for great and powerful allies, but this posture was undermined when Prime Ministers Holt and Gorton uttered sound bites: "All the way with LBJ" and "We'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with you." To Plimsoll he wrote: "We also need to show that we reach conclusions for ourselves and do not simply support whatever America says or does."

He was more forthright with Britain, informing ministers on his first visit to the United Kingdom that "we do not expect Britain to assist in the defence of Australia and frankly did not believe that she would have the capacity to do so." Although, during 1966 and 1967, British ministers assured the Australians that they would retain a presence east of Suez, it cannot have been really surprising when the Wilson government decided that because of financial difficulties Britain would be calling home its legions east of Suez in 1971.

It was easier for Britain to withdraw when it became apparent that the new regime in Indonesia under General Suharto was firmly entrenched and prepared by an agreement in September

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Mucking About: An Autobiography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 287.

1966 to end the confrontation with Malaysia. Between 1966 and 1968, Hasluck visited Indonesia four times and built up a sense of mutual confidence. He is generally regarded as having a creditable record of constructive networking with the emerging nations of Southeast Asia.

As for Vietnam, during 1966 and 1967 it was possible to hope, and even to believe, that the US-led military intervention would succeed. Negotiations with China were not a practical proposition as the country was embroiled in its Cultural Revolution. To a scholarly liberal like Hasluck, dialogue was impossible with a regime that despised the scholarship of the past and was given to parading dissident intellectuals in dunce's caps before jeering mobs, before sending them off to the collective farms. But in 1968 order was restored, with the pragmatic Zhou Enlai in a position of enhanced authority. At the same time a number of the old certainties began to crumble. The shock of the Tet Offensive early in 1968 was followed by President Johnson's decision in March to call a partial halt to the bombing of North Vietnam. Then, as the presidential elections drew near, the bombing stopped entirely and the United States moved cautiously towards peace talks. Johnson's successor, the Republican Richard Nixon, continued this process. Australia was consulted about none of these manoeuvres, and Hasluck was more than once caught out as a spokesman for yesterday's policies.

By 1968 Hasluck began to contemplate retirement. Having been defeated for the party leadership by John Gorton in January 1968 he soldiered on dutifully but without much spark of fresh creativity. He saw his role as the shepherding of impetuous prime ministers, stronger on charm than he but less given to systematic thought. He found his closest allies among the senior civil servants – Sir James Plimsoll and Sir John

Bunting at External Affairs, as well as Sir Edwin Hicks at Defence. It was a relief when Gorton offered him the governor-generalship, to take office from April 1969.

### **Post-Hasluck Foreign Ministers: Freeth, McMahon, Bury, and Bowen**

Hasluck was fortunate in the timing of his departure. He had identified himself too thoroughly with the view that China was a menace whose designs must be contained by US (and Australian) presence in Vietnam. He would have found it hard to adapt to Nixon's policy of disengagement. It is less easy to understand how it was that between 1969 and 1972 the Australian Government was so slow to acknowledge that change was in the air, but remained sterilely committed to the attitudes of the early 1960s.

One explanation would lie at the ministerial level. From 1941, the Department of External Affairs had been provided with ministers of substance and ability: Evatt, Spender, Casey, Menzies, Barwick and Hasluck. In the four years after Hasluck's retirement in February 1969 the portfolio had four different ministers: Freeth, McMahon, Bury and Bowen. A phrase of Disraeli's comes to mind: "transient and embarrassed phantoms"<sup>17</sup>. But veterans in the Department would remember that Spender in little more than a year made a distinctive impact. What of the quartet who held office in the last years of the Coalition ministry?

Gordon Freeth was another Western Australian who entered Parliament at the same election as Hasluck in 1949. He had

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<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Endymion*, Longmans & Green, London, 1880.

held several ministerial offices competently if not brilliantly, but had not made his first parliamentary statement on foreign policy until 1967. He seemed at first content to continue along Hasluck's lines, albeit with a more genial presence within the Department and with a readiness for cautious innovation. But at the federal election of December 1969, when there was a strong swing against the Gorton government, Freeth was one of those who lost their seats.

The conventional wisdom has it that he was punished for having asserted, in August 1969, that the presence of Russian naval units in the Indian Ocean was not necessarily a cause for alarm and might even help détente. This heresy cost him Democratic Labor Party preferences and possibly others who normally voted Liberal but, as Western Australians, were sensitive to Indian Ocean security. Other factors may have been more important. Although it is true that, apart from six years in the 1940s, Freeth's rural constituency had never returned a Labor member, it was a year of drought and Freeth had not been nursing his electorate as carefully as he might. But many Liberals concluded that Freeth paid the price of his lapse from orthodoxy. This impression was reinforced by a kind of Indian summer for the Democratic Labor Party which had four members in the Senate in 1969 and five in 1970.

William McMahon was moved from Treasury to External Affairs. Another of the parliamentary intake of 1949, and by now the longest serving Liberal cabinet minister, he lacked charisma and was mistrusted by many of his colleagues. They called him 'Billy the Leak' because of his too-close association with the Packer media. Because of these shortcomings, historians have tended to underestimate his competence. He continued his predecessors' policy of maintaining good relations with the consolidating Southeast Asian nations. This was demonstrated in May 1970 when the

Indonesian government called a regional conference at Jakarta to discuss what steps could be taken to stabilise Cambodia. In the early months of 1970 the United States, in a carefully-phased series of air attacks, had bombed eastern Cambodian provinces where units of the Viet Cong were thought to be operating. Cambodia's neutralist Prince Norodom Sihanouk was ousted in favour of a more or less pro-Western regime. This stirred up attacks from Communist insurgents, the Khmer Rouge.

The Jakarta conference was notable less for its capacity to influence events in Cambodia than the constructive role played by McMahon. It was his finest hour. He played a useful role in assisting Indonesia's initiatives and in encouraging a hitherto diffident Japan to take a leading part. Significantly, neither the United States nor Britain was invited to the conference, and this suggested that Australia's Southeast Asian neighbours were prepared to regard it as an acceptable equal who did not carry too much post-colonial baggage.

However, some important aspects of Australian foreign policy remained frozen, mainly concerning Vietnam. President Nixon proclaimed his Guam doctrine, giving the South Vietnamese notice that they must defend themselves. In 1970, US forces began to withdraw from Vietnam and Australian troops followed. At home, the opinion polls showed that the majority of Australians supporting the war, hitherto steadily consistent, began to melt away quite quickly. Anti-Vietnam demonstrations continued with unabated vigour, and the government gained little praise for prosecuting conscientious objectors who were sent to prison. Within the Department of External Affairs, Plimsoll and Sir Keith Waller exchanged positions, the former going to Washington and the latter becoming head of Department for four years. Despite the

presence of these highly skilled professionals, the Australian Government seemed crassly unable to read the portents of change in the United States. Time and again a shift in US policy left the unprepared Australians stumbling in its wake.

During McMahon's term in the portfolio from November 1969 to March 1971 the structure of the department was overhauled to create a number of specialist units. This reflected the influence of Waller, but was also a response to the decision of the Labor Opposition under Whitlam to participate in the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and the upgrading of the department's information flow. There was also a change of name to the Department of Foreign Affairs, perhaps reflecting a greater sense of national autonomy. McMahon changed little else before March 1971, when he became leader of the Liberal Party and hence Prime Minister after the self-immolation of John Gorton. However, it was McMahon's voice rather than either of his two foreign ministers who seemed to speak for Australia in 1971 and 1972.

His first foreign minister was the former treasurer, Leslie Bury. Bury was a gentlemanly Anglo-Australian who had shown some capacity for independent thought in 1962, when he was dumped from the Menzies ministry for questioning whether Britain's entry into the European Common Market would be as calamitous as Menzies and McEwen claimed. A contender for the party leadership in 1968, he was no favourite of McMahon's and lasted less than five months.

During 1970 and 1971, China's relations with the Western world were thawing perceptibly. In October 1970 for the first time a majority of members of the United Nations, though not a sufficient majority, voted in favour of admitting China to membership in place of Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan. Italy, Canada and several other non-Communist nations had



afforded diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China. Somewhat pointedly, the Chinese did not renew their contracts for the purchase of Australian wheat in 1970, giving preference to Canada. It may be significant that before appointing Bury as foreign minister, McMahon had seriously thought of offering the job to a Country Party front-bencher, Ian Sinclair.

In the United States, President Nixon commissioned a report which, in February 1971, recommended normalisation of relations with China. Soon the embargo on trade with China would come down. Reading the omens, Whitlam secured an invitation to lead a delegation from the Labor Opposition to visit China in July 1971. At his meeting with Zhou Enlai, he defended Australian membership of ANZUS and SEATO but stressed interests in common with China. McMahon scoffed, but was then hugely disconcerted to learn that Henry Kissinger had made a secret visit to China preparing for an official visit by President Nixon. McMahon tried to put a good face on accepting the shift in policy, but it was all too much for his foreign minister. Leslie Bury complained that Australia should not always be dragged along at the chariot wheels of the United States. McMahon allowed four days for the resultant backlash to gather and then sacked him.

Bury was succeeded by Nigel Bowen, who had followed Barwick as member for Parramatta and subsequently as Attorney-General. Bowen was thoughtful and conscientious, but he had none of Barwick's brilliant aggressiveness. The only unorthodox thing about Bowen was his birthplace: a log cabin in British Columbia. At the United Nations later in 1971 he registered Australia's abstention on the resolution to admit the People's Republic of China and to oust Taiwan, but under his watch no progress was made towards formalising diplomatic relations with China. Bowen continued to assert

that China was likely to stir up insurgency in the region and the younger generation of Liberal cabinet ministers used similar language. Probably the ablest of them, the Minister for Defence, Malcolm Fraser, said in his Deakin Lecture of 1971 that China was not to be trusted. Even the restoration of the trade in wheat in September 1972 did little to shift the government's mindset. But since 1970, Australian public opinion polls had been moving perceptibly from the old dogmas of the Cold War. It was not surprising that in December 1972 Whitlam came to power at the head of the first Labor government in twenty-three years.

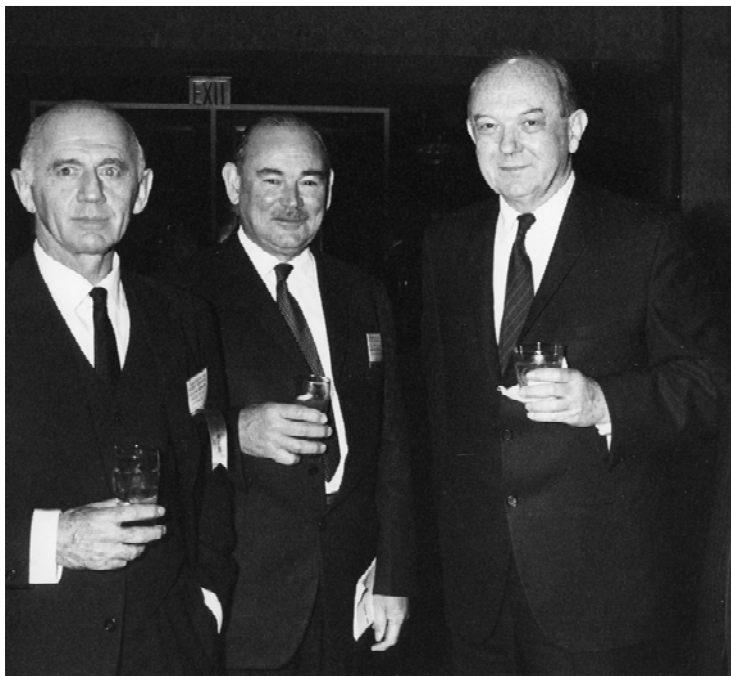
## **Conclusion**

In the early 1960s a plausible case could have been made for Australia's anti-communist foreign policy, but the decade had been one of challenge and change. If anything, it is surprising that Australian foreign policy did not show greater adaptability in responding to change.

It would be easy to place the responsibility on the Democratic Labor Party, the mouse that roared and kept the Liberal Party elephant in subservience for nearly two decades. But, as the biographer of Paul Hasluck, I might suggest another motive that resonated with many men of his generation. During the Second World War, Hasluck served his country as a bureaucrat in Canberra and it was a sensitive point with him that he never heard a shot fired in anger. His elder brother, though a married man with children, volunteered for the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, was taken prisoner at the fall of Singapore, and died miserably in Changi. Lewis Hasluck and many others like him had died because Australia, Britain, the United States and other democracies had not stood up to Germany and Japan while there was time. Appeasement had become a dirty word.

## The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1960-1972: An Overview

Hasluck and those of his generation who thought like him were determined never to be appeasers.



*The Far East-America Council Conference on Asia on 7 October 1968. Left to right: Australian Treasurer William McMahon; Australian Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck; US Secretary of State Dean Rusk; and Australian Ambassador to the United States Sir Keith Waller. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0551).*

## **Discussion**

### **Professor Joan Beaumont FASSA FAIA:**

Thank you for that wonderful overview and those insights into the Hasluck relationship. I believe you're writing a biography on Paul Hasluck at the moment, that is nearly finished and promises to be a treat from what we've already heard. Now, my notes said that as moderator, I have the right to ask a question before opening to the audience.

I've been trying to make the making of foreign and defence policy comprehensible to the young Majors and their counterparts from other services at the Army Command and Staff College this week, and when I think about the causes of war, one of the questions that came to me was 'whatever happened to ideology?' I was going to ask you, as a starting question really, how much you think ideology, however you define it, influenced these various practitioners of foreign policy? In particular, whether ideology might explain the slow reaction of the late 1960s and the early 1970s to the changing global environment as a kind of cognitive dissonance of people who were, just to put forward the thesis, true believers in the ideology of the Cold War?

### **Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I think that both Barwick and Hasluck in their different ways would have seen themselves as pretty empirical people without preordained philosophy. In fact, John Burton's major criticism of Hasluck was that he hadn't any ideology. However, everyone has an ideology, of course.

In Hasluck's case, the trouble was that once he had made up his mind on a question, he found it very difficult to shift. I think we have to look at the role of the Democratic Labour Party as the mouse that roared and spooked the elephant of the Liberal Party. It is noticeable that once Whitlam came to

office and Armageddon didn't follow immediately, that the Democratic Labour Party vanished from federal politics at the next election, but I think this could be a little too simplistic. I think that when Australia missed the opportunity of establishing diplomatic relationships with China in 1949-50 that it missed a source of information and that would be one of the reasons why the mindset stayed frozen in the worst years of the Cold War.

**Robert Lowry:**

I'm interested in how the Department coped with the coup in Indonesia in 1965. Can you explain a bit on that area?

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

Well, so far as I've seen it, and others may have gone into the archives more deeply, I think, at first, they felt it was too good to be true. The Department could not be sure that Indonesia under the new regime would be any different to what it had been under Sukarno, given to flirting with the Communist Party of Indonesia, given to making aggressive noises about neighbouring countries.

It was only gradually, over several months into the Autumn of 1966, that the attitude became relaxed, that there was a realisation that Suharto was there to stay. The Australian diplomatic representation in Jakarta had always been of a high quality and even in the most dramatic days of 1965, unlike the British, the Australian Embassy was unmolested and normality was continued. There was no reason why the Australian Government should look that gift horse in the mouth. I think that's about the story.

**Mike Fogarty:**

You talked about the relationship between Tange, Hasluck and Menzies. I'll put it to you that it's interesting that Menzies waited so long to knock off Tange because, to my mind, if

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you're aware of Bill Hudson's book,<sup>18</sup> Casey and Tange were compromised because they were against Suez. Why did it take Menzies so long to get rid of Tange as head of the department?

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

Well, it is surprising that Menzies didn't move him on in 1960 or 1961 and I do not know the answer. I think that once the decision had been made to oust Tange in 1964, it was extremely bad personnel management to keep him dangling for nearly twelve months before Plimsoll could arrive. Other governments would have been more peremptory, I think, in telling Plimsoll that he had to pack his bags and get to Canberra quicker than that. But at any rate, if anyone can throw a light on that mystery, I'll be delighted to acknowledge it.

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIA:**

I do cover the transition in my biography of Tange.<sup>19</sup> It was partly that a permanent head was a permanent head, and if he were determined to be permanent, he could be remarkably resilient. Menzies kept dropping hints, blunter and blunter, but Tange had a remarkably thick skin; he simply didn't want to go. He also knew that he had support from people like Barwick later on, but he was initially determined to dig in; and he was able to, in the culture of the time, given John Bunting's comments on the relationships between Menzies and senior public servants, as you've already mentioned.

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<sup>18</sup> W. J. Hudson, *Blind Loyalty: Australia and the Suez Crisis 1956*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Edwards, *Arthur Tange: Last of the Mandarins*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I think it could be said that although there was a convention. In fact, Alan Watt lasted for only 4 years. It was still a very young convention. It hadn't become deeply entrenched, so there was nothing grossly unusual about Tange staying for nearly eleven years.

**Jeremy Hearder:**

Yes, I think that, as Peter Edwards says, the tradition, the way things were with permanent heads is a very important part of explaining this. Menzies, for his part though, had become increasingly impressed with Plimsoll; he had worked quite closely with him in the 1950s in Canberra and spent four months of the year in New York after that and, I think, Menzies increasingly saw Plimsoll as the logical successor to Tange.

As to what happened in 1964 and why Plimsoll was delayed for so long: after Hasluck carried out Menzies' instruction to Tange that he had to move and instructed Plimsoll that he was to be the next secretary. Why Plimsoll was delayed was that Plimsoll really didn't want to be secretary. He eventually took it on simply as a matter of duty. He had all the wrong ideas about being a secretary. He said to Laurence McIntyre, "When I'm Secretary, I'm just hoping that the department will carry on, will work." He didn't have any particular vision or want to change it or anything like that. Menzies, of course, wanted him particularly because of his policy, not because of his management style. What happened was that Plimsoll managed to persuade Hasluck to tell Menzies that he would like to complete two years in New Delhi. Now, I think Tange may have had a few personal reasons why he wanted to stay on in Canberra too and that's another reason there was this delay. The other thing with Plimsoll was that he hoped against hope that when Athol Townley died in December 1963, who

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had been announced to be the next ambassador in Washington. Plimsoll hoped that maybe they might change things around and make him ambassador in Washington instead of secretary of the department. It was Keith Waller who became ambassador in Washington, and so that also caused the delay, as far as I can see.



*From left to right: W. Kent Hughes; Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies; Australian Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck; and Australian Minister for Defence Athol Townley. Photographed in 1963. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-1089).*

**Professor William Maley:**

Just briefly on the question of whether there was a convention regarding the head of department, I'm inclined to wonder about that, really, because just quickly running my mind over some other departments, there were some very long-serving secretaries during that period: Sir Tasman Heyes at



Immigration from 1949 to 1960, Peter Hayden again at Immigration for 11 years after that and Sir Henry Bland at Labour, who was there for about 15 years I think. I'm not sure the convention is quite capturing the nature of the pressures at that point.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

It's always been put to me that the five year convention was something peculiar to External Affairs.

**Dr Russell Trood:**

I might have just had my question answered, actually, by Geoffrey Bolton, but I'm interested in this balance between the Departments of Defence and External Affairs as the means by which policy is developed. One characterisation of this period might be that there was a kind of militarisation of Australian foreign policy, which may or may not have reflected the power and influence of the Department of Defence.

It may particularly reflect that the influence of Tange, wherever he was, was the most powerful influence. The observation Jeremy just made about Plimsoll was interesting in that respect, but I wonder whether you have a perspective on the extent to which Defence or External Affairs or perhaps even the Prime Minister's office had a very strong influence on policy, and whether we're talking here more about the capacity of individuals to influence the direction of Ministers' views.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I find that a very feasible thing. If you look at the Minister for Defence from the end of 1963, Hasluck briefly, then Shane Paltridge, then Allen Fairhall, and, a little later, Malcolm Fraser, these are all pretty energetic ministers with an agenda that they want to see carried out. That's seconded, of course,

at least in the time that the decision was taken to go into Vietnam, by the chief of the armed services, being Sir Frederick Scherger, who was very well regarded by Menzies. He was the only serving officer who was even considered in 1965 when the notion was that we would at last have an Australian Governor-General; Scherger's is one of the names that was on the short list. He was utterly confident that we could just go into Vietnam; if we sent our troops the Americans would look after it and everything would be right.

I sense, though I'm open to correction, that this was a thing against which Hasluck eventually reacted, that Scherger was just forcing the pace too hard for Hasluck's cautious temperament. So, I think it's arguable, looking also particularly at the capacity of Fraser in the late years against the foreign ministers, that the pendulum could have swung a good deal towards Defence.

**Philip Flood AO:**

I don't want to dispute in any way the emphasis that Professor Bolton gives to the main issues that took place during that period, from 1960 to 1972. I just want to add a comment: that it was a period of a very significant change in Australians' attitudes to Europe. This was the period of the three British applications to join the Common Market; it was the first one that had the real decisive impact.

When Menzies saw the kind of settlement that looked possible for Britain in 1962, until De Gaulle vetoed it in early 1963, he was appalled and horrified. This was an extraordinary wake-up call for Menzies that Australia's interests were not synonymous with Britain's. That sort of wrecked a reversion to the view that Tange and others had sustained, that this was exposing the delusion that Menzies had.

It led, in part, to and Hasluck having to seek a policy of a less Anglo-centric view of Europe, and one of the manifestations of that, although not a major issue, not along the lines of the kinds of issues that Professor Bolton was mentioning, was the decision to seek membership of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and it was Barwick who led that. Barwick thought, initially, we can just do it through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, let's join the DAC and then establish ourselves and then join the OECD, but then he was moved to Chief Justice.

Hasluck initially was very cautious about joining the OECD and sceptical about Barwick's view, but then he came to accept Barwick's view and push that line. Ultimately, it all happened under McMahon, or perhaps technically under both Bury and McMahon, but ultimately under McMahon. But, the credit for that policy, the credit for a broader view of Europe has to be given to Barwick and Hasluck, and that was a significant change through that period.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I agree with that entirely. The task of writing the Lord's Prayer on a 10-cent piece is a little difficult, and I think some important factors have probably been left out in my narrative.

This period in the 1960s coincides with the time when Britain ceases to be Australia's major source of investment and trade, and is overtaken by the United States and Japan and others. Also, in 1971, the British start tightening their immigration regulations so that it's no longer possible for Australians to move in and out as it had been until then. All of that, I think, must have changed the climate of thinking.



*The Australian Delegation on 30 October 1968 at the OECD Development Assistance Committee High Level Meeting at the Organisation's Headquarters, Chateau de la Muette, France. Australian Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck (right) talks to K. C. O. "Mick" Shann (centre), First Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs. (C of A/DFAT : HIS-0552).*

**Mack Williams:**

Just to follow up on Philip Flood's comment because we both served in Brussels in the early 1960s, I think you talked about a balance between Defence and Foreign Affairs, but certainly in my time in the mid-1960s, the tension between the departments of External Affairs and Trade (which had not yet been amalgamated) was very strong over what we do to keep the British out of the Common Market, to the point where Trade was sending its own communications through the Post Office rather than through External Affairs. It got to that sort of level. Now, leaving aside the triviality of that, this meant that there was another tension in the minds of both the

Department of External Affairs and the minister, that they had to keep in mind; not as prominent as other issues, but it was there, I think.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

Well, I'll agree with that. It seems to me that there's a terrible inconsistency between the view that China is this totally untrustworthy monster that might emerge from its cave at any moment and that China is a reliable, paying customer that can always be counted on to meet bills and ask for more wheat. It's possibly schizophrenic.

**Mack Williams:**

McEwen's role in all this was very, very prominent.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

Yes.

**Professor Joan Beaumont FASSA FAHA:**

You have the same dissonance in relation to Japan, which I've often been asked about in relation to Japan with the very early trade treaty [the Agreement on Commerce, signed 1957] when there's still enormous anger among families and ex-prisoner-of-war communities. So at that time, we managed to keep our personalities separate in some senses, I think.

**Professor William Maley:**

On that particular point, my recollection of that period was that in the second half of the 1960s, there was extensive popular reporting in Australia of all the turmoil associated with the Cultural Revolution. There was a perception, at the mass level, and I'd be interested to know what it was in the Department, that China was in a phase of acute unpredictability. So in a sense you'd just keep negotiating your contracts for wheat as long as you could. I can't remember anybody thinking, at the time, that China was the

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kind of power whose behaviour or trajectory could easily be anticipated; at that time, there was just so much internal turmoil going on in China.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AI FASSA:**

Certainly memory suggests that's how it was, yes.

**James Ingram AO FAIA:**

During that period I was head of the branch that dealt with East Asia and Southeast Asia and several other things, but I think that what Philip Flood has said is more than just accurate.

With Hasluck, we used to send submissions up on the Cultural Revolution; we took the view I suppose that, bluntly expressed, it was such a period of turmoil that it wasn't possible to predict an outcome and we saw no scope for any kind of intervention on the part of Australia. I don't see such a contradiction between our trade interests and our political interests. In my experience in those years the basic political policies, the foreign policies on the political side, were really set by the mind frame of the Liberal Party, and Menzies. In effect, Hasluck was to me the embodiment of those attitudes. And he changed, too, for some of the reasons on the record, and I think there are others.

On the other hand, the real realists were these trade people and they're the ones who effectively pursued what you might say were the areas where there was real scope and a necessity for Australia to pursue, with its dependence on agricultural exports at that time. Mining wasn't very important at all. The trade people were the true realists, in my view. They actually effected what I would regard, historically, as the more important elements of Australia's total foreign relations than the ins and outs of our foreign ministers, all of them, I would say, when the basic policies were set.

**Dr Ann Kent:**

Mr Ingram came in, I think, in 1968 or some time like that, but under Max Loveday, during the previous period when I was working in the China section, there was great tumult about the attitude to China among officers like Steve Fitzgerald, Brent Clark and myself. We would meet annually before the UN vote on China in Malcolm Booker's office and he would put the question, 'Should we vote for China to replace Taiwan in the United Nations?' We would all give very good arguments why this should be the case. It would have been close to an hour that we'd speak, and then Malcolm Booker would say, 'Alright, but we can't do it.' That was it. So, every year, we repeated this play of democracy within the department. Over the Vietnam War, too, there was a great deal of ferment to be found, among junior officers at least.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I wonder if I could take this opportunity to ask you if there's any light to be thrown on the decision to send an embassy to Taiwan in 1966? There are two stories, one of which is that it was all Harold Holt's doing in a moment of exuberance and that the Department of External Affairs just trailed on afterwards. The other view tends to suggest that External Affairs brought it home. I think it probably was Holt, but I'd like to know whether I'm wrong or not.

**Dr Ann Kent:**

I can't really say whether it was Holt or not. That's what I understood at the time, but also Chiang Kai-shek was a very, very effective spokesperson for Taiwan and I think he may have been very persuasive.

**Professor Joan Beaumont FASSA FAHA:**

Any other reflections on that?

Geoffrey Bolton

**Garry Woodard FAIA:**

Can I just ask that am I right that Malcolm Booker was at that dinner with Holt and Chen Chih-mai?

**Dr Ann Kent:**

I don't know, unfortunately.

**Zara Kimpton OAM:**

As Dr Kent said, it was interesting to hear you say that you would have these sort of charade meetings when you would recommend an action, but I suppose in the end it came down to a political decision. It wasn't a departmental decision.

**Dr Ann Kent:**

Yes, that's right. It was not a departmental decision.

**Zara Kimpton OAM:**

That was the frustrating thing but it was then the reality?

**Dr Ann Kent:**

It was interesting that the meeting was held every year, but the fact remained.

**Andrew Farran:**

Just in regard to the opening of the Embassy in Taipei, I'm wondering whether the conclusion of the Asian-Pacific Council (ASPAC) had something to do with that, because that was about that time. Clearly, ASPAC was a grouping which included Taiwan; it was a multilateral innovation and it may have necessitated a stronger presence in Taipei, I'm not sure.

**Philip Flood AO:**

I've never heard of that.



**Professor James Cotton FAHA:**

Just a quick point, and that's that there was a measure of debate in the Department because Ann I think was responsible for writing the piece, one of the very interesting pieces in *Current Notes* on the Cultural Revolution, on the doctrine of the long-lived people's war that Lin Biao pronounced in 1965. Assiduous readers of *Current Notes* would be able to detect a quite different interpretation to what's going on in China. So, I mean there was some measure of debate.



*Australian Prime Minister, John McEwen (right), and Australian Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck (standing behind McEwen), greet the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand E. Marcos, Mrs Marcos, and family, upon their arrival in Australia (22 December 1967) to attend the memorial service for the late Harold Holt. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0504).*

**Mack Williams:**

On a totally different issue, I appreciate trying to get everything into the one document, Professor Bolton, but I think we tend to gloss over the Cambodian angle of Vietnam in these days, which was actually a unique situation.

I was in Phnom Penh at that time, where we represented US interests in Cambodia and Cambodian interests in Vietnam. We represented both sides, which was pretty unique in diplomatic practice and history. More can be thought about that as a chance to show that there was some independence in Australian foreign policy at that stage. The Americans were happy for us to do that, the Cambodians were happy for us, and it comes back a bit, to the Jakarta meeting, that spirit that Australia can actually do some things like this.

**Robert Furlonger CB:**

I can't help but wonder whether Plimsoll's relations with Hasluck were actually so much better than Tange's had been with Hasluck. I recall a conversation I had with Alf Parsons on one occasion about the time Alf was High Commissioner to New Zealand, and Plimsoll came through. Alf happened to mention to Plimsoll that he'd seen Hasluck three times in the last few weeks and Plimsoll's reaction was 'Heavens, I'm lucky if I see him once a month.'

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I'd leave that one to Jeremy Hearder to some extent. I know that in the Hasluck papers there's a very full and interesting discussion of Plimsoll's character from time when Plimsoll died in 1987. Walter Crocker and Hasluck exchanged several letters trying to tease out what it really was that made Plimsoll tick. I've always sensed that if anybody had access to Hasluck, it was Plimsoll. It may have been as seldom as that, but nobody was doing much better.

**Jeremy Hearder:**

I am interested in the sort of feeling of procedure that Hasluck brought from Territories to External Affairs. Plimsoll's diary shows when Hasluck was in Canberra, he would see him for one appointment a week in Hasluck's office. That was it. I can find no trace of Hasluck ever having him around for a meal or a drink or another basis, but when they went overseas, it was Jekyll and Hyde. I mean, Hasluck was completely different. People who handled Hasluck overseas found him an entirely different sort of person.

I think that the relationship between Hasluck and Plimsoll is a rather peculiar one when you compare it with the rest of the Department, but Hasluck did have this extraordinary respect for Plimsoll right from the beginning. I don't really know what Plimsoll personally thought of Hasluck except that he was always loyal to Hasluck for years after his time at the Department.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

May I offer one quick footnote? At that meeting at the New Zealand High Commissioner's house the evening that Harold Holt drowned, the guests at dinner were the Gortons and the Haslucks, with one other person: Plimsoll.

**Professor Joan Beaumont FASSA FAHA:**

Social diaries are a great entry into these worlds. We've had a great discussion and we owe that I'm sure very much to the fascinating introduction we had from Professor Bolton. Thank you once again.



*Prime Minister Harold Holt holding a federal cabinet meeting at Government House in Canberra on 26 January 1966 following the swearing-in ceremony of the new ministry. Seated around the table from the left foreground: Minister for Defence Allen Fairhall; Minister for Territories Charles Barnes; Minister for Works Senator John Gorton; Postmaster-General Alan Hulme; Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck; Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Trade and Leader of the Country Party John McEwen; Prime Minister Harold Holt; Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party William McMahon; Minister for Primary Industry Charles Adermann; Minister for Supply Senator Denham Henty; Minister for Labour and National Services Leslie Bury; Minister for National Development David Fairbairn; and the three Services Ministers who were not members of Cabinet but had been called in for defence talks: Minister for Navy Frederick Chaney; Minister for the Army Malcolm Fraser; and Minister for Air Peter Howson. (NAA: A1200, L53604).*



## **Confrontation and Vietnam**

*Professor Peter Edwards AM FAHA*

In January 1965 the Australian Government decided to send an infantry battalion to Borneo to help Britain and its Commonwealth partners to secure Malaysia's borders from Indonesian incursions. Three months later the Government announced that it would send another battalion overseas, this time to help another powerful ally, the United States, to protect another Southeast Asian country, the Republic of Vietnam (commonly known as South Vietnam), against the threat posed by insurgents supported by the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (commonly known as North Vietnam). The commitment to Borneo ended successfully within two years and, although it had been a major concern for policy-makers, the media and the general public in the early 1960s, it was quickly forgotten by most Australians. By contrast the commitment to Vietnam became Australia's longest and most controversial overseas conflict in the twentieth century; for years afterwards it became a symbol of strategic, diplomatic, military, political and social failure and ineptitude.

These commitments were the culmination of what was taken at the time to be Australia's greatest foreign and defence policy challenge since 1945, the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia. Australia had for some years based its policies on keeping both its major allies, the United States and Britain, which Prime Minister Robert Menzies famously called 'our great and powerful friends', engaged in supporting the security of non-communist governments in Southeast Asia. By late 1964 and early 1965 a major problem had arisen. Each ally was asking for Australian support in one conflict, while downplaying the importance of the other. In pressing

Australia to help support Malaysia against the Indonesian 'Confrontation,' Britain characterised President Sukarno as a Southeast Asian Hitler, while seeking to minimise its exposure to the growing conflict in Vietnam. At the same time the United States was calling for support in Vietnam, and urging Australia and New Zealand to keep their commitment in Confrontation to the lowest possible level. Australia hoped that quadripartite talks between the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand would establish a common approach to these two conflicts, but it proved difficult to secure such talks and when they were held they revealed more differences than common ground.<sup>1</sup>

While there were many parallels, the two commitments were handled quite differently. One is now held up as an example of 'best practice' in diplomacy and foreign policy-making, while the other was an example of bad process leading to seriously flawed outcomes.

How should we explain this difference? According to Garry Woodard, the answer lies essentially in the contrast between two Ministers for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick from 1961 to 1964 and Paul Hasluck (who was knighted after he

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based largely on the evidence and arguments of the relevant sections of Peter Edwards (with Gregory Pemberton), *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1992. A shorter account of Australian diplomacy in this period, drawing upon *Crises and Commitments* and other volumes of the *Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, may be found in *Australia and the Vietnam War*, New South Press, Sydney, 2014.

left the portfolio) from 1964 to 1969.<sup>2</sup> Woodard, like the departmental head Sir Arthur Tange and other diplomats of the time, and in sharp contrast to Barwick's biographer David Marr, suggests that Barwick was close to an ideal foreign minister.<sup>3</sup> He established a good rapport with the diplomats of his department; he was willing and able to stand up to the Prime Minister and to win battles over policy in Cabinet; he gave priority to establishing good, long-term relationships with neighbouring countries, especially Indonesia; he adopted a robust attitude in dealing with powerful allies, basing Australian policies in Southeast Asia on Australia's national interests rather than giving priority to alliance loyalty; and, more specifically, he placed Confrontation ahead of Vietnam in shaping Australia's commitments to the two conflicts in Southeast Asia.

By contrast, Woodard, Tange and their colleagues saw Hasluck as a dour and uncommunicative minister, whose relations with the departmental officers were formal and frigid. In their view, Hasluck was determined not to challenge Menzies; he was used by Menzies to suppress the influence of External Affairs on policy-making; and at a crucial time he placed Vietnam ahead of Confrontation as the conflict of greater importance for the security of Southeast Asia and therefore for Australian security.

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<sup>2</sup> Garry Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> See also Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, mandarins and diplomats: Australian foreign policy making, 1941-1969*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2003; Peter Edwards, *Arthur Tange: Last of the mandarins*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006 chs. 7 and 8; David Marr, *Barwick*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980.



Woodard concludes his account of Australian policy-making in this period with a counter-factual.<sup>4</sup> He suggests that if Barwick had remained foreign minister for another year instead of being succeeded by Hasluck in April 1964, Australia might either have avoided becoming committed to the Vietnam War or have greatly reduced its commitment and the attendant costs. While respecting the research and analysis in Woodard's account, I find it hard to accept his counter-factual hypothesis. To explain my view, it is necessary to look at the development of Australian policy towards Southeast Asia, and especially at the role of another foreign minister of the time, Robert Menzies.



*The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck (left), with Prime Minister Harold Holt (centre) and the Secretary-General of SEATO, Jesus M. Vargas (right) at the opening ceremony of the 11th SEATO Council Meeting in June 1966. (C of A/DFAT : HIS-0371).*

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<sup>4</sup> Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, ch. 16.

## **Australia's Strategy Against Communism**

By the late 1950s the Australian Government had developed the strategic posture known as forward defence. Although sometimes derided as meaning nothing more than fighting imaginary foes in Asia before they supposedly invaded Australia, it actually meant rather more than that. Australian forces would be structured, equipped and trained to operate only in Southeast Asia, not in the greater Middle East or other parts of the world. They would only act in close cooperation with either the United States or Britain, or preferably both. Australian forces would rely on these powerful allies to supply the greater part of any military power that might be required, as well as providing logistic and other support to the much smaller Australian contingents. There was also a strong preference for acting in the context of a broad multi-national coalition, like the one within which the Australians had fought in the Korean War.

What is not always recognised is the caution with which the forward defence posture was applied. The pattern was set by the government's handling of the initial commitment to the Malayan Emergency in 1950, the first year of the post-war Menzies government. While Menzies made no secret of his pro-British and anti-communist views, his response to Britain's requests for assistance in the campaign against the communist insurgency in Malaya was very cautious. Menzies and his Cabinet colleagues questioned whether Australia would be placing itself in opposition to Asian nationalism and whether bombing was a useful tactic against an insurgency in the Malayan jungle. Before taking any decision, Menzies despatched a high-level military mission to Malaya, both to investigate the situation with Australian eyes and to advise the British on how to conduct jungle warfare, a subject on which the Australians considered themselves expert by virtue of the

New Guinea campaign in the recent world war. In the event, Menzies despatched transport aircraft, the least controversial form of commitment, and later, as a reaction to the outbreak of the Korean War, bombers. In this crucial stage of the campaign, no troops were sent: there were no Aussie boots on the ground.

These decisions prefigured Australian policy throughout the 1950s. While the government spoke often of the threats posed by communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia, it placed a low ceiling on defence expenditure, giving priority to what was then called 'national development', the growth of the domestic economy and infrastructure. Not only would Australian forces not be sent anywhere beyond Southeast Asia, despite the reverence accorded to Gallipoli, Tobruk, the western front and other distant battlefields; even in Southeast Asia the Australian commitment was stronger in rhetoric than in military force. From 1954 Australian policy in the region was shaped largely by the outcome of the Geneva Conference and the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). For the Menzies government, SEATO appeared to offer many benefits: links with both Britain and the United States as well as with regional allies such as Thailand and the Philippines; a multilateral environment, capable of curbing any excesses of an over-confident US commander, like General Douglas MacArthur in Korea; and access to the high-level planning of great and small allies. SEATO was intended primarily to secure non-communist regimes in Laos, Cambodia and especially South Vietnam. In the late 1950s, Australian Governments spoke more about SEATO than about ANZUS.<sup>5</sup> Australian troops were not sent to Malaya until 1955, by which time it was clear that campaign had

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<sup>5</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, pp. 184-5.

effectively been won. The actual fighting in the Emergency was designated as the troops' secondary role: their primary task was to serve as the Australian contribution to the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve, the structure which kept British forces in the region.

### **Forward Defence Under Pressure**

For a time, forward defence seemed to be achieving success. The Malayan government, which gained independence in 1957, asked the Australian and other Commonwealth forces to remain until the Emergency was declared over in 1960, and even afterwards. The South Vietnamese regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem, who became the first foreign head of state to visit Australia in 1957, was also proving more successful than many had feared in the immediate aftermath of the 1954 partition of Vietnam.

In the late 1950s, however, two problems emerged. Indonesia was pressing its claim to West New Guinea, the only part of the former Netherlands East Indies that had been excluded from independent Indonesia in 1949. Australia had responsibility for the eastern half of the island, today's Papua New Guinea, under a United Nations mandate. It opposed the Indonesian claim, with the hope that the two parts of New Guinea could advance to independence, either separately or together. Australia preferred an outcome along these lines, rather than sharing an almost indefensible land border with Indonesia.

Australian fears were sharpened in the late 1950s as President Sukarno adopted an increasingly dictatorial form of government, euphemistically described as 'guided democracy', while developing closer links with both the Soviet Union and China. The dilemma for Australia was that

the United States, now clearly Australia's most powerful and important ally, was taking a quite different approach. Washington decided to help Sukarno to incorporate West New Guinea as the price for keeping him out of identification with the communist bloc. The divergence between Australian and US policy culminated in the US decision in 1962 to facilitate an Indonesian takeover. Menzies told the Australian people that we simply had to accept this policy because of our reliance on 'great and powerful friends'. The Australian Government was deeply concerned about US support could be assured in the face of a potential threat from an expansionist Indonesia to Australia's responsibilities and interests in New Guinea: this was a major, but often under-estimated, driver of Australian policy in the crises of the early and mid-1960s.

At same time, Australia faced worrying signs of deterioration in the non-communist states of former French Indochina. After his apparent success in the late 1950s, President Diem's increasingly autocratic methods and his favouritism for his fellow Catholics were alienating Buddhists and many others who were potential allies in the anti-communist cause. By this time the Vietnam War, which many historians prefer to call the Second Indochina War, had already begun in effect, as Hanoi and Washington were fighting a proxy war in Laos. At the time and ever since, many have underestimated the importance of Laos in Hanoi's strategy for gaining control of all of Vietnam, as well as hegemony over Laos and Cambodia. Intermingled with the twentieth-century struggles of decolonisation and the Cold War was the centuries-old desire of the people of the Red River delta for regional hegemony.

These tensions came to a head in a series of crises in Laos between 1959 and 1961. For the most part, they occurred in the two years from January 1960 to December 1961, when

Menzies took the External Affairs portfolio himself. This mattered. During the preceding decade Menzies devoted much of his attention to relations with London and Washington, while Casey, as External Affairs Minister, developed Australia's relations with the immediate region. In these two years, Menzies had even more reason than usual to devote his attention to the relations between the great powers and to see regional developments solely in that context. A recrudescence of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States saw the building of the Berlin Wall and the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba.

Menzies' famously strong attachment to Britain and the Commonwealth was strained by a crisis over South Africa and Britain's first attempt to join the European common market. Moreover, SEATO was looking like a very fragile basis for the sort of coordinated Western policy in Indochina that Australia sought. It was now clear that Britain was extremely reluctant to become militarily involved; France was even more disinclined to repeat the humiliation of Dien Bien Phu and was starting a campaign for what President de Gaulle called the 'neutralisation' of Indochina; and Pakistan cared about nothing except its hostile relationship with India, which gave it a shared interest with China.

All of this came only a few years after the Suez crisis of 1956, when Menzies had aligned Australia closely with Anthony Eden's misadventure and had shared Britain's humiliation when the United States had withheld its support. The experience had made painfully clear to Menzies which of the great and powerful friends had the greater economic and military influence. In the year after Suez, Menzies announced that Australia would henceforth coordinate its military

equipment as far as possible with the United States, rather than with the United Kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, by 1960-61, the dominant concern in Menzies' mind was the reliability of both of Australia's great and powerful friends. Was Britain turning its back on commitments and responsibilities east of Suez, especially in the areas of greatest concern to Australia and New Zealand, in order to enter Europe? Would the United States remain committed to Southeast Asia, when it faced so many challenges elsewhere in the world, especially in regions of much greater importance to US national interests? Would the new Democratic administration of the young and inexperienced President John F Kennedy be as resolutely anti-communist as the outgoing Republican administration of President Eisenhower? The Kennedy administration was, like its predecessor, supporting Indonesia's claim to West New Guinea, even as Sukarno was becoming ever closer to Mao's China and being rearmed by the Soviet Union. Partai Komunis Indonesia, the Indonesian communist party, was becoming the world's largest communist party outside the Soviet Union and China. Would the United States under Kennedy also withdraw from Indochina?

It was in this context that the Australian Cabinet on two separate occasions in 1961, while Menzies was both Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, discussed the position in Laos at length and, in effect, reaffirmed a decision it had previously taken in 1959. The future of Indochina, in Cabinet's view, was of fundamental importance to Australian security and it was therefore in Australia's national interest to do everything it could to encourage the United States to remain committed to the defence of the non-communist

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<sup>6</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, p. 205.

countries of Southeast Asia. Consequently, the Menzies-led Cabinet decided that, while recognising the enormous difficulties facing non-communist forces in Laos and the rest of Indochina, Australia would support the United States in any military action it decided to take in Laos. It would prefer to do so within the multilateral SEATO context; or, failing that, with both Britain and the United States; but, if necessary, Australia would act in support of the United States alone. The Australian Government recognised that US military leaders might provoke a nuclear confrontation with China but regarded that as a risk that simply had to be taken. Since the late 1950s Australia had been offering the United States the use of facilities on Australian soil, in order to lock the US into support for Australian security.<sup>7</sup> Australia was not under pressure from Washington to become involved in other people's wars; it was seeking assurance that the United States would fight Australia's wars.

In the event, the successive crises in Laos passed without major military involvement by the United States and its allies. The major powers signed another Geneva Agreement in 1962, proclaiming the neutrality of Laos. Some in the West saw this as the best result that could be salvaged; others regarded it as essentially doing no more than delaying the inevitable victory of the communist forces. It was certainly clear that the crucial theatres of potential Cold War conflict in Southeast Asia were now South Vietnam and (too often forgotten) Thailand. The United States moved to reinforce its position in both those countries. Australia made its first military contributions in 1962, sending a team of Australian Army military advisers to South Vietnam and a squadron of RAAF Sabre fighter aircraft to Thailand.

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<sup>7</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, pp. 232-33.



As far as most of the Australian public was concerned, crises like those in Laos would come and go in Indochina, but the military power of the United States was likely to prevail in the end. The public was not aware, however, that Menzies and his ministers had taken a decision of fundamental importance. Australia would be willing to intervene militarily in Indochina alongside the United States, if that would ensure that the US remained committed to the containment of communism in Southeast Asia. To make such a commitment was in Australia's interests, partly in terms of maintaining the alliance relationship with the US, partly because the security of mainland Southeast Asia was vital to Australian security, and partly to strengthen the willingness of the US to support Australia in the event of any conflict with Indonesia, with which Australia now had a land border in New Guinea.

### **Twin Crises: Confrontation and Vietnam Escalate**

It was against this background that Australia faced the twin crises of 1963-65. The idea of linking Malaya with Singapore and the British territories on the island of Borneo to form a new federation of Malaysia was first raised in 1961. After initial hesitation, Australia came round to the view that this was a sound formula for Britain to pursue its decolonisation in the region. In January 1963 the Indonesian government declared a policy of 'Confrontation' against the concept, apparently intending to replicate the mixture of threat, bluff and low-intensity military action that had proved successful in the campaign to secure West New Guinea. After Malaysia came into being in September 1963, Sukarno's rhetoric escalated, as he declared 'a year of living dangerously' and spoke of an axis between Beijing and Jakarta, or even linking Beijing, Jakarta, Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Pyongyang. The fear that Confrontation might escalate into higher levels of military action, not only against Malaysia but also against the

Australian-administered territories in New Guinea, dominated media headlines in Australia and the private concerns of policy-makers in Canberra.<sup>8</sup> Under what circumstances, they asked themselves, could they expect United States support under ANZUS against a militant Indonesia?

At precisely the same time, and of much greater concern in Washington and around the world, the anti-communist regime in South Vietnam was falling apart. In November 1963 the assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem, with the connivance of the US, led to a seemingly endless series of coups in Saigon, with each new government looking less credible than the one before. After Kennedy was assassinated three weeks after Diem, and Lyndon Johnson became president, Vietnam policy was effectively placed on hold until the presidential election of November 1964, which Johnson contested as the 'peace candidate.' In late 1964 and early 1965, with Saigon in terminal stages of political crisis, the world debated whether the United States would seek a diplomatic solution or intervene with massive military force.

The striking feature of Australian foreign policy in this period is the contrast between the handling of the two crises. One has been praised as representing best practice in diplomacy, the other as an example of inept and underhand policy-making.

On Confrontation Barwick, who had been Minister since the end of 1961, and the diplomats of his department had considerable influence on Australian policy. Their highest priority was the establishment of the best possible relationship with Indonesia, even when Sukarno's anti-Western rhetoric and his ever-closer links with China were arousing deep

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, pp. 201-04, 240, 291-2, 329.

antagonism across the political spectrum. External Affairs engaged in an extremely vigorous diplomatic campaign, aimed at persuading the Indonesians to accept the creation of Malaysia, while encouraging the British and Malaysians to establish the new federation with the minimum of provocation to the Indonesians (and the Filipinos, who had their own objections to the creation of Malaysia). This diplomacy was the product of effective teamwork by Barwick, diplomats in Canberra including Arthur Tange, Keith Waller, and Gordon Jockel, and the able and experienced heads of mission in Jakarta, Keith 'Mick' Shann, and Kuala Lumpur, Tom Critchley. Despite the political pressures to adopt a stronger stand against Indonesia, Barwick was able to persuade his Cabinet colleagues to adopt a policy of 'graduated response' to the British and Malaysian requests for military assistance. They frequently questioned British assessments of the dangers posed by Indonesian military actions and repeatedly rebuffed requests for specific support, especially the introduction of infantry and SAS troops, despite allegations by British officials and the London media that Australia was giving too little, too late.

All of this was in sharp contrast with the way in which the Menzies government handled decisions on a potential commitment to Vietnam during precisely the same period. Meetings of Cabinet and its important Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee often discussed both issues at the same meeting and lamented the fact that they had to discuss two separate conflicts with two allies, but the critical decisions concerning each conflict were handled in markedly different ways.

On Vietnam, Menzies, it seems, used Hasluck as a block to, rather than a conduit for, any influence by External Affairs. Moreover he excluded the Defence Committee, which

comprised senior officials from Defence, Prime Minister's, External Affairs and Treasury, from any significant influence on policy-making. It seems clear that Menzies had decided that he would implement the policy foreshadowed in the Laos crises of 1959-61: that Australia would offer a battalion of infantry troops for service in Vietnam, if that offer would help to convince the United States to commit its own massive military power to the defence of South Vietnam. The only advisers whom he trusted to implement his policy were the Chiefs of Staff Committee, especially its Chairman, Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger, and the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton. Although the flamboyant Scherger and the dour Wilton were totally different in personality, both were strong supporters of Menzies' approach to Vietnam. Scherger had long favoured strong US intervention in Indochina, while Wilton was devotedly loyal to SEATO, having been chief of SEATO's military planning office immediately before his appointment as the Army's chief.

Menzies sent Scherger, unaccompanied by anyone from External Affairs, to represent Australia at a crucial meeting between military representatives of the three ANZUS allies. There Scherger blatantly disregarded his brief, drafted by the Defence Committee and approved by ministers, which instructed him not to make any commitments and to ask probing questions about the strategy that the United States intended to pursue. He was told to raise questions similar to those that the Menzies government had raised à propos the commitments to Malaya and to Confrontation: was there a viable political and military strategy? How would the local people react to massive foreign intervention? Was bombing relevant to a counter-insurgency campaign? Instead, Scherger virtually pressed an Australian battalion on to the Americans, although the Americans themselves were still debating what

strategy to pursue and had in any case only asked for an increase in the number of Army advisers, not for a formed unit of combat troops. The combination of Menzies and Scherger ensured that Australia would commit a battalion of troops to Vietnam, with no limit on the duration or size of the commitment.

Why was there such a sharp contrast between Australian policy-making on the two simultaneous crises in Borneo and Vietnam? According to Garry Woodard, the difference is essentially that Barwick and External Affairs had significant influence on the one but not the other. He has marshalled an impressive amount of documentary evidence to support his case.<sup>9</sup> It is possible, however, that Woodard underestimates one important element. Menzies was well aware of the American concern not to allow Indonesia to be pushed unequivocally into the communist camp. Just as the United States had facilitated the Indonesia acquisition of West New Guinea, so now it was pressing Britain, Australia and New Zealand to use great restraint in opposing Indonesia's Confrontation of Malaysia. Australian ministers and diplomats repeatedly pressed Washington to indicate the point at which Indonesian aggression would trigger support under the ANZUS treaty, and what form that support might take. The response from the Kennedy Administration was frustratingly cautious. US support, it indicated, would depend firstly on how successful the Commonwealth partners were in opposing Sukarno with minimal provocation and force; and secondly on support for US policies elsewhere in Southeast Asia, which clearly implied the deteriorating situation in Vietnam.

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<sup>9</sup> Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, passim.

The Australians sought every opportunity to press their case for US support over Confrontation, but succeeded only in irritating their powerful ally. Barwick, who had been the most feared barrister in the notoriously aggressive Sydney bar before entering politics, pressed the Americans hard – in the view of Menzies and Hasluck, too hard – for a document that set out the obligations that the US would accept in the event of an escalation of Indonesian aggression.

The document that was finally produced was full of qualifications and constraints.<sup>10</sup> Barwick further angered the Americans when he described it publicly in excessively positive terms. It looked to Washington as if the Australians, especially their foreign minister, were seeking to embroil the United States in a conflict in which it ardently wished to have no part. When Barwick was abruptly removed from his position to be appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court, many thought he was being sacked for annoying the Americans. That was not essentially true, but it was certainly the case that Menzies and Hasluck believed that they had to work hard to soothe American sensitivities.

The significance of all this is that Menzies and those few colleagues whom he consulted had their own reasons for complying with the Barwick-External Affairs approach to Confrontation. The diplomats believed that they were shaping a policy according to Australia's national interests, 'refined but not defined' (as they like to put it) by alliance considerations. Menzies was well aware, however, that the United States wanted the Commonwealth countries to handle Confrontation with extreme caution and restraint. Moreover, Menzies understood that offering support for the United States in Indochina was a necessary quid pro quo for ensuring US

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<sup>10</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, pp. 280-81.

support in any conflict involving Indonesia, whether in Malaysia or New Guinea. As a famous cable from the Washington Embassy made explicit, Australia's reaction to the 'more flags' campaign by the United States, which sought support in Vietnam from its allies around the world, was shaped by the desire to establish US support vis-à-vis Indonesia.<sup>11</sup>

In all that happened in the early and mid-1960s, it is important to recall that Menzies had been a young man of military age during the 1914-18 war and had been a young Prime Minister between April 1939 and August 1941. It is hardly surprising that he would have had ingrained the perception that the real question was whether the United States would become involved in a great war in Asia, in which the future of Britain and its Empire-Commonwealth around the world was at stake. The danger was not of American imperialism, it was of isolationism or at least withdrawal to areas close to home. Once committed to a conflict, it seemed, the United States was invincible. In the early 1960s it was almost impossible for Menzies and others of his generation, such as Scherger, to imagine that the United States could actually be defeated or fail to gain a military victory, once it had fully committed itself.

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<sup>11</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, p. 298.



*Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick with US President John F. Kennedy at the White House, Washington D.C. on 17 October 1963. (C of A/DFAT : HIS-0284).*

## **Conclusion**

Thus I arrive at my counter to Woodard's counter-factual. He suggests that, if Barwick had still been Minister for External Affairs in April 1965, Australia might not have become committed to the Vietnam War. My response is that it may have made little difference because the final decisions on questions of war and peace are matters for the Prime Minister.

Menzies had, in my view, decided on his willingness to commit Australian combat forces to Indochina, to ensure that the US remained committed there, during the Laos crises of 1960-61, in the period when Menzies was Minister for External Affairs as well as Prime Minister. Menzies had his



own reasons, based on his knowledge of US priorities and policies, to support the Barwick-External Affairs approach to Confrontation. It seems to me likely, therefore, that Menzies would have sidelined External Affairs in late 1964 and early 1965 just as much if they had still been under Barwick's leadership as he did with Hasluck in the portfolio. He probably would still have used Scherger and Wilton to support and implement his policies. It is possible, of course, that Barwick might have argued sufficiently strongly with Menzies and his ministerial colleagues to secure some modification of the open-ended way in which Menzies committed Australia to Vietnam. For example, Barwick might have convinced Menzies that Australia should have joined Britain and New Zealand in arguing that the Commonwealth countries were making an important contribution to Southeast Asian security by supporting Malaysia against Indonesian Confrontation. On those grounds the commitment to Vietnam might have been, if not avoided altogether, at least tempered.

We can look at the way in which Prime Minister John Howard handled the Australian commitment to Iraq in 2003 to see how a commitment, much more motivated by support for the alliance than by Australia's own immediate interests, could have been handled. Under Howard, Australian forces were committed promptly and withdrawn promptly; they operated under rules of engagement which ensured minimal exposure to risk, such that there were no combat deaths; they operated in a self-contained area of operations, ensuring that they were not closely integrated with US forces with a quite different style of operation; and Australia deployed relatively small, well-trained units, none of whom had been conscripted. As a direct result, Howard did not pay the political price for the Iraq commitment that Menzies' successors did for Vietnam.

We will, of course, never have a definitive answer to any counter-factual arguments. Nevertheless, we can say that there was a major difference in the way that Australia handled the two conflicts of the 1960s. In one, the Minister and Department of External Affairs were given a large role in policy-making; in the other, they were effectively sidelined, with the Prime Minister relying heavily on the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Barwick was certainly a different minister from Hasluck, but we must not forget the extraordinary authority of Menzies at the time. To understand these crises, we also need to remember what happened, and what did not happen, in 1960-61 when Menzies was his own Minister for External Affairs, as well as his experience as Prime Minister in 1939-41.



*Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIIA presenting on “Southeast Asia: Confrontation and the Vietnam War” at the Australian Institute of International Affairs’ Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs 1960-1972, Government House, Canberra, 19 February 2013. (Australian Institute of International Affairs).*

## **Discussion**

### **Professor Jeffrey Grey:**

There's a cartoon from an American newspaper that I use with undergraduates. It has a feisty undergraduate poking his finger at his professor and saying, "Why should we learn the lessons of Vietnam? Nobody else has!" There were a number of comments made in the earlier session, both about the perceived militarisation of Australian policy in this period, and about the role of Arthur Tange, who unusually (though not uniquely) was Secretary ultimately of both Foreign Affairs and of Defence. I wonder if I might ask you, as Tange's biographer, to provide some assessment of Tange's importance or otherwise in the formulation of the key decisions and processes that you've just outlined for us.

### **Professor Peter Edwards AM FAHA:**

I think it is fairly clear that Tange was very much involved with Indonesian policy. When Barwick was appointed minister, he came into the department literally on his first day, within hours of the appointment. This is in sharp contrast to Hasluck who was weeks in the position before he even contacted his department. That's one of the issues that the diplomats had with Hasluck. Barwick came in and more or less said, 'Well, what's the agenda?' The question of Indonesia was the major item on the agenda.

From then on, Indonesian policy, Confrontation policy, was very much a departmental matter. At the time, or at least soon afterwards, much was made of the role of Mick Shann as ambassador in Jakarta, and many commentators, not least Mick Shann himself, tended to focus on his role. He did extremely well, there's no doubt about that, but it was, to use the great cliché, a team effort. Tom Critchley in Kuala Lumpur was an extraordinarily effective and influential High

Commissioner, I think he'd been High Commissioner for something like 10 years in Kuala Lumpur and played bridge with Tunku Abdul Rahman and was closer to Tunku than many Malaysian cabinet ministers. But also, the people at home, Tange himself, Keith Waller, Gordon Jockel and Patrick Shaw, were all crucially important. So there was a real External Affairs view and departmental sense of working with Barwick on that.

By contrast, Tange was pretty much shut out of the decision-making on Vietnam. I think Hasluck was, in a sense, being used by Menzies not only to shift Tange himself but also to shut down the role of the diplomats, which was proving inconvenient to the way Menzies was going. Just on that, what I also say in the biography is that when Tange began as Secretary of Defence, many of the reforms with which he was associated related directly to his experience as Secretary of External Affairs and his time sitting on the Defence Committee chaired by the Secretary of Defence. He wanted to reform what he saw as the weaknesses of Defence, particularly its weakness in policy advice: first as a department which separate ministers for the Army, Navy and Air Force — and was really a group of departments, but also as a department that simply wasn't, neither the uniformed people nor the civilians were trained or structured to give defence policy advice, either strategic advice or advice on what Tange called 'higher defence policy'. That's what a lot of the controversial reforms in the 1970s were about.

Tange made two visits to the Vietnam War while he was High Commissioner in India. He came away impressed by the way that the US generals could talk about politics and what the Americans called 'pol-mil': the integration of politics and military. The Australian officers simply couldn't do that; they weren't trained to do that. They would say: 'That's outside our

brief. We just talk about military matters: what sort of weapons to use, tactics and so forth.’ That's one of the main reasons why Tange supported that noble institution, the Australian Defence Force Academy, to train young officers from all three services to enable them to think about the political context as well as the direct military events and materiel involved.

**Garry Woodard FAHA:**

As an aside, Peter, I think Tom Critchley played poker with the Tunku, not bridge. Tom certainly played bridge because he played a lot of it in India during the war, but it was poker that the Tunku and Tom played.

Your exposition is very thought-provoking for me. I absolutely agree that the Menzies’ Cabinet was cautious about entering into overseas military commitments and sending people overseas to fight, and therefore Vietnam becomes more of an aberration, particularly in my thesis about Barwick.

You mention the importance of coalitions in Korea and then the importance of SEATO. Certainly in the December 1964 discussions, Menzies almost immediately said to Hasluck, “Is this a SEATO operation?”. Hasluck said “No.” Menzies said, “Why isn't it a SEATO operation?” and Hasluck said, “I don't know.” Deputy Prime Minister John McEwen, who had obviously talked with Menzies before he went into the meeting, slid in and said, “Well, we should see SEATO as a paper operation and we shouldn't try and push it beyond that.” This is a question of whether coalitions beyond the two great and powerful friends were important in any way for Australia.

I think it's worth thinking about, because it questions whether it's also the same today; that is, that we think of coalitions as nations lining up behind us because we told them to do so,

without taking account of what their views, interests, and actions may be. If the decision to commit troops had not been taken in December 1964 or by April 1965 it was perfectly obvious that we were going to have no allies, that none of the Asians were going to come readily into that war and that SEATO countries were not going to go on something that impinged on the SEATO treaty.

**Professor Jeffrey Grey:**

I have just a couple of comments. First, you may remember that there was the Rusk-Thanat Agreement of 1962. The basic point was that the Thais were standing with the Americans. There were very few Asian allies, but the Thais were there and of course they did send troops, with some financial assistance. The Republic of Korea, which was never part of SEATO, also sent troops, far more troops, I think it was something like 50,000.

**Garry Woodard FAIA:**

They were mercenaries in both cases.

**Professor Jeffrey Grey:**

Yes; but even so, they're still sending troops, so it wasn't entirely without Asian allies. I think the whole atmosphere changes with successive Prime Ministers. Menzies thought, as far as we can tell, that we should just do this. It was thought that one battalion would be enough and then when the military started taking a look at this business of having a battalion integrated with an American brigade, they found it's horrible, it doesn't work.

The Secretary of the Department of the Army was unwise enough to say so publicly and it became an issue. The Army started saying, 'Well, we want our own independent task force of at least two battalions and, eventually, three.' I don't think the government saw that coming at all. When the first signs of

boosting the battalion came up, just at the time of the Malaysia-Singapore split in August 1965, at that stage, the thinking was, 'we can't send any more troops because we still don't know how that's going to impact on Malaysia, on the Confrontation situation.' Then, there was the coup [in Indonesia] and all that.

**Garry Woodard FAIA:**

On that factual comment, at the December 1964 Cabinet meeting [passage inaudible] Holt went on to make a peculiar statement. He said, "sending a formation will mean more formations": very prescient. Then, as you know, in April 1965, in Washington DC, Bunting and Plimsoll did try to get an agreement that there would only be one battalion and they were laughed at by the military. I think the military probably saw, from the beginning, that there would be a commitment of more than one battalion, though I'm not sure that anybody on the political side except possibly Harold Holt, or on the bureaucratic side except possibly [inaudible], saw that.

**Professor Robert O'Neill AO FASSA FAIA:**

I just want to come back to the Australian-British connection. We tend to look at Britain, these days, through the lens of the 21st Century. But 50 years ago, Britain was still a pretty powerful nation and we had all kinds of connections to it and, therefore, Britain loomed very large in our policy-making. I was in the Army myself, from 1955 to 1968, during which time the Australian Army came out of Korea and got more heavily involved in the Malayan Emergency. The shift, via the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve, was really very handy.

Australia had been looking around for about two years since the armistice in 1953 to find an acceptable way of getting its quite sizable force out of Korea. It was proving rather elusive until Britain proposed the idea of setting up the Strategic

Reserve. Once Australia had agreed to take part in that, Britain suddenly became very supportive, substantially withdrawing our forces from the 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Division and putting forces in Malaya from all three Services. That had a lingering legacy, particularly for the Australian Army, because during the later 1950s we got to learn counter-insurgency warfare fairly seriously from people who were quite good at it. I don't mean that all the British regiments were good at it, but some were extremely good at it, and we had the chance to get alongside them. That meant that we were developing our own thinking on warfare in Southeast Asia during the early 1960s and that politicians were aware of this.

Also, you talked about Australia's desire for access to high levels of planning. We got that in spades when Major General John Wilton was appointed Chief Planner for SEATO in the mid-1950s. He then came back to Australia in late 1957, early 1958, and became Commandant of the Royal Military College. I was a cadet then, and I can remember him talking about his experience and it really was fascinating. Out of that came the desire, when we got involved in Vietnam, to have our own area of operations. As you know, Wilton was crucially important in seeing we had that.

Furthermore, right through this time, Australia's informal military connections with Britain remained very strong. Although Britain was not involved in the Vietnam war and Harold Wilson had been deaf to President Johnson's pathetic appeal, "Harold, won't you just send me a single battalion of bagpipers?", so desperate to have the British flag with his. However, Australia was getting delegations, quite large groups of British officers, coming through Nui Dat, about 20 at a time. I conducted several of them around myself and fielded their very interesting questions. That relationship has



gone on and on. Australia's cut back on the number of people we have in the UK, but if you were there in the early 1960s, there were Australian Army officers at every headquarters that you could think of. Again, we learnt a lot and those connections actually still remain useful. They've been useful during the Iraq engagement and they've been particularly thickened during the Afghanistan commitment as anyone who's listened to Professor Dan Marston at ANU can tell you.

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAHA:**

Thank you very much for that history, Bob, which you know extremely well, probably better than anyone in the room, I suspect. The Australian Army was being indoctrinated, if that's the right word, in the British-style counter-insurgency techniques, that were developed during the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation. Peter Dennis and Jeffery Grey have written the volume of the official history dealing with that.<sup>12</sup> That was a very effective collaboration, literally on the ground. Working with the British in Malaya, Australians were very comfortable in that situation: the ideas, the tactics and so on were very similar. We thought that this is where we'd learnt the game. I think many Australians, both in the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam and also in the infantry battalions, brought into Vietnam the idea that this, the British model, as it were, is how you fight this sort of war.

The Australians were pretty shocked when they very rapidly discovered that this was very different from the way the Americans fought the war. There were all sorts of comments

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Dennis and Jeffery Grey, *Emergency and confrontation: Australian military operations in Malaya and Borneo 1950–1966*, in *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, vol. 5, Allen and Unwin and the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1996.

about how they'd go in with transistor radios blaring and all that sort of thing and call in this massive firepower – when, it's about winning hearts and minds and ambushes and silent patrols and that sort of thing. And then the Australian troops discovered that by the time they were in Vietnam, from the mid 1960s onwards, the North Vietnamese had not just battalions but *divisions* in the South. So it was a different sort of war from Malaya, or it was several different sorts of war being fought simultaneously, so that the British-style techniques were not necessarily applicable. I think that's an important part of the story.

**Andrew Farran:**

Couldn't the Cabinet's dilemma over the deployment of the Army in Vietnam be summed up in the phrase, 'One battalion, not enough, two, too many'? On your reference to policy-making in the Department of Defence, when Arthur Tange got there, I think the only person who gave any thought to policy was Deputy Secretary Gordon Blakers. So, it was a one-man show.

As for the priority between Vietnam and Confrontation, it's surprising that the Department of External Affairs' profile was so low. As I recall, Mick Shann was sending cables back saying there could be war with Indonesia any day. It got to the situation that he was actually warning about the possibility of war with Indonesia. Some people will remember those cables, I think. Now, if your ambassador is saying that, and the government's priority is Vietnam and it's not doing much, the government's not listening to the Department, what's going on? You explained it, really.

**Professor Peter Edwards:**

It is possible to envisage a counterfactual where Menzies, the ministers and the policy advisers could have got together and said, 'Let's thrash out what would be a sensible policy.' One

of the questions that is often raised, both by Garry and many others, is: could we have argued for the division of labour? This is exactly what the New Zealanders were saying as they were forced into Vietnam by the Australians. The New Zealanders were saying, 'Look, why don't you say to the Americans, you can handle Vietnam, we can't actually contribute very much, but we're doing a really good job in Confrontation. We know it, we know how to handle it and we're doing it well. We understand your concerns about it and considering all that, why not leave the Commonwealth countries to handle this Commonwealth contribution, as it were, to the security of Southeast Asia, and you Americans handle the Indochina mainland.'

**Andrew Farran:**

Isn't that exactly what Barwick said to US Secretary of State Dean Rusk?

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAHA:**

That's what Barwick was trying to get across. I think Barwick could be unduly aggressive, and his brief was to find out where the United States was going to stand and he kept pushing Rusk to the point where, finally, Rusk said, 'Look, you can ask these sort of questions when you've got something. We've got 8000 advisors becoming combat involved. How many have you got?' That's when the decision was taken to send the training team. Barwick was talking about six or eight and it turned out to be a minimum of 30. He was trying to keep it limited.

**Mack Williams:**

I had just a couple of points on Vietnam. I happened to be on the ground when the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment arrived in Saigon. I had two points in particular. On the domestic political scene, we tend to forget that the DLP was very active in those days. Those of us in Saigon never

forgot that because B. A. Santamaria visited frequently, supported by Sir Charles Spry from ASIO, and they met with Brigadier Ted Serong. There was all sort of funny business going on within the Catholic hierarchies as well, so that was something which would be clearly known to convince the Prime Minister and others. It was another element to the whole thing, stiffening their backbone. Of course, the Serong element wanted to back up the British push through the British Advisory Mission to Vietnam [1961-65], based in Saigon, which was very much opposed to the way the United States was doing things, and outspoken about. They were very much opposed to it and they made a point of it, actually almost a fetish, until they pulled out.

The other point I was going to make was that there's been a lot of talk about similarities or lack of similarities between how Australia got into Vietnam and how Australia got into Iraq. I was in Washington for the last three years of Vietnamisation as we were trying to get out of Vietnam, and just to back up a point you made earlier, we were very much out of touch with what the United States was doing.

My job was to find out what the hell the Americans were doing next. It got to very basic ways of finding out. We'd get word that something was going to happen next week, that there would be an announcement on Vietnamisation. I would contact Winston Lord, who was in Kissinger's office [Special Assistant to the National Security Advisor 1969-73] and say, "Can we have lunch on Tuesday?" If he said we could, then I knew nothing was coming up because they always released their announcements on Tuesdays. If he said he couldn't, then that was important information. That was the level of intelligence we were getting at that particular point. What worries me is fast-forwarding to Afghanistan, we're in a very similar situation. That's another parallel. In other words, we

can look at parallels or not between getting into Vietnam; we can also look at parallels of getting out and particularly the way the military felt obliged to beat up the situation: “We're winning so we can get out.” We're seeing that happening all the time now, of course.

**Pierre Hutton:**

My credential is that I was in the embassy in Indonesia from 1970 to 1972 and then 1972 to 1974, I was head of the Indonesian-Malaysian section of the Department. Dr Trood can testify that I wrote a monograph for the Centre for Australia-Asia relations at the University of Queensland where I was a little shy about naming names, but I no longer have that inhibition. Some of us will be dead by the time it appears but in December of 1996, Sir Arthur Tange, giving assistance of sorts to my writing of *After the Heroic Age*,<sup>13</sup> said in respect of Hasluck, “Policy was increasingly concerned not with analysis of the international scene, but concerned with getting Australia into a war in Vietnam on issues not of our making.” Now, that's how Arthur Tange saw Hasluck.

The other thing that has always puzzled me, is that in *Crises and Commitments*<sup>14</sup> and in the Tange biography,<sup>15</sup> there is no mention of what Tange himself thought was the critical document on Konfrontasi. That is a paper which he presented on 2 February, 1965 to the new foreign minister, Sir Garfield Barwick. The British High Commissioner had seen Sir Arthur Tange, Keith Waller and Gordon Jockel must have been on holidays, because I saw the British Deputy High

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre Hutton, *After the Heroic Age*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, Griffith University, Brisbane, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*.

<sup>15</sup> Edwards, *Arthur Tange*.

Commissioner who told me all about Hitler and Sukarno and so on. It was later that, when visiting Sir Arthur Tange in retirement, someone talked about early 1965 and the evolution of Australian policy on Konfrontasi. It was described to me that Sir Arthur had said, "Harrumph," and produced, as Moreen Dee will remember, a document on Malaysia, which had gone to the Government in February 1965.

Why do I have all these boring details? Because, my informant, being well-trained in foreign affairs, read upside down the initials 'A.H.T/P.N.H.' and the name of the desk officer. Some of the language in the document is surprisingly in my view not Arthur Tange's: "We can expect that Indonesia will not turn communist in the immediate future and it will not disintegrate, it will not suffer an economic collapse. Indonesia has the potential to become the most powerful, as it is already the most populous, country in the region." Now, I was a confidant of Sir Arthur, he thought I was rather lacking in objectivity over Indonesia, but this is the document, when presented or read to Cabinet, since he tended to read documents rather than circulate papers prepared in the department, that helped to formulate our policy on Konfrontasi. It's an important document.

**Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA:**

I just want to offer two points concerning Hasluck. The first is that I'd be careful about believing that he was uniquely subservient to Menzies. His ethics were that once a decision was taken, you stuck with the Prime Minister and you didn't let any doubts emerge. With Holt and with Gorton, both of whom he respected far less than he respected Menzies, it was the same thing. He would not voice any public criticism. He would argue within the Cabinet, and there are many stories of him losing his temper and having a tantrum and sulking because the Prime Minister of the day wouldn't follow his

advice, but he kept it inside the office. The second point to make is that when Scherger went to Hawaii in March 1965 [for Military Staff talks on Vietnam from 30 March to 1 April 1965], Hasluck took the view that the Department of External Affairs should have nothing to do with this, that defence was defence and not foreign policy, and that the two should not get muddled. I've always understood that Scherger was an early, and perhaps unusual, example of a pol-mil general, and I can see where Hasluck was coming from. He liked to have clearly delineated lines of authority.

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIA:**

I think it fits with the picture that's emerging, and I'm very interested in your take on it: with Hasluck developing these principles about how the Westminster system should operate, including relations between ministers and Cabinet, between ministers and departments, and between ministers and Prime Ministers, but often taking them with a degree of rigidity, I think that in the end these practices become counter-productive. Every rule has its exceptions and I think that was possibly the difficulty with Hasluck.

**Geoffrey Miller AO FAIA:**

I had a couple of points about Australia-Indonesia Confrontation. I was in the embassy in Jakarta after the peak of Konfrontasi was over, but in 1965, when Mick Shann was still the ambassador there he would speak sometimes about his conversations with Sukarno and Indonesian foreign minister Subandrio. One point he made was that the Indonesians drew a distinction in their thinking between Britain as a would-be neo-colonialist power, on the one hand, and Australia, which would forever be part of their neighbourhood, on the other. Australia may have been drawing distinctions between what was the appropriate action in the case of Indonesia and Confrontation vis-à-vis Vietnam,

but I think the Indonesians, in their thinking, were drawing some distinctions as well.

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIA:**

That's the line that Mick Shann was very keen to press, but we should note he was pushing that to a receptive audience. That was good and that's why at the time, when the British Embassy was sacked, the Australian Embassy was left alone.

**John Robbins CSC:**

I'd just like to offer a military perspective. This period we're discussing very neatly brackets my service in the Royal Australian Regiment. I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion when we went to Borneo in March, 1965, and subsequently when we went to Vietnam in 1967. I would contend that the achievement of government policy and of various diplomatic initiatives were critically dependant on two things: firstly, the performance of our soldiers on the ground; and secondly, the calibre of the opposition.

That goes a long way to explaining success and failure in those two conflicts. When we went into Borneo, there was never any question that we would do anything other than dominate Indonesian forces. They were never present in the field in large formations or large number. Of course, it was quite the opposite in Vietnam where we found ourselves facing North Vietnamese Army formations, major formations, to my knowledge, as early as 1964. The essential difference between those two conflicts was a difference between a British Commonwealth force that was able to dominate by counter-insurgency methods and patrolling, as opposed to an essentially American force in Vietnam using very different techniques.



**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIA:**

Certainly, the calibre of the enemy is a crucial feature. I always like to recall a comment which I'm pretty sure was made by Herman Kahn, a futurologist and political scientist who soon after the end of the war, when asked "What do you see as the lessons of Vietnam?" said, "The next time we get involved in a civil war, I want to be with the Prussians against the Bavarians."

**Robert Furlonger CB:**

You rightly mentioned Mick Shann's role and Tom Critchley's role in Confrontation. The third official who should be linked with them is Gordon Jockel. Gordon was First Assistant Secretary in the Department and he provided the intellectual rationale for the whole Confrontation policy, sold it to Tange and then jointly, they sold it to Barwick.

**Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIA:**

Thank you, I think I did mention Gordon Jockel like you said. If I didn't, I certainly should, yes, I agree.

**Professor Bob Bowker:**

I wouldn't want the morning to pass without at least one Vietnam story. I was on my first posting in Kuala Lumpur from 1971 to 1973 during McMahon's visit to Kuala Lumpur in the lead up to the elections which saw McMahon lose office.

The reason for raising this is really that there's been a little bit of discussion about our relations with the United States and with Britain in the post-Vietnam period but not perhaps enough reflection on the good work that was done by Australian diplomats in the winding down of that conflict and the role which Australia played in the construction of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA). Those who worked with John Rowland in Kuala Lumpur and Duncan Campbell,

we actually had the role of the interlocutor with the Malaysians and the Singaporeans in constructing an arrangement which remains useful to this day. I say this partly because McMahon, in coming to Kuala Lumpur prior to the elections, did his level damndest to destroy a great deal of the hard work that had been done to bring those arrangements into place.

McMahon had been told by John Rowland in a cable (which I saw) that the Malaysians valued the FPDA, but in the post-Vietnam period, or as Vietnam was winding down, their focus was on the construction of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, playing down the linkage to external powers in favour of trying to find something of a regional response to the challenges that China was going to continue to pose. Rowland, in his quiet way, argued very persuasively, that in his forthcoming visit to Kuala Lumpur, McMahon should not draw too much attention to the FPDA, but rather indicate Australia's understanding of Malaysia's need to find its own way.

Well, McMahon arrived in Kuala Lumpur with a press party in tow that was already baying for blood and with Dick Woolcott as his foreign affairs adviser. In a heartbeat from arrival, he had been in to see Tun Razak, the Malaysian Prime Minister. McMahon emerged from that meeting saying how much Tun Razak appreciated the Five Power Defence Arrangements. In the meantime, the media party had surrounded a spokesman for the foreign ministry and got him to give a rather ambiguous answer to a question about Malaysia's view of the FPDA and that was all the media needed.

The media then immediately broadcast back the story that McMahon was seeking to mislead the Australian public on the degree of commitment that Malaysia really had to the Five

Power Defence Arrangements. McMahon did what McMahon did best: he panicked. He sent Dick Woolcott to try to stop the ABC stringer in Kuala Lumpur from reporting this story back to Australia. Because the stringer happened to be Chinese, this added a 'White Australia' element to the general conflagration that was breaking out around us. As a 22-year-old whose principal job in the morning was to take McMahon his newspaper, being sat down on McMahon's bed and being given a lecture on the perfidy of the Australian media, this was something which will remain in my memory for evermore.

What I saw as a consequence of this was John Rowland being victimised, despite being proven to be correct in the advice that he provided. His posting ended and he was not sent on to the posting that he had hoped to go to. There was a general sense of relief, I think, among the Malaysians when McMahon disappeared. But the quiet diplomacy that John Rowland had played, being able to deal with the Malaysians who were extraordinarily sensitive about the way in which the British had gone about their part in the Five Power negotiations, is something which I think ought to be remembered when we talk about Australia in the post-Vietnam period.

**Garry Woodard FAIA:**

Let it be also recalled that Bob Bowker was the diplomat who discovered Anwar Ibrahim.

**Professor Jeffrey Grey:**

One thing that comes clearly through the session this morning is the continuing intensity of passion and strength of view that this period continues to prompt many decades after it has, one would think, been confined – safely – to 'capital H history'. That in itself, I think, is an interesting manifestation of the way in which we continue to scratch at old wounds.



*Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, addresses the United Nations General Assembly on 4 October 1963. In his statement he welcomed Malaysia to the UN and confirmed Australia's commitment to Malaysia's defence. (UN Photo/DFAT: HIS-0283).*



## **Barwick, Hasluck and the Management of Foreign Policy towards Northeast Asia: the Limits of Australian ‘Realism’**

*James Cotton FAIA*

This chapter deals with the oversight and character of Australia's relations with the countries of Northeast Asia in the period 1961-1969. The claim, prominent in the secondary literature, that these relations were conducted according to “realist” assumptions is then assessed in relation to the thinking of Paul Hasluck. It will be shown that despite not managing to have official relations with the People's Republic of China (China), the regime in Beijing and its machinations, real and imagined, dominated the foreign policy approach of the Australian Government. No statement from an external affairs minister to Parliament or to the United Nations would have been complete without a condemnation of China and Chinese policies; indeed much energy was expended in New York in an endeavour to keep Beijing from assuming its place in the UN. Correspondingly, the interests of the 14 million people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) received more mentions in ministerial speeches than any other similar body of foreign persons on the globe, though Australian leaders maintained a studied disinterest in the Taiwanese people's actual rights and freedoms. However, until 1966 there was no resident embassy in Taipei. Significantly, when the issue of stationing a representative in Taiwan came before Cabinet in 1958, it was rejected: not because the government of Chiang Kai-shek was not representative or democratic, but because to take this step would be specifically to identify Australia with

those who believed that Chiang would, at some future time, again assert control over the mainland.<sup>1</sup>

Korea was the front line in the Cold War and Australian interests were engaged, at least to that extent. They became somewhat more focussed when the Asian-Pacific Council (ASPAC) was formed, with Seoul a prominent member, in 1965. Throughout this whole period, relations with Japan were managed not by the Department of External Affairs but by the Department of Trade (Trade and Industry from 1963) and were thus the preserve of Deputy Prime Minister John McEwen. In the relationship, direct consideration of political and strategic matters rarely surfaced – aside from cooperation at the UN to prevent China from achieving membership – though David Walton has been able to illustrate the beginnings of exchanges on security.<sup>2</sup>

Looming over this period like a giant landmark is the intellect of Paul Hasluck, Minister from April 1964 to February 1969. It is not an overstatement to claim that Hasluck undertook as his personal mission to convince Europeans and others from beyond the region of the importance of China in the central balance and thus the need to respond in unified fashion to what he took to be Chinese aggression and adventurism.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Notes for Cabinet: Australian Representation in Formosa, 12 August 1958', in Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China 1949-1972, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2002, pp. 155-57; NAA A1838, TS519/3/1 vii.

<sup>2</sup> David Walton, 'Australia-Japan and the region, 1952-65: the beginnings of security policy networks', in Brad Williams and Andrew Newman (eds.), *Japan, Australia and Asia-Pacific Security*, Routledge, London, 2006, pp. 9-29.

Ministers in these years had inherited a policy of hostility towards China, fed by the perception of China's policy in the Korean War, in the Malayan Emergency and in Indochina.<sup>3</sup> Australia had been, in December 1961, one of the co-sponsors of a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly that deemed the issue of China's membership an "important question" that accordingly required a two-thirds majority of members voting in favour to be accepted. The real rationale for this measure was as a delaying action.

Having refused for a decade to extend diplomatic recognition to Beijing, Australia's policy grew harder and harder to change with the increasing power of the communist regime and the corresponding likelihood that Beijing would not modify its policies in such a manner as to allow the government to claim that the grounds for its hostility had been removed. In the years immediately following this period, the revelations concerning the Kissinger visit, coming so soon after Whitlam's party had been to Beijing, was therefore an adverse development from which the government was never able to recover.

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<sup>3</sup> Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Ann Kent, 'Australia-China Relations, 1966-1996: a Critical Overview', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* (vol. 42, no. 3, 1996), 365-384; Edmund S. K. Fung and Colin Mackerras, *From Fear to Friendship. Australia's Policies towards the People's Republic of China, 1966-1982* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1985); David Goldsworthy (ed.), *Facing North. A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia. Vol 1: 1901 to the 1970s* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press/DFAT, 2001).



## Garfield Barwick as Minister, 1961-1964

As Minister for External Affairs, the issue of managing relations with Indonesia was Barwick's principal concern, as Garry Woodard has shown.<sup>4</sup> Yet on his first ministerial Asian tour, which included not only much of Southeast Asia but also Korea, Taiwan and Japan, Barwick acknowledged, in his account to Parliament the centrality of China. As he stated, "I was conscious, throughout a journey which skirted the formidable periphery of Communist China, that this entire region has become a primary theatre of international pressure and conflict."<sup>5</sup> Shortly after this trip, Barwick delivered the 13<sup>th</sup> Roy Milne lecture to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, his *tour d'horizon* beginning with China, which he characterised as a rising power "dedicated to both nationalist expansion and also to the rapid, world-wide extension of Communist imperialism".<sup>6</sup> Most of his remarks dealt with the related issues of Australian diplomatic recognition and of the prospect of entry of China to the United Nations. Australia would not open relations with Beijing and would continue to oppose the campaign by Beijing's supporters in the UN General Assembly. Barwick defended this stance, partly on the grounds of China's behaviour and evident aspirations, and also because such recognition would deny any place to Taiwan, a state with which Australia and many Western states had maintained formal relations.

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<sup>4</sup> Garry Woodard, 'Best Practice in Australia's Foreign Policy: "Konfrontasi" (1963-66)', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 33, no.1, 1998, pp. 85-99.

<sup>5</sup> *Current Notes*, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, vol 33, no 7, 1962, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Garfield Barwick, 'Australian Foreign Policy 1962', *Thirteenth Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Perth*, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, 1962, p. 9.

From Barwick's remarks it was clear that opposition to UN entry by China, as it was currently constituted, into international society was a major element in Australian Government policy. Interestingly, Barwick noted that neither Chinese state would countenance the presence of the other in the UN, adding the statement that "Meanwhile, we do not close our eyes to, or ignore the existence of, the Communist administration."<sup>7</sup>

Later that year, at the UN General Assembly, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Jim Plimsoll, outlined these same reasons for opposing China's entry. The first issue he raised as an obstacle was the status of Taiwan, though he also adverted to China's regional policy which he characterised as one of "constant subversion".<sup>8</sup>

In a further presentation to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, this time to a lecture series organised in Sydney, Barwick again referred to his experiences on his regional travels where, he asserted, all 15 countries he had visited were fearful of China's intentions, with Vietnam "directly in the line of fire." He then suggested that "consciousness of the Chinese threat will... play a more and more important part in our thinking in the next ten years."<sup>9</sup>

By 1964 the China threat had become, according to Barwick, Australia's greatest regional preoccupation:

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<sup>7</sup> Garfield Barwick, 'Australian Foreign Policy 1962', p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Current Notes* (vol 33, no 10, 1962), 76.

<sup>9</sup> Garfield Barwick, 'Ourselves and Our Neighbours', in Garfield Barwick et al 1963, *Living with Asia. A Discussion on Australia's Future*, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney, 1963, pp. 56, 57.

We must accept, I believe, for the present that China constitutes the greatest threat to the security of the region in which we live. The presence of a super-power... which... is in reach of becoming a nuclear power, cannot fail to give cause for concern. When this power has shown itself openly aggressive in the cases of Korea, Tibet and India concern becomes apprehension. That she should consciously isolate herself from world influences increases the potential that the situation presents. It is said that all this could be changed if China were now brought into the family of nations and given her rightful place as a great power. I wish it were as simple as that.<sup>10</sup>

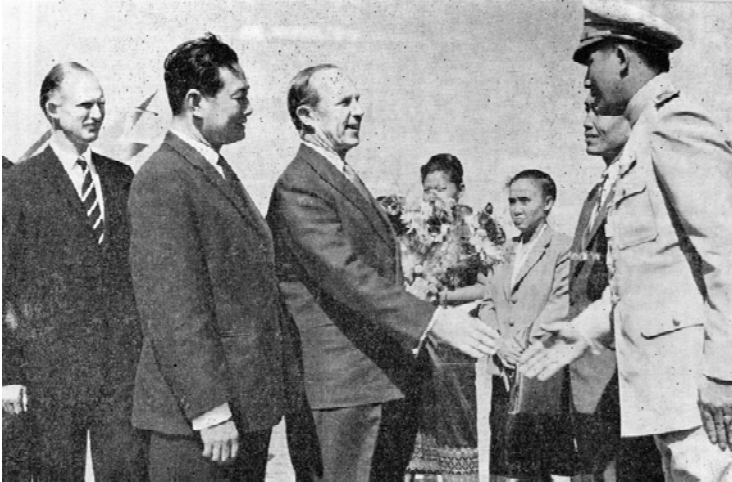
Barwick quoted his predecessor Richard Casey on the issue of diplomatic relations, concurring with Casey's judgement that Australia would have to "abandon" Taiwan. Barwick then expressed agreement with Casey, suggesting that "we cannot barter away the rights of the 10,000,000 people in Formosa without giving them their say in their own destiny. To do so would be a negation of principles for which we have fought."<sup>11</sup> Contributing to a debate in the General Assembly on Albania's proposal in 1963 to unseat Taiwan and invite China to assume immediate membership, the Australian spokesman had gone even further claiming that Taiwan's policies had been in conformity with the ideals of the organisation: "The government of the Republic of China ... has striven to live up to the precepts embodied in the Charter regarding economic advancement, social progress and human

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<sup>10</sup> Garfield Barwick, 'Australia's Foreign Relations', in John Wilkes (ed.), *Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy*, Angus & Robertson/AIPS, Sydney, 1964, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Barwick, 'Australia's Foreign Relations', p. 23.

rights.”<sup>12</sup> It should be pointed out that at that time in Taiwan there was no freedom of assembly, no freedom of expression, no right to form political parties and no elections to the “national” government. In retrospect it might be said that by so firmly insisting on the prerogatives of the Chiang Kai-shek regime, Australia played a small but not negligible part in ensuring that the rights of the inhabitants of Taiwan continued to be denied. This situation became more obvious with time.



*Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, arrives in Laos on 6 December 1962. Left to right: Australian Minister to Laos, A. M. Morris; Laotian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Quinim Pholsena; and Australian Minister for External Affairs Sir Garfield Barwick. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0269).*

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Cablegram to Canberra: Chinese Representation, 16 October 1963’, in Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China 1949-1972*, DFAT, Canberra, 2002, p. 229.

## Trade with China

Meanwhile, China had become a major importer of Australian wheat; in 1964 the country that was “the greatest threat” was also, for wheat growers, their largest market. Wheat sales were in effect taxpayer-subsidised, due to the price stabilisation scheme of the era. Moreover, the Australian Government knew that part of the 1964 shipments were diverted to China’s international friends Cuba, Albania and North Korea. Members of Australian statutory bodies and especially the Wheat Board – which distinguished itself again in more recent times in the management of business with putative pariah states – facilitated this trade, including hosting visits from Chinese officials to Australia. A question in parliament from Gough Whitlam in August 1965 elicited the information that to that date, 12 Commonwealth employees had visited China.<sup>13</sup> The Commonwealth was highly sensitive to suggestions that it was entertaining representatives of an antagonistic regime to pander to the sectional interests of the Country Party. A Cabinet decision in March 1966 to permit a delegation from China to travel to Australia to negotiate a bulk purchase of wheat directed that “the Government and the Wheat Board should each take special care to limit official recognition of the delegation and also the publicity surrounding it.”<sup>14</sup>

Total exports to China in these years remained relatively constant: \$129 million in 1962-63 and \$126 million in 1969-70. The commodities exported were overwhelmingly wheat,

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<sup>13</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 8, 1965, p. 510.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Cabinet Decision – Mainland China – Wheat Negotiation, 15 March 1966,’ in Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China 1949-1972*, DFAT, Canberra, 2002, p. 262.

with wool the next most important.<sup>15</sup> In 1970-71, however, trade halved; there is evidence that this was as a response to government expressions of hostility towards Beijing.

## **Relations with Japan**

If Australia's trading relationship with China was insulated from the government's wider strategic outlook, almost the whole carriage of policy towards Japan was based upon calculations of trading advantage. The oversight of policy remained in the hands of John McEwen and the Department of Trade and Industry until McEwen departed from the scene. Closer trading relations with Japan were institutionalised in the 1957 Commerce Agreement. This in some respects marked the resumption of a pattern of trade complementarity with Japan that was interrupted by the trade diversion policies of the Lyons Government in 1936. Such reservations as the Australian Government entertained regarding Japan's regional role were removed with the review of the Treaty on Commerce in 1963,<sup>16</sup> and thereafter relations waxed almost without adverse incident, buoyed by growing volumes of trade and isolated from controversy by the closeness of the US-Japan security treaty. By 1969-70, Japan had become Australia's largest trading partner.

Diplomacy was cordial and, aside from some controversy in the era of the White Australia policy in relation to Japanese technical experts working at West Australian mines, problems were few. Japan was a member of ASPAC and cooperated with Australia on preventing China from taking a seat in the United Nations and Hasluck, in particular, encouraged Japan

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<sup>15</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 42, no. 5, 1971, p. 292.

<sup>16</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 3, no. 8, 1963, p. 34.

to take a greater interest in providing aid to Southeast Asia. But Australia-Japan relations were the dog that didn't bark.<sup>17</sup> Japan was becoming more important to Australia than any other country save the United States, yet the agenda linking Tokyo and Canberra remained narrow in conception. When McMahan seized control of the relationship once McEwen signalled his intention to retire, he announced with some gusto that a new policy towards Japan would be pursued. However aside from adjustments to the Australian bureaucratic machine there was no substance to the change. The Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation (known as the NARA treaty) was for a future time.

### **Paul Hasluck as Minister**

Paul Hasluck assumed the External Affairs portfolio on 24 April 1964, having spent the previous five months as Minister of Defence. Whereas Barwick brought to the position a curiosity about international affairs, and some prior knowledge due to his penchant for travel, he apparently held few formed views on specific issues. Hasluck, however, brought both highly-developed views and sustained personal experience of diplomacy. While there were evident continuities in their policy advocacy and even in their rhetoric, it will be suggested that the key to Hasluck's management of policy towards China, and much else, can be found in his prior convictions.

As early as 1943, Hasluck had understood that China would be "the major factor in the future development in the Far

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<sup>17</sup> Alan Rix, *The Australia-Japan Political Alignment. 1952 to the Present*, Routledge, London, 1999.

East”.<sup>18</sup> In an essay prepared in early 1964, Hasluck stated plainly that “fear of China is the dominant element in much that happens in the region, and the fear is well founded.” Consequently, “the strength of the United States” was needed in Asia if “freedom of choice” was to be restored.<sup>19</sup> Hasluck clearly considered the unacceptable alternative would be an Asia in which China was hegemonic:

We could not endure to have a single dominant power in Asia capable of dictating the terms on which neighboring countries could conduct their relations with us, determining the conditions under which we ourselves would have to live in this region, able to interrupt our communications with the world at large. We want peace and political stability and continued social and economic advancement in all the countries of Asia.<sup>20</sup>

Hasluck had in mind shorter-term and longer-term objectives and his projections for these did not change during the remainder of his ministerial career. The first task was to defend those countries in the region, notably South Vietnam, that were the objects of communist subversion. Beyond this task lay the further issue of inducing and encouraging China to accept what Hasluck considered to be the settled rules of international society. On his first visit to London as minister, he drew a parallel to which he returned repeatedly in his conceptualisation of that second task, that between China currently and the USSR formerly:

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness. Australian Foreign Affairs 1941-1947*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1980, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Hasluck, ‘Australia and Southeast Asia’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1964, p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> Hasluck, ‘Australia and Southeast Asia’, p. 62.



World peace since the last war has depended mainly on the working out of a detente between the Soviet Union and the Western alliance. It is in our interest that this detente continues and eventually leads to attempts to form better relationships between these two groups of powers. Already, under the umbrella of deterrent power the countries of Europe have been able to make progress and enjoy prosperity. Today in Asia, however, the actual and potential power of China and its aggressive policies pose enormous and growing problems to the whole world. In order to establish in Asia the sort of conditions under which Western Europe has developed in the past few years, we first must establish the same sort of detente with the power that is the major cause of fear among the nations of Asia today.<sup>21</sup>

The depth of Hasluck's concern about China may be judged by his apparent reference during his talks with the British, at least according to the British record, to the possibility of a nuclear outcome if China could not be contained by conventional means.<sup>22</sup>

Détente with China would be difficult to achieve since the obstacles were many. In his first statement to parliament as minister, Hasluck made 14 references to China, developing the thesis that the country was driven by an aggressive intention to dominate the region:

...the cause for concern is that China has repeatedly spoken and acted in a way that reveals an aggressive

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<sup>21</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 35, no. 11, 1964, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Garry Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2006, p. 159.

intention to try to dominate the life of other nations, a readiness to achieve her purposes by any means at her command, and an unwillingness to contemplate peaceful relationships with other great powers except on her own terms.<sup>23</sup>

The struggle in Vietnam was represented as China waging war by proxy, with the government in Hanoi effectively under China's control. Regarding Australia's future policy, this statement also contained the pregnant phrase: "as a small nation in a time of power contest we have to choose." Hasluck was setting the stage for the announcement, a month later, of the decision that had already been made by Cabinet on 17 December 1964 to commit Australian troops to the Vietnam conflict. Interestingly, whereas Barwick had referred to Australia as a "middle power" (following Spender, in a terminology that went back to Eggleston) Hasluck was much less inclined to use that nomenclature.

Justifying the Vietnam decision, Prime Minister Menzies observed that the Vietnam conflict represented "part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans."<sup>24</sup> Looking back, the extent of government hyperbole in regard to China was extraordinary. By July Menzies was claiming that with "aggressive communism almost on our shores," the Chinese would "sweep down" unless checked.<sup>25</sup>

In a series of speeches in 1965 Hasluck painted an increasingly bleak picture of Australia's strategic predicament. In an address to the Australian Institute of International Affairs he depicted the growing conflict in

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<sup>23</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1965, p. 119.

<sup>24</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1965, pp. 178-80.

<sup>25</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 7, 1965, p. 415.

Southeast Asia as “part of the rivalry of power and the ideological contest which is taking place throughout the world.” The outcome of that struggle in Asia was crucial: “For as long as Australia exists the relationship with Asia and the necessity to find the terms on which we live alongside Asia, preferably in peace, will be with us.”<sup>26</sup> Coming to acceptable terms with China was the key to living with Asia. It was Hasluck’s contention that China must either be contained or learn to live within the rules of international society.

In November 1965, Hasluck addressed a Liberal Party conference on the topic “Australia under Challenge”. Australia faced, in his view, two real dangers: the emergence of a world where international obligations were totally discarded, or a world where the Western alliance was weakened or had disintegrated. Central to both of those dangers was China. Chinese policy was testing the alliance, and if that test was failed, then there was little prospect that an ordered and predictable international system would survive. Though China was a global problem, for Australia there was no greater issue: “At the end of the road there is always China and we would be quite unrealistic to think that we could patch up any of these situations in a permanent way and ignore the existence of China, or ignore the policies of China.”<sup>27</sup>

In the course of 1966, the year that the government took the decision to replace the battalion dispatched to Vietnam with a larger task force, Hasluck became even more strident in his descriptions of what he took to be an Asia-wide struggle against “Chinese domination” and “Asian Communist imperialism”. In retrospect, it has been shown that China

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<sup>26</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 9, 1965, pp. 536, 544.

<sup>27</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 11, 1965, p. 714.

played no part in the decision by North Vietnam in 1959 to resume the guerrilla struggle in the South. While China did provide the regime in Hanoi with considerable material support thereafter, this was a response to North Vietnam's requests rather than as part of a pre-determined regional strategy. With the escalation of the conflict, the growth of Russian aid to Hanoi and especially the failure of the North Vietnamese comrades to condemn "revisionism", Beijing's ardour noticeably cooled.<sup>28</sup>

With SEATO having proved a weak vessel for the organisation of a local response to this perceived threat, Hasluck also made efforts to look elsewhere in Asia for sympathetic states with which to cooperate. Hasluck travelled to India where he discussed with his counterpart "threats to peace in Asia and particularly those resulting from the aggressive policies of [the] People's Republic of China of which India has already been and continues to be a victim."<sup>29</sup> Following a proposal from International Institute for Strategic Studies Director Alastair Buchan that, against the prospect of future Chinese manoeuvres, a new arrangement of "countervailing power in Asia" should be sought by an alignment of Japan, India and Australia, Hasluck made the suggestion that these powers (with New Zealand) might be considered the "legs of a tripod" of like-minded states all with a profound interest in "the rebuilding of Asia."<sup>30</sup> Helpfully,

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<sup>28</sup> Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000; Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1966, p. 195.

<sup>30</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1966, p. 20; Alastair Buchan, 'An Asian Balance of Power?', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1966, pp. 271-81.

the Australian National University organised a conference on this theme, though with a somewhat meagre intellectual harvest.<sup>31</sup>

In further pursuit of Asian solidarity, Hasluck became a supporter of the Asian Pacific Council (ASPAC), attending the first formal ministerial conference in Seoul in June 1966. Reporting to parliament on this development, Hasluck noted that its membership of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand (with Laos as an observer) represented "all the countries of eastern Asia north of the Equator except Cambodia", a proposition that was true only if Taiwan was considered to be "China."<sup>32</sup> Yet in the same speech, having made the point that it was essential to maintain "common security" in the region against China, in order "to bring the Peking authorities to see that direct and indirect aggression will not succeed," Hasluck then suggested that there would be a time when it would be possible to reach "some understanding" with China. Having warned that "we should not think of a static international society," he concluded on the following note: "We know Communist China is there, we want to live with it, and are willing to explore new ways of doing so, but we are not prepared to fall flat on our face before it."<sup>33</sup>

By the time this speech was made, Hasluck had already been to Taipei to conclude an agreement to establish a diplomatic mission there. Having played a dead bat to repeated questions

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<sup>31</sup> J. D. B. Miller, 'The Conditions for Cooperation', in J. D. B. Miller (ed.), *India, Japan, Australia. Partners in Asia?*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1968, pp. 195-212.

<sup>32</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 37, no. 8, 1966, p. 477.

<sup>33</sup> *Current Notes* vol. 37, no. 8, 1966, pp. 482, 484.

in parliament from Sir Wilfred Kent Hughes regarding the anomaly of the absence of such a mission, it seems to have been an initiative of Prime Minister Holt.<sup>34</sup> The mission which was duly opened in September 1966 was also regarded as something of a victory for the vociferous “Taiwan lobby” in Australia,<sup>35</sup> which included parliamentary veteran Kent Hughes, orientalist and fantasist W. G. Goddard and a rag-tag group of union and business figures. In some respects, and despite the role of Taiwan in ASPAC, the presence of the mission presented yet a further complication for Australia’s China policy. The first ambassador, Frank Cooper, engaged in a somewhat courageous correspondence with the Minister in which he pointed out the real nature of the authoritarian and militarised political system on Taiwan and the difficulties of managing relations with the secretive, delusional and paranoid Chiang Kai-shek. In a dispatch written as a response to Prime Minister Holt’s visit in 1967, Cooper effectively undermined the claims the government had consistently voiced regarding Taiwan:

First and foremost, I think we must accept that the R.O.C. is a police state in which the trappings of democracy are observed, but in which there is no real freedom of speech, movement or association. There is no freedom from arbitrary arrest, and no organised

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<sup>34</sup> Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1979, p. 327.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremy Taylor, ‘The Reluctant Embassy: Establishing, Maintaining and Ending Australian Diplomatic Representation in Taipei, 1966–72’, *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2009, pp. 197-210; Joel Atkinson, ‘Australian Support for an Independent Taiwan Prior to the Recognition of the People’s Republic of China’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2011, pp. 68-85.

political opposition ... for the simple reason that any  
such opposition would be regarded as treason.<sup>36</sup>

Cooper's critical observations and contention that the international position of Taipei was in decline were vigorously contested. Assistant Secretary James Ingram prepared a memorandum for First Assistant Secretary of External Affairs Malcolm Booker that noted: "We have judged that it is in our interest to sustain the Republic of China as an alternative focus of Chinese loyalty."<sup>37</sup>

There is little doubt that at the root of Cooper's difficulties was the fact that, prior to the opening of the mission, Hasluck had developed two arguments deeply uncongenial to the ears of the government in Taipei. First, Hasluck time and again returned to the long-term project of achieving an "accommodation" with China; that suggested dealing at some future time with the existing regime in Beijing, albeit once chastened and subdued. Second, the argument always advanced by Hasluck as a reason for not exchanging envoys with Beijing was that "Taiwan" should be protected. Now the government in Taipei did not see itself as "Taiwan" and, as Cooper pointed out more than once, any reference to the prevailing limitations on their rule was highly unwelcome; at this stage even the euphemistic phrase subsequently adopted in Taipei, "the Republic of China on Taiwan", was yet to be acceptable. However, the Australian position also seemed to entail that if the Taiwan polity could be recognised for what it

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<sup>36</sup> 'Dispatch Cooper to Hasluck 24 April 1967', in Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China 1949-1972*, DFAT, Canberra, 2002, p. 271.

<sup>37</sup> 'Minute Ingram to Booker 21 December 1967', in Stuart Doran and David Lee, *Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China 1949-1972*, DFAT, Canberra, 2002, p. 280.

was then the chief objection to the People's Republic of China being accepted as "China" would be removed. Following the establishment of the mission in Taipei, Hasluck's statements to this effect continued, rendering the position of Cooper and of his successor Hugh Dunn temporary and conditional which, in the event, it proved to be.

The Australian Government clung to the policy of refusing to countenance the expulsion of the Republic of China from the UN and various proposals were considered that would have allowed, the parties willing, the representation of "two Chinas". While the Australian Government made much of Beijing's refusal to accept anything less than its claim to constitute the only legitimate government of China, as Australian diplomats in Taipei pointed out, Chiang Kai-shek was no less inflexible. The Kuomintang leadership were under no illusion that if they became, in effect, the authorities in a state entity restricted to the territory of Taiwan, they might sooner or later be forced to legitimise their position through elections that they were unlikely to win.

Hasluck, ever the historian, regularly returned to the comparison with the Soviet Union in sketching the future course of relations with China: "just as the great task in international diplomacy in the post-war years had been to try to achieve a détente between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies, so in the coming years the great task was to try to achieve a détente with the newly-risen power of mainland China." From the perspective of 1967, however, he continued, "we cannot hope for a détente until aggression has been checked."<sup>38</sup> Through 1968 he continued to affirm this position, just as he continued to insist that the principal theatre of Chinese aggression was Vietnam.

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<sup>38</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 15.



But as the resolve of the Johnson Administration began to waver following the 1968 Tet Offensive and the waxing of dissenting domestic opinion, Hasluck's inflexible insistence on active opposition to Asian communism until it manifestly changed its ways began to appear a touch anachronistic. As was pointed out even at the time, Australia's hard line opinions never matched the modest dimensions of the Australian contribution to the war (as has been and is the case in the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan). Even Andrew Peacock's cautious suggestions in September 1968 that slightly more permissive modalities be supported at the UN in order to deal with the China representation conundrum were dismissed by Hasluck.<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, on his first visit to Yugoslavia in November 1968, Hasluck referred to Australia and the host country as "middle powers" which suggested the beginnings of a reassessment of Australia's possible future stance.<sup>40</sup> However by the time that Prime Minister Gorton announced in parliament that he was in favour of a "non-aggression pact or pacts" in the region,<sup>41</sup> Hasluck had relinquished his post, having been offered the position of Governor-General.

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<sup>39</sup> *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, 26th Parliament. Hansard, no. 37, 11 Sept 1968, p. 935.

<sup>40</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 39, no. 11, 1968, p. 480.

<sup>41</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1969, p. 44.



*Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, representing Australia at the Malaysia Day celebrations in Kuala Lumpur. His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia (pictured shaking hands) granted audience to a number of foreign representatives on the morning of 16 September 1963. Her Majesty the Raja Permaisuri Agong of Malaysia is pictured on the far right. (Reproduced with Permission from the National Archives of Malaysia/DFAT: HIS-0281).*

## **Hasluck and Realism**

In an insightful survey piece on Australia in the Cold War, David McLean invites students of this period seeking a fuller understanding of the course of Australian foreign policy to move beyond a consideration of the sequence of events and policy decisions to wider issues of culture and worldview.<sup>42</sup> In

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<sup>42</sup> David McLean, 'Australia in the Cold War: A Historiographical Review', *The International History Review*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, pp. 299-32.

the case of Barwick, it is probably sufficient to argue that, as a skilled advocate, he offered an appropriately measured defence of an inherited body of policies in relation to the countries of Northeast Asia. Where his originality was undoubtedly on display was in his handling of relations with Indonesia. Garry Woodard applies the "realist" tag to Barwick<sup>43</sup> but its use, while appropriate, raises further questions. Did the times bring realist individuals to prominence; has realism always been the dominant approach to international affairs in Australia; has realism generally been the province of conservative figures in the Australian political tradition?

Barwick's tenure as foreign minister, in an area of policy not closest to his main interests or expertise, was too brief to permit a thorough exploration of these questions. However Hasluck's contribution invites further scrutiny. The predominant, indeed the only, interpretation of Hasluck as minister places international power politics as the central feature of his thinking.<sup>44</sup> Peter Edwards suggests Hasluck was motivated by "a prudent concern to protect [Australia's] interests in a world dominated by the ruthless politics of

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<sup>43</sup> Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe & Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats. Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 2003, p. 114.

<sup>44</sup> Greg Pemberton, *All the Way. Australia's Road to Vietnam*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987, p. 212; Robert Porter, *Paul Hasluck. A Political Biography*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1993, p. 227; Henry S. Albinski, 'Vietnam', in Tom Stannage, Kay Saunders, Richard Nile (eds.), *Paul Hasluck in Australian History. Civic Personality and Public Life*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1999, p. 173.

power.”<sup>45</sup> Garry Woodard and Joan Beaumont describe Hasluck’s approach as minister as being that of “an unashamed realist.”<sup>46</sup> Geoffrey Bolton extends this term to his longer-term worldview, identifying Hasluck’s “realist” approach to international affairs much earlier in his career.<sup>47</sup>

The grounds for a “realist” interpretation of Hasluck’s thinking are many, not least Hasluck’s own later, self-conscious signposting of his activities.

In his autobiography he describes, on his way to participate in a League of Nations Union meeting in Geneva in 1932, defending the view, heretical in the company, that differences between nations were “settled by power and not by reasoned argument.”<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the notes written by Hasluck during his decidedly deliberate organisation of his personal papers for posterity almost invite a realist interpretation. Recounting his personal experiences immediately post-war of debating international affairs at the University of Western Australia, he reacted, according to his recollection, with growing frustration to the habit of his interlocutors to rely upon explanations that employed abstract ideas instead of

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<sup>45</sup> Peter Edwards (with Gregory Pemberton), *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia’s involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1992, p. 283.

<sup>46</sup> Garry Woodard & Joan Beaumont, ‘Paul Hasluck as Minister for External Affairs: Towards a Reappraisal’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 52, no. 1, 1998, p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, ‘Sir Paul Hasluck: The Opportunities of His Career’, *Early Days: Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society*, vol. 12, no. 6, 2006, p. 736.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Mucking About: An Autobiography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1977, p. 179.

power: "They did not know that world politics was still power politics."

Having completed *Workshop of Security*, a critique of the early development of the UN Security Council,<sup>49</sup> Hasluck considered producing a broader work: as he later observed, "for a time I contemplated writing another book." The paper 'Realism in Foreign Affairs' he described as the draft of the opening chapter of this projected work.<sup>50</sup> In the event Hasluck instead turned his attention to the first volume of his official history, where, reflecting on Australia's too facile passage into membership of international society, he suggested that accordingly the nation "never had occasion to meditate on the precarious existence of a small nation in a world of power."<sup>51</sup>

In what would apparently have been Hasluck's opening chapter to his unwritten treatise, he develops the propositions that are central to the realist approach: that states are the key actors in global politics and that the extent to which they can acquire and deploy power is the crucial determinant of the success of their undertakings. In Hasluck's own words:

... we should recognise that the world today is a world of power politics. What do we mean by 'a world of power politics'? The phrase means, in part, that, in the ultimate issue, if there is a conflict of interest, the possession and use of power will decide which interest is to prevail. It also means that there is a

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Workshop of Security*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1948.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Hasluck, 'Introduction', Hasluck Papers, NLA, MS5274; *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1939-1941*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, p. 5.

consequential rivalry of powers one with another, and that the acquisition of power, the accretion of power and the protection of power already possessed become, in themselves, part of the national interest ... Power, which originated as an instrument of policy, becomes an end of policy. The phrase also means that, long before the ultimate issue is reached, the possession or lack of power is a determinant of national action<sup>52</sup>

This is not the place to discuss the ambiguities of the essential term in this discourse, “power”, but it is remarkable that Hasluck so actively identified his own thinking in terms of this leitmotif. Interestingly, he dates this essay in the collection of his unpublished writings as 1947, but it seems to have been revised later, judging by the remark that the UN had become “in the past seven or eight years” yet another theatre for the customary competition between nations.<sup>53</sup>

If the key to explaining the trends in international affairs and the activities of the more powerful states is power, then it follows that lesser states will be highly constrained in their freedom of action. This is not to suggest that smaller states have no choices whatsoever. Smaller states, as he notes, may seek to augment their own power or to pursue alliances. Speaking of Australia (in a passage again clearly added in the 1950s) he adds that “[t]o ensure that an alliance does not submerge Australian interest we have to be a strong and

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Hasluck, ‘Realism in Foreign Affairs’, Hasluck Papers: NLA, MS5274: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Hasluck, ‘Realism in Foreign Affairs’, Hasluck Papers: NLA, MS5274: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 12.

worthwhile ally.”<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, on these assumptions, it is the big battalions that matter.

Regarding Asia, Hasluck as minister was therefore predisposed to look to the policies of the Soviet Union, the United States and China and their mutual dynamics in order to explain regional relations. For example, he saw the situation in Vietnam in terms of the power environment with the Vietnamese communists in the debt of their Chinese neighbours for ideological guidance and material support. On his mission to Paris in late 1964 to convince nations beyond the region of the vital importance of resisting “Chinese aggression” and especially its manifestation in Vietnam, Hasluck – something of a Francophile, who had himself visited Saigon in 1938 – showed little interest in learning from the insights of foreign minister Maurice Couve de Murville, which were undoubtedly based upon the long and bitter experience of the French in Indochina.<sup>55</sup> In particular, Hasluck was impervious to the argument that Vietnamese communism was largely the product of its own dynamics and was therefore unlikely to be subject to Beijing’s control.

Given that the China threat was Hasluck’s major preoccupation by far it is striking that, as Gregory Clark famously pointed out,<sup>56</sup> the diplomatic and intelligence resources devoted by the Australian Government were so meagre as to be completely out of proportion to the scale of

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<sup>54</sup> Paul Hasluck, ‘Realism in Foreign Affairs’, Hasluck Papers: NLA, MS5274: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Cablegram to Canberra 7 November 1964’, Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China 1949-1972*, DFAT, Canberra, 2002, pp. 248-52.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory Clark, *In Fear of China*, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1967.

the postulated threat. This point was subsequently echoed by T. B. Millar.<sup>57</sup> Critiques of Hasluck's conduct as minister, while acknowledging his high personal standards and formidable work ethic, question his ability to use even those resources that were readily available to him. Malcolm Booker, First Assistant Secretary in External Affairs during Hasluck's tenure as minister, suggested that, in any case, as Hasluck's conclusions flowed from general premises long and firmly held, it was difficult to contest his views on policy:

Since Hasluck had made up his mind on all the basic issues there was no scope for developing new strategies to deal with the changing international environment; decisions could be quickly made because they were kept within the framework of established policies.<sup>58</sup>

Peter Edwards similarly refers to the "rigidly codified"<sup>59</sup> character of Hasluck's later policy formulations. But inflexibility is not the unique preserve of realism. It will now be argued that a closer reading of his words, starting with his writings of the 1940s, suggests that Hasluck cannot be adequately categorised as a "realist". Three grounds for this view will be considered in turn.

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<sup>57</sup> T. B. Millar, *Australia's Foreign Policy*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1968, p. 91.

<sup>58</sup> Malcolm Booker, *The last domino: aspects of Australia's foreign relations*, Collins, Sydney, 1976, p. 191.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Edwards, *A Nation at War: Australian Politics, Society and Diplomacy during the Vietnam War 1965-1975*, Allen & Unwin/Australian War Memorial, North Sydney, 1997, p. 346.



### ***1. Hasluck's Realism Not Timeless***

First, for Hasluck, the insights of realism, whatever their practical usefulness for his role as minister, were not timeless. By contrast, the realist position postulates that dominance over international affairs through the power of the major states is a condition of the state system that is unchanging. On this view, in a world of states, international affairs remain unsettled in a condition of "anarchy" and the policies of the member states are thus, in a sense, necessitated. For his part, Hasluck held that though the fact of power politics was regrettable and its influence pervasive, it was not permanent. Indeed it was especially desirable for Australia, being a smaller country, that the era of power politics prove temporary.

Hasluck's only book-length work devoted solely to international affairs was *Workshop of Security*. It is the distilled wisdom of his direct experiences during the first years of the United Nations, particularly in relation to the functioning of the Security Council. While he raises many criticisms of the UN and advances a number of proposals for institutional reform, his position is very far from being consistent with realist premises. On Hasluck's view, the Council could be made to work with the right approach and especially after due recognition of the shared interests of the major players. From the realist point of view, by contrast, the UN could be nothing more than a further arena for great power manoeuvres.

In his 1947 essay Hasluck makes the contingent existence of his realist premises plain:

It is one of the historical facts of international relations that if any powerful state or powerful group of states places reliance on power as an instrument of

policy all nations are obliged to do so if they wish to survive. The challenge is made in physical terms and has to be resisted physically or it will prevail.<sup>60</sup>

In Hasluck's view the power politics of his era are clearly the result of such a choice being made by an unnamed group of powers, evidently the Soviet Union and its allies and dependencies.

If realist wisdom was not timeless, in what circumstances would its insights become obsolete? According to the realist approach, though policies such as the pursuit of a "balance" might produce a relatively stable configuration of power, no such configuration could be lasting. Hasluck agreed with this proposition, but looked to a time when power would cease to be the key variable and, accordingly, international affairs could enter an altogether different era. He made this view plain in his first statement to parliament as minister for external affairs:

Power is not enough. In a world of power, peace is only maintained on a precarious balance and it is plain that recourse to power as a means of security is in essence a readiness to have recourse to war. There will never be full security for anyone unless and until the exercise of power is made subject to agreed principles of international conduct and, in a world of national states, that means that the possessors of power restrict by their own pledges their own use of power.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Hasluck Papers: NLA, MS5274: Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1965, p. 128.

In such a world, Australia could not afford to be neutral: "as a small nation in a time of power contest we have to choose." Nevertheless, he continues, a permanent condition of power politics could not be viewed with equanimity since it would most likely entail Australia's eventual extinction:

When a world of principle, a world of peaceful settlement, a world of respect for international obligations, when that sort of world goes, then Australia goes. We will have no chance of survival if that sort of world is not preserved. We are too small a nation; we are too exposed a nation; we are in too dangerous a condition to be able to live if we do not have that sort of world. The building and maintenance of that sort of world depends on the strength and the resolution of the Western Alliance.<sup>62</sup>

Thus Hasluck was immensely preoccupied with finding the best means to achieve détente with China; first to remove what he perceived to be the immediate threat of aggressive Asian communism, but also to build a foundation for something more enduring: "detente is a stage – a necessary stage – from which hopes for some better way of living together may spring."<sup>63</sup> His expectation that the leadership of China would, some day and as the result of confronting a superior force, offer some token of future good behaviour was not consistent with a realist position which views such tokens as of dubious and only temporary value.

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<sup>62</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 36, no. 11, 1965, p. 718.

<sup>63</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 18.

## 2. *Values and Realism*

Hasluck's rejection of pure realist principles raises another question: if Hasluck could conceive another (and more secure) basis for international affairs, what was it and how could it be achieved? Here we come to the second ground for rejecting the application of the term "realist" to Hasluck's thinking: his belief in the place of values in international affairs.

Addressing a Moral Rearmament assembly in January 1966 he contended that without justice, truth and fair dealing between people at home, there would be none in the nation's foreign policy.<sup>64</sup>

Quite apart from the fact that, *prima facie*, a realist would have little to say to a Moral Rearmament assembly on the subject of international affairs, it is significant that he returned to the identical theme at a similar gathering the following year. In perhaps his most thoughtful and reflective piece on foreign policy he was at pains to reject the notion that its practice was all "expediency and compromise."<sup>65</sup> Behind the nation stood the people: "There is no separate ethic for the statesman. There is no strange exudation of public affairs that can be separately classified as political morality."<sup>66</sup> Hasluck was clear that in Western societies the origins of that morality, even if unacknowledged, was Christianity. Interestingly, while some commentators have recognised the importance of moral standards to Hasluck,<sup>67</sup> none have drawn the inference that his realism was thereby qualified.

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<sup>64</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1966, pp. 13-24.

<sup>65</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 13.

<sup>67</sup> Porter, *Paul Hasluck. A Political Biography*, pp. 236.

On the traditionalist realist view, the international sphere cannot reflect the morality of the private individual. Either relations between states were best considered as amoral or, more usually, the strife and contention of the international sphere reflected the unavoidable fact of human evil. Later realists sought to explain that strife was a result of the particular, anarchic, characteristics of the international system. In any case, realism rejected the applicability of the usual standards of morality.

As to what possible routes lay from the power politics of the present to a rule-based international order, Hasluck's comments, while providing no systematic account, are at least partially suggestive. In his frequent references to the precedent of the Soviet Union in relation to China, Hasluck mentions a number of times the importance of deterrence in conditioning the Soviet attitude. Clearly, countervailing power is necessary to set the stage for more deep-seated changes to the international system. Further, *Workshop of Security* is predicated upon a belief in institution-building and institutional learning in order to condition state behaviour. Hasluck also expresses the view that shared civilisational values can act as background influences for states, and he includes, in the case of Africa, the improving impact of Western ideas in some former colonial countries.

### ***3. The Dissenting Perspective of Non-Status Quo States***

In this same 1967 address, having pointed out that contending views of morality were one of the notable sources of international discord, Hasluck conceded that ethical notions held to be central in our own society might not be similarly regarded elsewhere. There was a danger that Australians might assume that justice was always coincident with their own interests.

In an unusually reflective passage he pointed out that the current rules of international society might be differently perceived by the non-status quo states and that their desire to change those rules might well have merit:

...in the present day, Australia is in a very different situation from many .. other nations. In Australia we are content with the existing international order .. . Therefore we naturally support the idea of respect for treaties; the rule of law; the principle of refraining from the use of force or the threat of force to serve national interests; respect for the territorial integrity and the sovereign independence of each state. We can be peace-loving for it suits us to join a combination against aggressors and to avoid any disturbance of the status quo. It is easier for us to be virtuous than it is for some others because the course of virtue coincides with our self-interest. .. We need to remember that there are quite a number of nations who are not so pleased with the existing order as we are. Some of them only became nations after the existing order had been established and they had no part in saying anything about the sort of world into which they were born. Naturally they are less conservative in their views about how it should be altered when they find some point which causes dis-satisfaction to them. They want things to be changed and they will be restless until they are more comfortable.<sup>68</sup>

Western values required the nations that affirmed them to be proactive. Western society should remain true to its proclaimed principles including “regard for human beings” and “freedom”, and thereby make an active commitment to

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<sup>68</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1967, p. 12.

the advancing these values, especially in the formerly colonial world: "let us remember that some of the ancient resentments are 'founded on fact'. To make its name good Western civilisation has to be in the forefront of helpful change."<sup>69</sup> All of these suggestions, of course, were potentially self-critical.

For the realist, and in this respect E. H. Carr is a good example, values are a mask, convenient or otherwise, for material interest. By contrast, for Hasluck they are of profound importance. Further, from the perspective of realism, claims by states for the revision of the international order are only as valid as the capacity of these states is sufficient to advance them.

### **Realism, Rectitude and Certainty**

In his ministerial career, Hasluck certainly focussed on power. But his attitude towards power was not, for the reasons adduced above, that of the archetypical realist.

Hasluck was a student of Fred Alexander and gave his lectures at the University of Western Australia in 1940 when Alexander was travelling in the United States on a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Alexander was Hasluck's mentor in international affairs.<sup>70</sup> Alexander had been a student of William Harrison Moore and, like his mentor, a foundation member (as assistant secretary) of the League of Nations Union (LNU) in

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<sup>69</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 19670, p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> Hasluck, *Mucking About*, 195, 264-5; Paul Hasluck, *Light that Time Has Made*, National Library of Australia, Canberra. 1995, p. 36.

Victoria.<sup>71</sup> In Perth, Alexander was a tireless campaigner for the LNU, as well as an influential media commentator, notably through his fortnightly columns in the *West Australian*. In the same year that Hasluck travelled to Geneva to attend an LNU summer school, Alexander was also at the League of Nations, first undertaking research and then serving as an alternate delegate for Australia to the League Assembly. Alexander and Hasluck later travelled back from Europe on the same ship.

Harrison Moore and his students, including Alexander and also W K Hancock, believed that the international system could be regulated by way of appropriate institution building and the encouragement of the emerging trend towards interdependence, the latter impelled by developments in trade, investment, communications and migration. Such an outcome was desirable and its attainment especially in the interests of smaller powers. They also held, however, that there was no inevitability in this movement to more harmonious regulation, which could be disrupted by irredentist ideologies or mutual national suspicions, notably the likely consequence of the competitive acquisition of armaments. Once international institutions were undermined, international politics became a domain of power: unstable and prone to conflict. Speaking to the Alliance Française in 1935, Alexander warned that the Ethiopian crisis marked a looming watershed in the international system:

...if the League failed to prevent Mussolini getting his way in Africa, the League was doomed and the world

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<sup>71</sup> James Cotton, 'Imperialism and internationalism in early Australian international relations: the contribution of W. Harrison Moore', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2009, pp. 639-57.



must inevitably return to the bad and dangerous system of pre-war alliances, with its attendant race in armaments and future conflicts, which must finally spell the end of Western civilisation.<sup>72</sup>

At this time Hasluck was Alexander's student. Just as Alexander, despairing of the League, began to place his hopes in a future relationship with the United States, so Hasluck was later to do the same, though neither abandoned the idea of a world ultimately regulated by institutions. In short, this point of view was closer to liberal institutionalism than to realism; elsewhere I have argued that it is a position common to many Australian writers on international affairs in this era.<sup>73</sup> Nor is it without precedent that such a viewpoint might generate, in profoundly dangerous circumstances, sympathy for the exercise of power. In E. H. Carr's foundational work of realism, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, the work of Alfred Zimmern, notably *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, is taken to be emblematic of the "utopian" or idealistic approach that Carr seeks to discredit.<sup>74</sup> Though one of the thinkers behind the creation of the League and a leading light of the League of Nations Union (a young Hasluck heard him lecture in Geneva) Zimmern finished his days in the United States as a resolute champion of the US strategy in the emerging Cold War.

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<sup>72</sup> *West Australian*, 2 November 1935, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> James Cotton, 'Early international relations teaching and teachers in Australia: institutional and disciplinary origins', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2013, pp. 71-97.

<sup>74</sup> E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939*, Macmillan, London, 1939; Alfred Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law 1918-1935*, Macmillan, London, 1936.

In his statements to parliament – Whitlam was to describe them as “lectures” – Hasluck often assumed a facade of rectitude and certainty, frequently adopting a pained attitude towards those who sought to score debating points concerning matters which he held to be vital and regarding which he believed the essential facts were beyond dispute. As he said to parliament in March 1968: “I have been talking of very grave matters... that affect the very survival of Australia... I have tried to speak of them soberly, factually and without emotion. I would trust that the debate which ensues would keep the considerations at the same level.”<sup>75</sup> Not only did he persist in this view, he became increasingly bitter in his attitude towards government critics. His late paper, ‘Teach-in’, which undoubtedly reflected his unhappy experience at Monash University on 29 July 1965,<sup>76</sup> almost goes as far as to suggest that the heated public exchanges of the time were arrogating to another sphere a debate which should only be conducted in parliament.

Yet it is difficult not to interpret the reservations that Hasluck expressed regarding his realist premises as signs of self-doubt. In this context, his resolute refusal to engage in any debate with his departmental staff admits an interpretation at variance with the picture that is usually drawn. There can be little dispute that as a minister he intervened far too frequently in the sphere of administrative minutiae, but one wonders whether this posture was as much to guard against the exploration or even exposure of those doubts, as it was expressive of a personality drawn alike to the rules of grammar and to what he saw as the proper and efficient dispatch of departmental business.

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<sup>75</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 39, no. 3, 1968, p. 91.

<sup>76</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War: Australian Politics, Society and Diplomacy during the Vietnam War 1965-1975*, pp. 69-70.

While it is possible, in retrospect, to develop a critique of Hasluck drawing upon his inconsistent realism, it is essential to consider how his position was viewed at the time. If contemporary observers found it lacking, there is some chance that Hasluck himself might have perceived similar problems. In a prescient passage written in 1964, Coral Bell was forthright in stating the view that non-recognition of China was delaying the inevitable:

The 14 years of non-recognition have been a period of postponing the day when the full implications of living with China as a great power in Asia and in the central balance have to be explored.<sup>77</sup>

In Bell's view, containment had not been effective and thus the only practical alternative, a view premised on power politics, was to accept China's place in the constellation of major powers.

By the early 1970s, according to Australia's pre-eminent international relations scholar Hedley Bull, the reality had to be accepted of a complex balance in Asia in which China was a major and essential component:

...the essential theme of international politics in the area to Australia's north, so Australian leaders thought or at all events said, was the struggle between the communist powers and their agents, communist parties in other countries, and the anti-communist alliance system headed by the United States. Any encroachment of the power and influence of the

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<sup>77</sup> Coral Bell, 'Australia and China: Power Balance and Policy', in A. M. Halpern (ed.), *Policies Toward China. Views from Six Continents*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965, p. 187.

former was taken to be injurious to the position of the latter, and Australia's interests were thought to be bound up with the success or failure of the United States policy of containment. Even in April 1965 such an assessment was defective and by the end of 1970 it was quite unreal. The simple balance which had grown up in Asia in the 1950s between the communist powers and the American alliance system was clearly giving place to a complex balance in which America, Russia, China and, to an increasing extent, Japan were independent actors. The ideological professions of each of them provided less and less of an inhibition to its mobility in foreign policy.<sup>78</sup>

In developing this proposition, Bull elaborated upon an argument stated by William P. Bundy.<sup>79</sup> Bull evidently held on realist grounds that membership of the balance was to be determined solely on the basis of the possession and exercise of power. Had Hasluck taken a similar approach, his insistent demand that China pay an entry price for full membership would not have been a central plank of his policy. Lest this interpretation be rejected as a caricature, it should be noted that he had actually said in 1964 in Canada that China should “pay an admission price” for UN entry.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, when the Red Guards came a little later to write editorials in the

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<sup>78</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘Australia and the Great Powers in Asia’, in Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper (eds.), *Australia in World Affairs 1966-1970*, F W Cheshire/AIIA, Melbourne, 1974, p. 325.

<sup>79</sup> William P. Bundy, ‘New Tides in Southeast Asia’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 49, no. 2, 1971, pp. 187-200.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Conversation between Hasluck and Cadieux 27 November 1964’, Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China 1949-1972*, p. 255.

*Peking Review* lambasting the UN as a reactionary forum,  
Hasluck's continued insistence could be understood.

These examples show that even contemporary commentators who took realism seriously appreciated that Hasluck's attempts to qualify realism exposed his thinking on China to inconsistency. In the light of these sentiments, the critique offered here is thus not anachronistic.

There is a further point to consider in relation to the scholarship and commentary of Hasluck's era. Though the extent of China's engagement with Hanoi was unclear at the time, even by the late 1960s enough was known of the Vietnamese revolution to support the view that in its dynamics communism and nationalism had deep roots and were irreducibly linked, neither was an emanation of Chinese influence. Perhaps the best scholarship on the issue was that of Paul Mus, whose major work was published in 1952 in French.<sup>81</sup> His ideas became better known in the 1960s from the work of those who were influenced by him including Bernard Fall, Frances FitzGerald, John T. McAlister and others he taught at Yale.<sup>82</sup> Dennis Duncanson, a British scholar with experience of counter-insurgency in Malaya, told a similar story.<sup>83</sup> Though Hasluck required his department to prepare and publish a number of studies on Indochina, there is little sign of Hasluck himself engaging with this literature: as

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<sup>81</sup> Paul Mus, *Viêt-Nam: sociologie d'une guerre [Vietnam: Sociology of a War]*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1952.

<sup>82</sup> John T. McAlister Jr. and Paul Mus, *The Vietnamese and their revolution*, Harper & Row, New York, 1970; David Chandler, 'Paul Mus (1902–1969): A Biographical Sketch', *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2009, pp. 149–191.

<sup>83</sup> Dennis Duncanson, *Government and Revolution in Vietnam*, Oxford University Press/RIIA, London, 1968.

a reader of Racine in the original he would have had no trouble with the texts of Paul Mus. Hasluck seems not to have followed his own frequent injunction to master the relevant historical literature.

In some respects, Hasluck was a tragic figure. Though apparently a robust realist, he had the misfortune of assuming the task of managing relations with a powerful ally, the leadership of which, in the event, were realists without reservations.

As has been shown, for almost two decades Australian pronouncements on China policy were especially dominated by a professed concern for the fate of Taiwan. It was ironic that in the hands of Henry Kissinger, a realist with none of the reservations so evident in Hasluck's thinking, the United States leadership abandoned its entrenched position regarding Taiwan. Though Kissinger's memoirs suggest otherwise – "Taiwan was mentioned only briefly during the first session"<sup>84</sup> – in the record of his talks with Zhou Enlai it is clear that Taiwan was the most important subject in their exchanges and that Washington was quite prepared to permit, even facilitate (by dropping the "important measure" resolution doggedly supported by Australia at every annual Assembly session), China's membership of the UN and the Security Council.<sup>85</sup> It was Hasluck's fate to have had the

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<sup>84</sup> Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, Hodder & Stoughton Sydney, 1979, p. 749.

<sup>85</sup> Henry Kissinger, 'Kissinger to Nixon, "My Talks with Chou En-Lai,"' 14 July 1971, Top Secret / Sensitive / Exclusively Eyes Only Source: box 1033, Miscellaneous Memoranda Relating to HAK Trip to PRC, July 1971; National Security Archive, George Washington University: Electronic Briefing Book no. 66 (ed.) William Burr: <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/>>

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foundation of the China policy he had inherited from his immediate predecessors, and which he so eloquently defended on quasi-realist grounds, be thoroughly undermined by the policies of an unqualified realist. It is fortunate for his later reputation that he was, by this time, safely ensconced in vice-regal office.

David Lee

## **Australia's Foreign Ministers Freeth, McMahon, Bury and Bowen and China and Japan, 1969–1972**

*Dr David Lee*

This chapter traces the policies of Australia's foreign ministers towards China and Japan in the period from 1969 to 1972. After a long period of ministerial stability, which had seen only four foreign ministers between 1950 and 1969, the final years of the Liberal-National Government saw another four ministers in just under four years. R. G. Menzies' retirement in 1966 after 16 years as Prime Minister led to four Prime Ministers in seven years.



*The Far East-American Council Conference on Asia 7 October 1968. Left to right: The Right Honourable William McMahon, Treasurer of Australia; The Right Honourable Paul Hasluck, Australian Minister for External Affairs; The Honourable Dean Rusk, US Secretary of State; and His Excellency Sir Keith Waller, Australian Ambassador to the US. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0551).*



## **Gordon Freeth: 11 February 1969 to 12 November 1969**

Gordon Freeth succeeded Sir Paul Hasluck as Minister for External Affairs on 11 February 1969. Born in South Australia on 6 August 1914, Freeth attended Sydney Church of England Grammar School before returning to his family's home state of Western Australia. He graduated in law from the University of Western Australia in 1938 and then practised as a barrister and solicitor at Katanning, 277 kilometres inland from Perth. During World War II he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force and flew Beauforts in Papua New Guinea. Returning to Western Australia, he became prominent in local politics and then won the Federal seat of Forrest in the 1949 election. Freeth served on the backbench for eight years before entering Menzies' ministry in 1958 as Minister for the Interior and Works. He became Minister for Shipping and Transport in 1963 and held that portfolio until 1968 when he was appointed Minister for Air and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. When his Western Australian colleague, Paul Hasluck, became Governor-General in 1969, Freeth took over as Minister for External Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Freeth succeeded to the portfolio at a time of significant change in international affairs, particularly in Asia. There were major impediments to the recognition of the People's Republic of China (China), including its backing of Hanoi in the war being waged in Vietnam. However, a number of nations were softening their position towards Beijing in the late 1960s. In 1968 US President Lyndon Johnson had

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<sup>1</sup> *The Age*, 'Today', 5 December 2001; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 2001; John Farquarson, *Obituaries Australia*, <<http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/freeth-sir-gordon-404>> .

signalled the United States' intention to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War by opening peace talks in Paris with North Vietnam. His Republican successor, Richard Nixon, foreshadowed US forces being progressively withdrawn from the conflict as South Vietnamese forces were built up and maintained the dialogue with North Vietnam that Johnson had begun.<sup>2</sup> In Canada, when Pierre Trudeau succeeded Lester Pearson as prime minister in 1968 he immediately undertook to seek an exchange of diplomatic relations with Beijing.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Italian foreign minister announced in parliament on 29 January 1969 that the time had come to recognise the People's Republic of China.

However, as the international climate became more favourable to the recognition of China, Freeth continued the China policy of Hasluck, Barwick and Casey. He and departmental officers met with the Italian Ambassador in Canberra early in 1969 to dissuade Italy from recognising China. The two main arguments he deployed were, firstly, that Beijing was encouraging North Vietnam and the Viet Cong to be intransigent in the Paris peace talks and, secondly, that if the Republic of China (Taiwan) were expelled from the United Nations, "this would seriously damage the prospects for the continued separate existence of Taiwan, and its own

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<sup>2</sup> See generally Larry Berman, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger and Betrayal in Vietnam*, Free Press, New York, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> 'Submission from Department of External Affairs to Freeth, 12 February 1969', in Stuart Doran and David Lee (eds), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra: , 2002, pp. 292–4.

rights to membership would be subject to the veto of mainland China.”<sup>4</sup>

Prime Minister Harold Holt had strengthened Australia's attachment to the Republic of China (Taiwan) by agreeing to establish an embassy there in 1966.<sup>5</sup> When Japan surrendered to Nationalist China in 1945, both Nationalists and Communists had regarded this as a formal act of retrocession of Taiwan to China. The communist government in Beijing regarded Taiwan as legally part of China and the Nationalists, who had fled to Taiwan after the civil war in 1949, considered themselves as the rightful government of both Taiwan and mainland China. Complicating the management of China policy for Freeth Australia's first Ambassador to Taiwan, Frank Bell Cooper, emerged as a stringent critic of Australian and US China policy. For example, in a dispatch from Taipei on 11 March 1969 he described US China policy as the “biggest blunder that the American had ever made” and recommended that the Australian Government think of other possibilities given that the status quo on China would not last much longer.<sup>6</sup> This dispatch earned him a strong rebuke from Department of External Affairs Deputy Secretary, Laurence McIntyre, who defended government policy as a means to

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<sup>4</sup> *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, note 2, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Cabinet Decision No. 251, 17 May 1966’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 265.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Letter from Cooper to McIntyre, 11 March 1969’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 299.

dissuade Beijing from the forcible annexation of an independent Taiwan.<sup>7</sup>

Freeth's major initiative in his short tenure as Minister for External Affairs was to respond to President Richard Nixon's statement on 25 July 1969 at Guam. There the President issued a statement to the effect that the United States would require more self-reliance from its allies and "look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defence".<sup>8</sup> In a speech to the House of Representatives on 14 August 1969, Freeth declared that the Australian Government had no quarrel with Nixon's Guam doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

Later in the speech, when commenting on Soviet activity in the Indian Ocean, he took the advice of his departmental secretary Sir James Plimsoll and used the following carefully crafted words:

Australia has to be watchful, but need not panic whenever a Russian appears. It has to avoid both facile gullibility and automatic rejection of opportunities for co-operation. The Australian Government at all times welcomes the opportunity of practical and constructive dealings with the Soviet

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<sup>7</sup> 'Letter from McIntyre to Cooper, 12 June 1969', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, 300–301.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Edwards, *A Nation at War: Australian Politics, Society and Diplomacy during the Vietnam War 1965-1975*, Allen & Unwin/Australian War Memorial, North Sydney, 1997, pp. 241–3.

<sup>9</sup> Speech made in the House of Representatives on 14 August 1969 by the Hon. Gordon Freeth M.P. in *Current Notes on International Affairs*, vol. 40, no. 8, August 1969, pp. 413–19.

Union, as with any other country, and this has been the basis of our approach to each issue.<sup>10</sup>

The statement was consistent with Hasluck's approach to the two communist superpowers – Hasluck had once sought to enlist Moscow against Beijing – but it proved controversial.<sup>11</sup> Freeth's speech and a later statement by Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, indicating support for a collective security system in Asia led to a speculation that major change was afoot in Australian foreign policy. When Prime Minister John Gorton went to Adelaide on a visit on 12 September 1969 he was forced to hose down fevered speculation. Australian security, Gorton declared, would be threatened by the establishment of any Russian naval military bases anywhere in the region.<sup>12</sup>

When Australia went to the polls a month later, on 25 October 1969, the Australian Labor Party recovered from its landslide defeat in 1966 to take eighteen seats from the coalition parties, winning a bare majority of the two-party preferred vote, but falling four seats short of toppling the Gorton Government. Freeth was among the coalition casualties, losing his seat of Forrest when Democratic Labor Party (DLP) preferences failed to flow in sufficient numbers to him, a factor attributed to retribution for his statement on the Soviet Union. The DLP had broken away from the ALP in the mid-

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<sup>10</sup> Speech made in the House of Representatives on 14 August 1969 by the Hon. Gordon Freeth M.P, pp. 414.

<sup>11</sup> For Hasluck's ideas on China see Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam* Allen & Unwin, Sydney & Boston, 1987, 211–12.

<sup>12</sup> Extract from a speech by the Prime Minister, John Gorton, at the Kingston Electorate Liberal Party Dinner in Glengowrie, South Australia, on 12 September 1969, see *Current Notes*, vol. 40, no. 9, September 1969, pp. 518–19.

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1950s. Following a strongly anti-communist foreign policy, the electoral preferences of its supporters had helped the coalition parties at the expense of the ALP. Some argue that it was wheat-grower disenchantment rather than DLP hostility that was decisive in Forrest but, whatever the case in that electorate, it was clear that the strongly anti-communist DLP had been crucial in keeping the coalition in office in 1969 by keeping other marginal seats out of ALP hands. This factor would exert a major influence on China policy in the years from 1970 to 1972.



*Portrait of Sir Gordon Freeth in 1961. Born in Angaston, South Australia on 6 August 1914, Freeth established a career as a Barrister and Solicitor in Western Australia in 1938 before serving in the RAAF from 1942-45. First elected as member for Forrest in 1949, Freeth stayed in office until 1969 having replaced Paul Halsuck as Minister for Foreign Affairs. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-1151).*

## **William McMahon: 12 November 1969 to 22 March 1971**

Freeth's successor, William McMahon, was a much more senior and experienced minister. Born in Sydney in 1908, McMahon graduated with an LLB from the University of Sydney in 1933, practised for a time in the firm Allen, Allen and Hemsley and, like Freeth, won office at the 1949 election. Unlike Freeth, it took McMahon less than two years to enter the ministry. He became Minister for Air from 1951, Minister for Primary Industry from 1956, Minister for Labour and National Service between 1958 and 1966 and then Treasurer from 1966 to 1969.<sup>13</sup> As Treasurer, McMahon clashed with the powerful Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, John McEwen, over tariff industry protection and McMahon's decision, supported by Holt, not to devalue the Australian dollar in 1967.<sup>14</sup> After Holt's death in 1967, McEwen refused to serve under McMahon and supported the rival claims of John Gorton. After the 1969 election, Prime Minister Gorton moved McMahon, against his wishes, into the portfolio of external affairs.

Prone to sometimes damaging slips of the tongue, McMahon was nonetheless a shrewd politician. He inherited the China issue as further countries were recognising China and the United States was looking less likely to be able to maintain the arrangement whereby any attempt to change the

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<sup>13</sup> Julian Lessor, 'Sir William (Billy) McMahon', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 18, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Golding, *Black Jack McEwen: Political Gladiator*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1996, p. 264-7.

representation of China in the UN had to be approved by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Sensing that the Nixon Administration's China policy was about to change, the Secretary of the newly re-named Department of Foreign Affairs Keith Waller in late 1970 instructed the Policy Planning Branch to prepare a paper on the subject. Other reasons for the review were growing public support for recognition of China and the burgeoning trade with China, particularly in wheat. In large part because it predicted that the United States would change its China policy unilaterally, the Policy Planning Branch recommended on 7 December 1970 that Australia should move towards recognising China. The paper noted that:

In the final analysis we must remember that the United States, as a super power, will tend to move at its own pace, and that pace will be largely dictated by the desire on the part of Washington and Peking to achieve some accommodation of interests. There is little chance that Peking's diplomacy will evolve quickly and flexibly, but should it do so we cannot expect the Americans to keep us fully briefed on every detail of change in their position. In the light of a likely quickening of United States efforts towards détente, Australia should clearly make every effort, first, to discover the guidelines of American assumptions and second, and no less important, to impress our own fundamental interests upon the United States, before the latter commits itself to any particular course of action.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 'Policy Planning Paper LP (no. 2, 7 November 1970)', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 350.



McMahon was unconvinced. “There is no desperate urgency,” he annotated, “Remember please that we have a D.L.P. —and that its reaction must be considered.” McMahon’s reminder about the DLP was salutary given the extremely close result of the 1969 election and the political fate of his predecessor as Minister for External Affairs, Gordon Freeth. In a submission to Cabinet on 9 February 1971, McMahon declined to follow the Policy Planning Branch’s recommendation. Instead, he recommended that he be authorised to consult with the United States, Japan, Taiwan and New Zealand on tactics in the United Nations relating to the China question.

There was no question, however, of abandoning Taiwan. Though McMahon wanted it to be publicly known that the Australian Government wished to normalise relations with China, he also stressed that Australia should be “prepared to deal with both the Government of the PRC and the Government of Taiwan in respect of matters affecting Australian interests in the territories under their respective control.”<sup>16</sup> Cabinet accepted McMahon’s arguments, agreeing that Australia should not rush to change policy but instead proceed step by step and to have discussions with the US Government in the first instance.<sup>17</sup>

In the meantime, on February 1971, President Nixon, in a broad-ranging report to Congress, announced that the United States had sought to “establish a dialogue with Peking” and that it was “prepared to see the People’s Republic of China

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Submission from McMahon to Cabinet, 9 February 1971’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China*, p. 390.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Cabinet Decision No. 902, 23 February 1971’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China*, p. 395.

play a constructive role in the family of nations.” In the context of the normalisation of relations, Nixon added: “For the United States the development of a relationship with Peking embodies precisely the challenges of this decade: to deal with, and resolve, the vestiges of the post-war period that continue to influence our relationship, and to create a balanced international structure in which all nations will have a stake.”<sup>18</sup> Alluding to this statement, McMahon asked visiting senior US officials on 26 February 1971 whether a change of American policy was in prospect. The leader of the delegation, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winthrop C. Brown, denied that Nixon was contemplating either recognition of China or seating it in the United Nations.<sup>19</sup>

### **Leslie Bury: 22 March 1971 to 2 August 1971**

McMahon succeeded Gorton as Prime Minister and twelve days later, on 22 March 1971, was replaced as Minister for Foreign Affairs by Leslie Bury. Born in London on 25 February 1913, Bury was educated at Cambridge University and then recruited to the economics department of the Bank of New South Wales. After serving in the Citizen Military Forces and then the Australian Imperial Force, he returned to banking. Bury then moved to the Commonwealth Treasury, which appointed him to Washington in 1951 to serve as Australian alternate executive director (executive director

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<sup>18</sup> *Current Notes*, vol. 42, no. 2, February 1971, pp. 86–8.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Record of conversation between McMahon and visiting US officials, 26 February 1971’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China*, pp. 396–402.

from 1953) of the International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

In 1956, on Sir Eric Harrison's retirement from politics, Bury won the blue-ribbon Liberal seat of Wentworth in a by-election. In 1962 Bury contravened government policy by casting doubt on whether Britain's prospective entry into the European Economic Community would have a particularly adverse effect on Australia. Bury was obliged by his remarks to resign his position as Minister for Air and Minister assisting the Treasurer. He returned to the ministry in 1963 as the Minister for Housing and, when Harold Holt succeeded Robert Menzies as prime minister in 1966, was promoted to cabinet as Minister for Labour and National Service. Bury supported John Gorton as prime minister and was appointed Treasurer to succeed McMahon when McMahon became Minister for External Affairs. On 22 March 1971, after McMahon succeeded Gorton as prime minister, Bury, who was suffering from hypertension, took up the less stressful portfolio of Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>20</sup>

McMahon and Bury together sought guidance from the highest levels of the US Government on China policy. On 13 May 1971 McMahon wrote to Nixon informing him that the Australian Government accepted that China would be admitted to the United Nations, with a seat in the Security Council, in either 1971 or 1972.<sup>21</sup> However, McMahon's

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<sup>20</sup> 'Leslie Harry Ernest Bury' in Diane Langmore (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 17, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1997, pp. 167–9.

<sup>21</sup> 'Cablegram from Department of Foreign Affairs to Embassy in Washington, 13 May 1971', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, pp. 445–6.

invitation to Nixon to expound his China policy produced a non-committal response in July.<sup>22</sup> Part of the reason for the reluctance of the Nixon Administration to divulge its thinking to Australia was that it was secretly planning for National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger to visit China, a decision not only kept secret from US allies but also from the State Department itself. Kissinger's July 1971 visit to Beijing was not only surprising to the McMahon government but also acutely embarrassing given that McMahon had been highly critical of Opposition Leader Gough Whitlam's contemporaneous visit to China.<sup>23</sup>

Although McMahon was unsuccessful in gaining access to the Nixon Administration's thinking on China, Bury was more successful in establishing an Australian dialogue with China. Noting that most governments seeking to establish relations with China had worked through third countries in which China was represented, Bury accepted advice from his department that "Paris combines – as no other likely site does – the advantages of size (contact can be made and maintained inconspicuously), good communications, freedom from possible political complications, an Ambassador whose experience and ability would make him a good negotiator and enough staff and resources to cope with the additional workload."<sup>24</sup> The Ambassador was Alan Renouf, who began

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<sup>22</sup> 'Letter from Appling to McMahon, 14 July 1971', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, pp. 500-501.

<sup>23</sup> 'Cablegram from Plimsoll to Department of Foreign Affairs', 15 July 1971, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 502.

<sup>24</sup> 'Submission from Department of Foreign Affairs to Bury, 20 May 1971', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 451.

on 27 May 1971 a dialogue with Chinese Ambassador to France and veteran of the “Long March,” Huang Chen.<sup>25</sup> (The Long March was a tactical withdrawal of some 9650 kilometres in 1934–35 by the Chinese Communists from southeast China to Ya’nan, capital of the northern province of Shaanxi.)



*Portrait of Leslie Bury in 1967. Bury served as Minister for Foreign Affairs (1971); Minister for Labour and National Service (1966-9); Minister for Housing (1963-6); and Minister for Air and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (1961-2). (C of A/DFAT: HIS-1263).*

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<sup>25</sup> ‘Cablegram from Embassy in France to Department of Foreign Affairs, 27 May 1971’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China*, pp. 455–8.

## **Nigel Bowen: 2 August 1971 to 5 December 1972**

Nigel Bowen replaced Bury as Minister for Foreign Affairs in August 1971. Born in British Columbia, Canada, on 26 May 1911, Bowen came to Australia as a boy, was schooled at King's School, Parramatta and then studied law at the University of Sydney. After serving in the Australian Imperial Force during World War II, he practised law in Sydney and took silk in 1953. On Sir Garfield Barwick's resignation as Attorney-General, Bowen won the federal seat of Parramatta at a by-election in 1963 and was appointed Attorney-General in the Holt Government in 1966. In November 1969 he was appointed Minister for Education and Science before serving again as Attorney-General between March and August 1971.

Bowen succeeded as Minister for Foreign Affairs at a time when the crisis over the representation of China in the United Nations reached its zenith. The Department of Foreign Affairs advised Bowen of the contradictions of Australian policy:

If we move towards relations with Peking, we damage our relations with the ROC. To some extent, this is already happening. If on the other hand we act to preserve the ROC's membership of the UN, especially if we take an active and conspicuous role, the PRC will hold it against us. We must bear in mind, in seeking to preserve a place for the ROC at the UN, that conspicuous activity in support of ROC interests will harm our prospects of renewing the dialogue with the PRC.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 'Submission of Department of Foreign Affairs to Bowen, 13 August 1971', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*:

The Department of Foreign Affairs thought that the best hope of retaining a place for Taiwan in the United Nations was first to back a vote in the General Assembly supporting the entry of the People's Republic of China and then secondly support a resolution for the non-expulsion of the Republic of China. This strategy failed partly because the United States Government, on a path to normalisation with the China, was only half-hearted in its support for the position of Taiwan in the United Nations. McMahon would later admit to the British Foreign Secretary, Alec Douglas Home, that the United States had acted too late in the United Nations and that Kissinger's visit to China had been unhelpful.<sup>27</sup>

On 18 October 1971 the UN General Assembly had three motions before it: a US resolution declaring that any proposal to deprive the Republic of China of its representation in the United Nations was an "important question" requiring a two-thirds majority<sup>28</sup>; a second US dual representation draft resolution calling for the entry of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations, including a seat on the Security Council, but at the same time affirming "the continued right of representation of the Republic of China"; and an Albanian resolution for the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations and for the

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*Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 562.

<sup>27</sup> 'Cablegram from High Commission in London to Department of Foreign Affairs, 13 November 1971', *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 662.

<sup>28</sup> *Representation of China in the United Nations*, UN General Assembly Resolution 1668, 16<sup>th</sup> session, 1080<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, 15 December 1961.

simultaneous expulsion of “the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek.”<sup>29</sup>

In the debate, Australia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir Laurence McIntyre, argued strongly against the expulsion of the Republic of China. However, after the debate ended, the General Assembly rejected the vote to make the expulsion of the Republic of China subject to a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. When a subsequent US effort to divide the question of expelling the Republic of China from seating the People’s Republic of China failed, the foreign minister of the Republic of China walked out of the Assembly. The Assembly then voted on the Albanian resolution, which was adopted by 76 to 35, with Australia in the minority.

For the remainder of the government’s term in office, Prime Minister McMahon and Minister for Foreign Affairs Bowen pursued a strategy of normalising relations with China through the Australian Embassy in Paris. On the options available to the government in 1972, Bowen concluded that “it was in Australia’s best interests to recognize Peking as soon as possible” but was “obviously doubtful as to whether sufficient members of his own party, quite apart from the DLP, support the move.”<sup>30</sup> When Cabinet considered the matter in February 1972 it approved Bowen’s recommendation to announce “a willingness to recognise the PRC and exchange diplomatic representatives on the usual

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<sup>29</sup> *Restoration of the lawful rights of the People’s Republic of China in the United Nations*, UN General Assembly Resolution 2758, 26<sup>th</sup> session, 1976<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, 25 October 1971.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Minute from Waller to Anderson, 11 January 1972’, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People’s Republic of China*, p. 675.



international law terms, that is, without either party approving or disapproving policy and without either party passing judgement upon disputed territorial claims, in particular the PRC claim that Taiwan is within their jurisdiction.”<sup>31</sup>

The strategy was unsuccessful because of the McMahon Government's continued support of Taiwan. Huang Chen was firm to Renouf that:

If Australia is willing to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, Australia must recognize the PRC as the sole legal government representing all the Chinese people, sever her so-called diplomatic relations with the Chiang Kai-shek clique and promise neither to support nor to take part in the fallacies of the two China, one China–one Taiwan, and independent Taiwan and the fallacy that the status of Taiwan remains to be determined<sup>32</sup>

The resolution of Australia's China question had to await the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972 and that government's decision to abandon Australia's diplomatic relations with Taiwan. What Australia's pre-Whitlam foreign ministers, particularly McMahon and Bowen, had contributed was to establish the platform through Renouf and the Australian Embassy in France on which Whitlam could swiftly establish diplomatic relations with China.

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<sup>31</sup> 'Submission from Bowen to Cabinet, 17 February 1972', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 688.

<sup>32</sup> 'Cablegram from Renouf to Department of Foreign Affairs, 23 March 1972', in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China*, p. 718.



*Portrait of Sir Nigel Hubert Bowen, September 1971. Sir Bowen served as Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2 August 1971 to 5 December 1972. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0582).*

## **Relationship with Japan**

Far more successful was the government's stewardship of the relationship with Japan, which in the 1960s was substantially trade-focused. Building on the platform of the 1957 Commerce Agreement, Australian trade with Japan blossomed through an increasing trade in agriculture and a burgeoning trade in minerals, particularly in iron ore, coal and bauxite, due the 1960s boom in the Japanese economy.

The government's Japan policy culminated in October 1972 with the inaugural Australia–Japan Ministerial Committee, the Australian delegation of which was chaired by Bowen, whose department had finally taken the lead in managing the Australian relationship from the Department of Trade. The Japanese delegation was led by the Japanese foreign minister, Ohira Masayoshi, and included the Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry, International Trade and Industry, Transport and Economic Planning. Discussions focused on regional and bilateral trade questions.<sup>33</sup> In the succeeding decades Australia's relationship with Japan would become one of its most important bilateral relationships.

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<sup>33</sup> See 'Australia–Japan Ministerial Committee Holds its Inaugural Meeting', *Current Notes* (vol. 43, no. 10, October 1972), 505-508.

## **Discussion**

### **Emeritus Professor Peter Drysdale AO FAHA:**

Those presentations have stimulated many questions in the audience and I don't want to forestall that, but as an economist, I must interpolate a question of my own at the beginning.

The narrative of both presentations, in a sense, tells a story of the development of Australia's diplomatic relations with Northeast Asia (excluding Japan) as one focused in the aftermath of the Cold War period. The story of Japan and the economic relationship with China are almost seen as an accident of vested interests and economic motivated policies from other departments. I wonder if you would like to reflect on that a bit and provide any intelligence on the interaction between the diplomatic community and the political leadership, and economic policy strategies. My conception of the economic strategy is that the leadership had a vested interest characteristic, and that the wheat trade was congenial, especially with Country Party politics and so on with China.

All these initiatives, it seems to me, on the Japan front and even on the China front on the wheat trade side, were cast in a broad diplomatic strategy that was rooted finally and ultimately in the wartime agreements with the United States, especially with respect to the consistency of that strategy towards Japan and acknowledging the normalisation of economic relations under the WTO within the gap between Australia and Japan. However, the initiative with the wheat trade, rooted as it was in Crawford's thinking all the way back to the famous 1938 speech on Australia as a Pacific power, is a notion of the development of Australia's economic and political security interests in Asia encompassing both Japan, China and Southeast Asia.

**Professor Anthony Milner AM:**

With James' comments on the Wheat Board and the Country Party politicians, Professor Drysdale's question is a very interesting one. Would you be able comment on the role of McEwen and his relations with these different foreign ministers we've been hearing about. He seems a very powerful figure in the government.

**Professor William Maley AM:**

I'd be interested to hear, particularly from our colleagues from the Department, some perceptions about the role that Sir Alan Westerman played. Because there was, I think, a fairly widespread conviction that Westerman provided a lot of the intellectual firepower behind the position that McEwen took, particularly in McEwen's disputes with McMahon and Treasury. It flashed through my mind that Alan Reid in his book *The Power Struggle* about the succession after Holt's death spent an awful lot of time talking about the policy differences between McEwen and McMahon as things that fed into the struggle for the leadership.<sup>34</sup> I was also interested in the role of some of the newspapers at the time, journalist Maxwell Newton in particular, in advocating for a particular aspirant to the leadership.

**Professor James Cotton FAHA:**

I think Peter Drysdale is absolutely right. If you go back to the presentation that Crawford gave to the 1938 summer school on Australian foreign policy, which was subsequently edited and published by W. G. K. Duncan, the thinking for the Japan relationship is all pre-figured there. We've got to remember that McEwen actually spent six or seven months as foreign minister at a crucial time; he was in politics during the trade diversion dispute. In many ways, the re-emergence of this

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<sup>34</sup> Alan Reid, *The Power Struggle*, Tartan Press, Sydney, 1972.

David Lee

Australia-Japan relationship was taking over where 1936 left off. People who took the broader historical view could see that once the wartime baggage was sorted out, if it could be, then this pattern would remerge. So, I think although it's true that it looks as though it's just driven by the Department of Trade, or it seems to be moving according to a narrow trade-driven agenda, I think that those involved actually had a broad strategic view.

By the way, some China people also had a broader view. If you look at the very early material sent back from Beijing when Australia opened its mission in Beijing, there were people who were saying: "This is the next market and, ultimately this market will be bigger than Japan so we need to be thinking now about the China market". This was received in the Department with dismissive comments, but of course the people advocating the size of the Chinese market in the middle 1970s were absolutely right. So, there are some big strategic stories here, but I think the relationship between Hasluck and McEwen was one of patron and client. Hasluck was very deferential to McEwen because he had McEwen's support. Remember, McEwen actually lobbied for him when he decided to contest the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Trade being McEwen's bailiwick, it was very much left to his way of operating. Billy McMahon, of course, jumped in immediately in 1970 when McEwen stepped down. McMahon reorganised and set up an inter-departmental committee to manage relationships with Japan and gave a wonderful speech where he talked about how there was going to be a new policy towards Japan, but then makes no statement in the speech about what that actual policy entails. It's one of those wonderful Billy McMahon speeches that you've just got to read. But, yes, there were these bigger strategic thinkers.

**Dr David Lee:**

Just to go back to the McEwen-McMahon disagreement, that was about tariff protection, among other things. The 1967 devaluation where McEwen tried to get Holt and McMahon to reverse the industry decision and McEwen's ideas for Australian banks' equity participation in new minerals ventures, were, among the other things, where Treasury and McEwen differed. These were just a couple of the big issues that they disagreed on.

**Clive Hildebrand AM:**

I didn't have anything to do with foreign affairs in 1960 – that's when I launched my professional career in mining. I had previously studied economics and I could see that the politics of the trade issues were dragged along by several features. There were a lot of players in the game that affected Australia and one of them was that the 1960s was the UN's Decade of Development which had implications all over the world. There were new mines starting everywhere. For example there was the Churchill Falls project in Newfoundland, which took 21 years to develop and it was nationalised, I think, on day one.

But, these sorts of projects, these magnificent projects, continued. Rio Tinto was nationalised in Spain; they took their money. I asked Rio Tinto-Zinc chairman Val Duncan at the time, "Why did you come to Australia?" He said, "Well, the CRA (Conzinc Riotinto of Australia) had lots of ideas and no money; we have lots of money and no ideas." He was a frank man, and that's probably exactly how it happened. The real player behind this, I think, was probably Japan, which I believe lifted this country up by its bootstraps and everybody followed. This was fighting against the idea that we would protect our iron ore; BHP didn't want to export the iron ore.

David Lee

So the politics was, if anything, holding it back. I don't know where diplomacy was in all this, but Japan came in, and with the US, they developed Mount Goldsworthy, a Utah development. The Japanese also developed the Bowen Basin. That was the Japanese steel industry replacing the Appalachian Pocahontas coal from America they had been using with Bowen Basin coal which was high quality and extracted here in Australia.

So, I think the mining industry probably led the diplomacy and led the politics on this and Australia was dragged along because of these investors who wanted to get in. They could see the steel industry was going to develop and it soon became the biggest steel maker in the world. After that, of course, China competed to provide a repeat. So that I wonder where diplomacy fitted into all of this. Were the politics holding it back? Was diplomacy, following the miners? People like Russel Madigan, who was the National President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, were very firm advocates for education in Asian affairs and getting into Asia.

**Phillip Flood AO FAIA:**

James Cotton, David Lee and Peter Edwards have painted a very eloquent picture of what Barwick and Hasluck were preoccupied with during the 1960s.

Given that, and given the limited role that Japan was playing in international affairs at that time, wasn't Australia's pursuit of relationship with Japan really a rational decision that pursued a rational outcome in Australia's interest? I note that relations with Japan during the 1960s were dominated by Sir John McEwen, Sir James Crawford and Sir Alan Westerman, and by the kind of mercantile issues they were pursuing.



Was there a better outcome for Australia than the one we'd achieved by the end of the 1960s, which led on to the view “Look, we need some further treaty with Japan, we need some sort of friendship, commerce, and navigation treaty” that became the NARA treaty. Whitlam took this up and ultimately wasn't able to conclude and the treaty was eventually finished during Fraser's term.

Just incidentally, I was a junior officer working on those issues, a very junior officer. I went with Gough Whitlam, whom was by then Prime Minister, as the junior officer on his team about negotiations with Japan, and Freeth delicately said “Prime Minister, there's a problem with this treaty, this treaty of NARA.” Freeth said, although he didn't want to explain, he said “I'll ask the junior linguist on our staff to explain.” The linguist said, “The problem with this treaty is that the symbol for NARA is very close to the symbol for bullshit in Japanese.” Mr. Whitlam replied, “Comrades, we have a perfect title for the treaty.”

**Professor James Cotton FAIA:**

Well, I'm with you on the McEwen position. I think, as I was intimating in my previous remarks that here are some people with some very long-term views and, looking back on it, they seemed to be the ones who have been on the side of history. But, of course in the meantime, we were getting ourselves entangled in all kinds of activities that didn't necessarily do us any good. Certainly, I don't think it did the people of Vietnam any good, and of course it led to a certain mindset which has been very difficult for us to escape from.

I just have to take exception to one thing that Peter said in his talks. He said, “We were very careful in Iraq to restrict ourselves to a sphere of operations a long way away from most of the shooting and get in and get out quickly.” We also had special forces in Iraq, and these special forces went into

action before the expiry of the deadline given to Saddam and his family. Nobody's ever going to prosecute Americans before the International Criminal Court for all kinds of reasons with which we are well familiar, but one day, Australia may just have to front up to the International Criminal Court and explain why it was that Australian troops were killing Iraqis before this international deadline expired, because that's against the rules of the Geneva Convention.

Unfortunately, that's one of those carry-overs from Vietnam, and certainly we'd have been much wiser to have stuck with McEwen and McEwen's position. We'd have been much wiser to stick to the kind of strategy Barwick pursued very successfully in relation to Indonesia and/or stayed out of Vietnam. Everybody would have been better off, including some of my contemporaries. I think I've credited McEwen with some far-sighted policy, and I think that's right. The more one thinks about it, the smarter it was.

If you want to get an idea of the hopeless incompetence of the people running foreign affairs towards the very end of this era, I recommend that you read the transcript of Bury's famous interview in Monday Conference. The thing is printed in *extenso* in *Current Notes*, so you can see that somebody in the department wanted to take revenge.<sup>35</sup> It is the most appalling record of trying to defend a position in relation to China on which Bury himself is not the least bit clear. These were the people who were in charge of foreign policy at that point. It's no wonder that Bury was sacked; what is amazing is that he ever became minister at all.

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<sup>35</sup> 'Foreign Minister's Interview on Television', *Current Notes*, vol 42, no. 5, 1971, pp. 275-82.

So, on the one hand, we've got some very far-sighted people who did us a lot of good. On the other hand, we do have a number of people who made some rather poor decisions. Well, you can understand it in the case of Bury, but I'm really puzzled by why it is that someone like Hasluck, so incredibly thoughtful, a really great intellect in all kinds of ways, was so closed to debate.

Now, as a 20 year old, I was very clear, I think, once I got that letter from the Department of Defence, what the Vietnam War was all about. At the time I read the writings of people who were concerned about the Vietnam situation, such as John T. McAllister, who introduced Paul Mus to English speakers.

But even people who had lent their support to other conflicts such as Bernard Fall, were all quite clear in their opposition. Even Dennis Duncanson, somebody on the far right in all kinds of ways, somebody who actually shot guerillas in Malaya, who was “Mr. Counter-insurgency” from the British point of view, even he looked at Vietnam and voiced his opposition to intervention; he also wrote a very good book on the subject, *Government and Revolution in Vietnam*.<sup>36</sup> They all said, basically, “this is a civil conflict: South Vietnam is sustained by American intervention. It won't be sustained except by the continuing exertion of external forces”.

It's pointless to get involved in a conflict of that kind; it's only going to result in a very messy outcome. And yet, here was somebody in Hasluck who could have engaged with those ideas, but someone who never seemed to change his mind on those fundamentals, and that, for me, is the puzzle. You can understand why somebody like Leslie Bury didn't make a lot

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<sup>36</sup> Dennis J. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution in Vietnam*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968.

David Lee

of progress on thinking-through the consequences of recognising or not recognising Taipei, but the puzzle, for me, is why it was that Hasluck was not able to engage with these debates, because those were the big debates then. I can remember very clearly because I felt myself to be a minor participant in that whole story.

I have to thank you, by the way, Peter, for in the second volume of your official history, the crowd scene that you reproduced from one of the Vietnam moratorium photographs is not in Melbourne or Sydney, it's in Adelaide and you can see me just down there, right at the front; so thank you very much.

**Dr David Lee:**

I think that is a very good point about the management of relations with Japan, which were largely the responsibility of the Department of Trade in the 1960s. It wasn't until the 1970s that the Department of Foreign Affairs took over that broad relationship. I do agree that more archival research is needed on Australia-Japanese relations, particularly from the mid-1960s on. That's a gap, I think, in our knowledge and something that hopefully will be addressed at some point in the future.

**Emeritus Professor Peter Drysdale AO FAHA:**

As I think James' story would make clear, I don't think there was a cigarette paper between Menzies and McEwen on the initiatives that were taken with Japan, and probably, although there is less evidence of this, on the initiatives with the wheat trade with China. I think there was a grand strategic purpose here and it required a great deal of courage, as those who lived through the period know, for Menzies to stand up and take up the Japan thing through.

Australia's Foreign Ministers Freeth, McMahon, Bury and Bowen  
and China and Japan, 1969–1972

I don't think it was, as I think has become clear in the subsequent conversation, an accident of economic interest politics to carry the thing forward with Japan. As you said, the initiative came through the mining sector. The mining involvement changed the whole political economy of managing Australia's external economic relations, including shifting us towards a much more open and flexible economy, less protectionist and all the rest, against McEwen's original stance. But it was grounded in a grand strategic judgement about Australia's interests in the region not only in the political sense, but also in the economic sense. Thank you all very much, and particularly James Cotton and David Lee, for what I think has been a very interesting and lively conversation.



*Dr David Lee (right) presenting on “East Asia: Relations with China and Japan” and moderator Emeritus Professor Peter Drysdale AO FAIIA at the Australian Institute of International Affairs’ Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs 1960-1972, Government House, Canberra, 19 February 2013. (Australian Institute of International Affairs).*

## **Memories of Serving Australian Interests Abroad**

*Andrew Farran, Principal Private Secretary to Gordon Freeth, former diplomat, former senior lecturer at Monash University and former President, AIIA VIC*

*Robert Furlonger CB, former Director-General, Office of National Assessments*

*Pierre Hutton, former Head of Mission to Burma, Nigeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, The Sudan and Switzerland, Delegate to UN General Assembly 1956 to 1958, Representative on UN Development Program Council 1966; Representative on World Food Council 1980 and Representative on UN Human Rights Commission 1982-1983*

*James Ingram AO FAIIA, former senior diplomat, Director-General of the Australian Development Assistance Bureau and Executive Director, UN World Food Program*

*Moderator: Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA, former senior Australian diplomat, former National Vice-President, AIIA and former President AIIA NSW*

## **Andrew Farran**

I am pleased to have this opportunity to make a few observations on Gordon Freeth's short tenure in External Affairs in 1969, following Sir Paul Hasluck's elevation to Government House.

1969 was a significant year for Australian foreign policy. Not because Gordon Freeth was the Minister for Foreign Affairs that year (and only for that year) – though his experiences were significant – but because of the number and range of international and regional issues with profound future implications that came to the fore then, and for the manner of their handling.

It opened with the commencement of the US/North Vietnamese “peace” talks in Paris in circumstances where it was clear that the US would not achieve its objectives in that conflict. This was followed by Prime Minister Gorton's second visit to Washington for a meeting with recently elected US President Nixon. It included mid-year the Five Power Ministerial meeting on Singapore/Malaysian security arrangements and Gorton's insistence that his use of the term “Malaya” was not a mistake, against a background of racial disturbances in Malaysia and an on-going dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah in which Australia would not be militarily involved. Also Britain announced that its military forces in any substantial sense would be withdrawn East of Suez by 1971 and could no longer be relied upon to protect its former colonies in the region.

In July 1969, President Nixon pronounced his Guam Doctrine which put allies on notice that they had to do more for themselves in safeguarding their national security. This had profound defense implications for the region, reflecting a clear weakening of US resolve to continue its previous role in

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that respect. An important ANZUS Ministerial Conference addressing this issue was held in Canberra in August. Both the United States and Australia began planning at this time for the withdrawal of their forces from Vietnam with some degree of dignity (which in the event was not achieved even within a further six years).

A development in the Indian Ocean area was an increased Soviet Union naval presence accompanied by diplomatic statements that the USSR was willing to work for a more cooperative international (including security) system and contribute to “the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia”.

Further afield, border hostilities had broken out between the USSR and the People’s Republic of China to China’s north, a China that following the “Cultural Revolution” was seeking, as stated by Prime Minister John Gorton in Parliament, “to mobilise a new generation in support of Mao Tse-tung’s extreme radical and nationalistic policies”. Closer to home, Indonesia was settling into its post-Sukarno era and Australia was doing all it could to deepen and strengthen its institutional structures and in the process condoned a very notional plebiscite to confirm Indonesia’s incorporation of West Irian.

The Freeth Ministerial Statement of 14th August 1969 addressed these issues. It was the passage concerning the Soviet Union that drew most attention. Although the fall of the Soviet Union was not then anticipated in any shape or form, and although the fate of Czechoslovakia the previous year was still much in mind, the speech picked up on recent high-level indications that the Soviets were seeking to adapt their policies to an international order that would facilitate higher levels of security in an increasingly inter-dependent and pluralistic world, particularly their reference to



contributing to “the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia”. On 10 July, the Soviet foreign minister had stated that “the prerequisite and potential for an improvement of our relations with Australia exist”. In response Freeth observed that the Australian Government “at all times welcomes the opportunity of practical and constructive dealings with the Soviet Union, as with any other country”. He noted the limited degree of its naval penetration in the Indian Ocean and added that it was “natural that a world power such as the Soviet Union should seek to promote a presence and a national influence in important regions of the world”. Reason for concern would arise if and when “the scale or methods or objective of the promotion are calculated to jeopardise our direct national interests or to endanger the general security and stability of the region”.

In that context the statement also addressed China. It noted the concerns of the international community with a rising China. It noted further that Australia’s stance, along with other major powers and their respective allies, was not one of hostility. It was more one of apprehension about a China that, unlike today, was not exactly putting out signals of cooperation and co-existence with all. Australia for its part was “not prejudging China’s short and long-range intentions”. It was Australia’s desire “that an accommodation could be reached which would have the result of putting the mainland of China into the international community without sacrificing the Republic of China or the right of the people of Taiwan to determine their own future”. Meanwhile, the statement continued, “part of an accommodation would be that China would allow its neighbours —the Soviet Union as well as countries like India and those of Southeast Asia — some assurance that the mainland of China is a country they could live alongside without the threat of armed aggression or internal subversion directed from Peking”. And even today,

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with all these assurances, the question of China remains uppermost amongst US, Asian and Australian strategic thinkers. Russia, on the other hand, barely enters into our thinking strategically, however it may be viewed in Northeast Asia.

So in 1969, after the Guam doctrine, serious policy-makers were looking ahead at the future implications of a plurilateral (if not yet an equipoised) world, at least regionally. But as with all things political, was this yet perceived and recognised as forward thinking in Australia, especially given that a Federal election was due later that year?

What of the government at that point, under John Gorton? Gorton was a leader with a known tendency to go his own way regardless, where he held strong, and as he would say progressive, views on an issue – an attractive quality perhaps to the like-minded. But there were influential elements in the governing parties that harboured reservations about the direction of certain government policies and Gorton's personal style. Forthcoming retirements, the ministerial fiascos over the handling of the F111 aircraft procurement, and some unresolved ministerial placements meant that the Cabinet structure still reflected the outcome of the leadership contest following Harold Holt's disappearance in 1967. Gorton wanted to change that after the 1969 elections.

What then were his options looking ahead? Where would external affairs play in this, given that Sir Paul Hasluck, the Minister for External Affairs, had been appointed Governor-General in February; Minister for Defence Fairhall would soon be retiring; Minister for National Development Fairbairn was expected shortly to go to London as High Commissioner; and Treasurer McMahon could be removed from Treasury. Gordon Freeth, who had suffered from being on the wrong side in the Gorton/Hasluck leadership contest in 1968, and

demoted from Cabinet to Air (as much to clear up the F111 problem) was again in Gorton's calculations. Gorton chose Freeth as Minister for External Affairs even though by his own admission he (Freeth) knew little about this area, and had not made it an interest. Being from WA, as was Hasluck, the acknowledged foreign affairs expert, Freeth had sought other areas of policy to make his own (Hasluck and Freeth had both been elected to Parliament in 1949 when Menzies and the LCP succeeded Chifley and the ALP). It is believed that Gorton had in mind appointing Freeth to the Treasury after the 1969 election and, on this understanding, Freeth, in spite of some misgivings, agreed to a short-term, stop-gap appointment to external affairs.

Whether matters would have worked out that way or differently no one can now say. But Freeth had a solid reputation for mastering a brief on any subject. It should be noted also that, almost in anticipation of this appointment, he had been asked to lead a parliamentary delegation to the EEC the previous year, which he did successfully, a relevant learning experience in itself.

What secures Freeth's place as Minister for External Affairs is the fall-out from the Ministerial Statement of 14th August 1969, a speech that recognised the significant changes in Australia's external environment and, one might think, reflected much policy-practical common sense. Initially the speech was well received in the media and by leading commentators.<sup>1</sup> But it was the passage concerning the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> *The Melbourne Age*, 11 September 1968: "If Mr Freeth made a mistake it was to be too candid; after years of complaint that our foreign policy is being made in the dark, he invited the public to take a glimpse of the realities of policy making and to join in a long-range estimate of the possible dangers facing the nation. The

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Union that roiled the anti-communist Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and influential sections of the parliamentary Liberal Party, who were either trading on the Soviet “threat” for electoral success in the case of the DLP or were unreconstructed “Cold War warriors” in the case of elements of the Liberal and Country parties. Whether the outcome of the 1969 elections reflected cause and effect in that respect alone is problematical. Gorton denied it and accepted much of the blame himself for the government’s relatively poor showing. Indeed, the Government lost 16 seats, reducing its majority from 39 to 7, on a swing against it of 6.6%. The swing against Freeth in his seat was 10 per cent. My own view is that the speech — together with sharp cuts to the Defence budget announced earlier in the year — gave the

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departure from conventional sermonising about external affairs has been seized on by the DLP and the Right-wing elements of the Government back-bench as evidence of a loss of moral fibre. In fact it is precisely the opposite.”

As to whether the statement reflected a change of policy rather than in its presentation, as alleged by some, *The Australian* (15 August 1969) commented: “[The statement] was a lucid, temperate and thoroughly practical analysis of the main issues in Australia’s current foreign policy”; and added: “There is no sudden change in the direction of that policy but there are highly significant new emphases, a strong vein of pragmatism and a more genuine note of flexibility than we have been accustomed to in recent years.”

The respected strategic analyst Robert O’Neill wrote a year later: “...the stance indicated by Mr Freeth...towards the Soviet Union seems well calculated to place Australia in a much sounder position than the attitudes which have been displayed by Mr Freeth’s opponents and disowners”. *Australian Outlook*, August 1970, p. 111.

DLP and other extreme groups (for example the League of Rights) ammunition to conduct a distorted and virulent campaign in Freeth's own electorate of Forrest specifically, a campaign that was difficult to counter over a wide area of WA. Another factor was that Labor was then being led for the first time by Gough Whitlam and the political tide of the country had already begun to swing towards him.

What's important in politics and the evolution of foreign policy is not being right but being right at the right time, and understanding how the articulation of policy is perceived, regardless of content. We all know that China should have been recognised long before it was, but the how and when were determining considerations in which all dimensions of politics play a part. Freeth and Gorton misjudged the moment electorally but not strategically. It is worth noting that in responding to Freeth's speech, Gough Whitlam stated: "I have spoken (myself) of the need for cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Vietnam settlement. The detente with Russia is the basis of President Nixon's foreign policy."

What of the antecedents of the speech? Who wrote it? Where did the thoughts on the Soviet Union come from? Any reading of the greater part of the speech, which was comprehensive in scope covering all current issues, would see it as a typical product of its kind from the bureaucracy (in this case the Department of External Affairs) in which the drafting hand of the respective sections could be discerned. But the introduction of an entirely new idea or approach would require authority at a high level. What one can say is that the departmental secretary, Sir James Plimsoll, would not have been surprised at the way it turned out apart from the addition of some more conciliatory sentences about China. As for the attention given to the Soviets, one should not overlook the

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proximity of the speech to the ANZUS Ministerial Conference held in Canberra just weeks before.

The speech was submitted to and approved by Prime Minister Gorton well before delivery. But was not seen by any other cabinet minister as far as is known, including the Minister for Defence (who only weeks before had declared Soviet naval vessels in the Indian Ocean to be a threat).

Gorton's own views at this time were that we had to adjust to a lessening of a US commitment to the region and the emergence of other powers, and the need to secure a stable regional order. While he would fight international aggression if need be, he was against Australian forces being involved on foreign soil to put down civil unrest or racial tension. This informed his view of the Five Power Arrangements with Singapore and Malaysia, which made him and Australia unpopular with the Malaysian government for some time after.<sup>2</sup> Gorton had also proposed from time to time a series of

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<sup>2</sup> Freeth had visited Malaysia just a week or so before the Malaysian elections in May. The day after the elections, racial tension came to a head with widespread outbreaks of violence up and down the country. To outsiders these were largely unexpected but in retrospect I glimpsed insights that might have been read better at the time. When we were visiting an outdoor project, a number of Chinese students came up to us and were anxious to explain their deep concern about the racial situation. Later there were talks with the Malaysian foreign minister, Tun Razak (later to be Prime Minister) and the head of the Foreign Ministry, Ghazali Shafie which were largely about the institutional structure and modalities of the Five Power Arrangement and plans to cover the British withdrawal. I noticed that as the Malaysians were leaving the meeting they exchanged puzzled looks as if something they expected the Australian delegation to discuss had not been raised. This would have been some assurance to them that the Five Power

non-aggression pacts between all countries of the region, to promote and sustain security and economic development.

On reflection, the passages concerning the Soviet Union could have been better presented domestically. The qualifying passages, to the effect that the Russian proposals, as with any other, should be in line with our objectives of removing suspicions and fears of any resort to force from or within the region, were easily overlooked by those who chose to do so. Much later, the issue was further exploited by the Fraser Government, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But in defense of those who had any handling of it, the content seemed reasonable and appropriate to a changing reality, strategic and political. It has been said that if Jack McEwen had seen those passages, they would have been struck out. But then, if that had been the case, we would in policy terms have been pedalling backwards again, at least until the ascendancy of Gough Whitlam.<sup>3</sup>

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Arrangement would support internal security (apart from regional security) if it came to that. That, of course, became Prime Minister Gorton's reason to delineate more sharply the limits of Australia's military commitment and deployment, and how he explained this at the Five Power Ministerial meeting in Canberra the following month and in the months thereafter. This disgruntlement on the part of the Malaysians continued well into 1971 when Sir Arthur Tange, at a Five Power officials meeting in Singapore that year, skillfully and effectively defused the issue with the Malaysians.

<sup>3</sup> For further details, see Andrew Farran, 'The Freeth Experiment', *Australian Outlook*, April 1972, vol. 26, no. 1. This article cites supportive comment and opinion on the statement, as well as providing a fuller account of its genesis and political context. Also, Andrew Farran, 'Reflections on Policy Making and the Public Service', *Public Administration*, June 1975, vol. XXXIV, no. 2 – originally submitted to the Royal Commission on the Australian

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*The presentation of the Hoover letter book by the Australian Government to the General Services Administration at the National Archives building in Washington D.C. on 26 September 1969. Left to right: Australian Ambassador to the United States Sir Keith Waller; Australian Minister for External Affairs Gordon Freeth; President of the Herbert Hoover Library Association General Harold K. Johnson; Chairman of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation Rear Admiral Lewis L. Strauss; Deputy Administrator of General Services John W. Chapman; and Deputy Archivist of the United States Herbert E. Angel. (C of A/DFAT: HIS-0566).*

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Public Service, 1975, a discussion of dilemmas faced by a professional public servant confronting line-crossing issues when seconded to run a Ministerial office.



## **Robert Furlonger CB**

I should say, first of all, that during the period we are talking about, 1961 to 1972, I only spent one year in departmental headquarters. The rest of the time I was either overseas or serving in the Defence Department in the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO). So as a consequence, with one exception, most of my impressions about the foreign ministers of that period are very much second-hand. That one exception was Sir William (Billy) McMahon, and I'm sorry that I will have to tell you some more Billy McMahon stories.

My experience with Billy extended over the period in various guises, in very direct and indirect ways. The first was in Geneva when he came to the ILO (International Labour Organization) annual meeting, and then I had him on my hands for a few days. I set up an appointment for him with the head of an international organisation, which Billy cancelled at the last moment saying that he had an important appointment in Paris and he had to be there in a few hours. So I gave him the official car and chauffeur, and waved him goodbye.

The next period was indirect. I was in Washington for a good deal of the time when McMahon was Minister for Foreign Affairs and the reports I got from colleagues in the department didn't really give me much inclination to change my judgment of him. I asked one colleague who accompanied him on a visit to Washington how the visit had gone. He described it, and I quote him as saying, "grotesque." There were other reports in the department about a visit he had made to Indochina, where his accounts of the visit contained a very healthy blend of fiction to go with the fact.

But perhaps the most notable thing I can comment on in that period is that the United States was proposing to undertake one of their many initiatives to try and get the North

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Vietnamese to the table on Indochina and for once they consulted us in advance, so we sent off a telegram to Canberra and sought Canberra's reaction. We got some pretty hardnosed reactions from Canberra. Most of the instructions that we were getting from Canberra during the period I was in Washington, between 1965 and 1969, were pretty hardnosed. We received very reluctant agreement to the various initiatives the Americans would try to take to get themselves out of the morass in Vietnam.

So Keith Waller (Australian Ambassador to the United States) went along to the State Department to talk to William Bundy (Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs), who was our normal interlocutor, to deliver these instructions and in the course of doing so, Waller said, "I want you to understand, Bill, these are cabinet decisions." So that was a normal practice. I went back to the embassy to send off the telegram and Waller got off to prepare for his inevitable evening engagement.

I sent off the telegram, and then I got a call from William Bundy. He was trying to get Waller, and I said Waller wasn't there; hence he was put through to me. Bundy said, "I went out to Dean Rusk [US Secretary of State] and told him all of Waller's representations, and I told him that Waller said that this was a cabinet decision." He said Rusk nearly jumped out of the seventh floor window. Bundy said McMahon will know about it and he's bound to leak it. Bundy emphasised that there were only seven or eight people in Washington who knew about this particular initiative.

The next indirect connection I had with McMahon was when I was working in the JIO, and he was Prime Minister by then. He was being criticized as being a do-nothing government in the media, so he sent a circular around to the various departments asking the departments to report on initiatives

that had taken place under his prime ministership. I contributed from the JIO the fact that we had opened up an intelligence relationship with Indonesia but I heavily underlined that it was not to be made public. So Billy eventually made his statement about all of his achievements and out this came.

The intelligence leak was included, so I had to indulge in some quick repairs via Gordon Jockel in Jakarta with my opposite number to try and rectify the matter.

Now all of that is a prelude to describing a visit I had with Billy McMahon in Jakarta, where I was an ambassador in 1972. It was announced that Billy would come to Jakarta and that he would spend several days there. We had a pretty extensive program lined up. He was to have a session with President Suharto and there were to be two formal dinners with accompanying speeches – one given by Suharto, with a return to be given by McMahon. The visit also included an address to Indonesian Parliament and finally McMahon was to have a press conference relating to the aforementioned intelligence leak.

The thing that worried me most was his projected meeting with Suharto, having heard from departmental colleagues that what Billy said he had said was quite often different from what he had actually said. For the first time in my diplomatic career, I committed a bare-faced lie. The practice had been that after an initial wider meeting, Suharto would take the visiting head of the government off for a private tête-à-tête with only Suharto's interpreter being present. So, lying through my teeth, I told the Indonesians very firmly that Mr McMahon always insisted on having his own interpreter there as well. So we got Geoffrey Forrester, one of my very good Indonesian linguists, in there as a joint interpreter.

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So that was my main worry resolved. Now with such an extensive program, obviously many things could go wrong with Billy McMahon. Fortunately, he kept to his brief pretty well during the visit. It was quite an important visit because for the first time we were going to open up a defence aid program. We were phasing out some fighter aircraft, Sabres if I remember correctly.<sup>4</sup> The Indonesians had got quite a lot of aircraft from the Soviets but by this time they were quite inoperable.

The Russian aircraft stood on the airfield looking magnificent but as a result of neglect and the deterioration of their internal systems in the tropical conditions, they were quite useless. So we decided we would give them these aircraft, together with a backup training team to go with them. So it was an important visit.

Much to my surprise, Billy kept to his brief during the whole visit and none of the disasters that I had been expecting occurred. In the course of explaining to Billy why it was possible to have a defence cooperation program with Indonesia, while not having a formal defence treaty, we drummed this message into him. At the end of the Indonesian program, he had a press briefing foreshadowing the next country he was to visit, which was Malaysia. During the course of this briefing out he came with the formula that we applied to Indonesia – you didn't need to have a formal defence treaty to have a formal defence program.

Of course, it was quite inappropriate when applied to Malaysia, where we had a formal defence arrangement through the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Richard

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<sup>4</sup> 23 CAC Sabre jet fighter aircraft were donated to the Indonesian Air Force between 1973 and 1975; and retired in 1982.

Woolcott, who was with him, had quite a lot of cleaning up to do afterwards to explain that this was not meant to undermine the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

So, on the whole, the visit was much better than it might have been. I think that this was probably one of Billy's better performances. If one looks at the foreign ministers during this period we're considering, I would rate Sir Garfield Barwick as the best. In fact, I think Barwick, in my view, would rank among the two or three best foreign ministers we had since the rather controversial Dr H. V. Evett. Billy, I would have to put at the other extreme. On this one occasion, I think he did pass the test and I was a very relieved man when he finally left Jakarta.



*The discussion panel presenting on “Memories of Serving Australian Interests Abroad” at the Australian Institute of International Affairs’ Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs 1960-1972, Government House, Canberra, 19 February 2013. Left to right: Andrew Farran; Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA; Pierre Hutton; Robert Furlonger CB; James Ingram AO FAIIA. (Australian Institute of International Affairs).*

## **Pierre Hutton**

As Public Information Officer or spokesperson of the Department of External Affairs, I had succeeded Dick Woolcott. I was at the top of the Sydney Tower, entertaining some guests at the government's expense, and the phone rang. It was the Australian foreign minister, which was quite a surprise. He said, "McMahon here, I want to know what you're saying about X, because you and I have got to say the same things." I don't know what eavesdropping services were listening in but they would've got an erroneous idea.

I was in my career accredited as Head of Mission to nine different countries. I commenced our diplomatic relations with Iraq, Syria and Jordan, but was based in Beirut – a much quieter place until they actually shot at me. But I'm here. Much of what would be covered is in a book I alluded to earlier, *After the Heroic Age*, published by Griffith University.<sup>5</sup> Also encouraging me, there's also one – the title explains itself – *The Legacy of Suez*, which was published by Macquarie University.<sup>6</sup>

I'm going to concentrate on my first posting as a callow youth to Bangkok and my first posting as Head of Mission to Nigeria. In putting the book *After the Heroic Age* together, to the possible surprise of some of my former colleagues, I was assisted by Sir Arthur Tange. Well I should say assisted in his own fashion, since in the margin of my drafts there would be questions in a familiar, jagged red handwriting, some of

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<sup>5</sup> Pierre Hutton, *After the Heroic Age and before Australia's Rediscovery of Southeast Asia*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, Griffith University, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Hutton, *The Legacy of Suez : an Australian Diplomat in the Middle East*, Macquarie University Middle East Centre, 1996.

which would be difficult to answer without risking a volcanic response. I had a dispensation from the thirty- year rule on access to classified documents in the Australian Archives and that helped too.

Two of the giant figures in the early academic studies of Indonesia and Malaysia, the late Dr Herb Feith and the late Professor Jamie Mackie, gave me many thoughtful comments, on the West New Guinea dispute and *Konfrontasi*. Finally, Professor Mackie wrote the following and you can't see my blush from the back row, "I recall what a small and beleaguered bunch of Indonesian *canners* (a useful Dutch word, or so he said – I suspect it means someone who knows about the subject) we were in the early 1960s, and by the moral and material contributions you have made, by being on the side of the angels (a very small side) on the issues of that time, I feel you warrant inclusion in our little band of happy warriors." If Sir Arthur had seen it, would only have confirmed his view that I was not objective on the subject of Indonesia.

A problem arose just before leaving for my first overseas posting to Saigon, with the admirable John Quinn,<sup>7</sup> a few years later to die uselessly in a plane crash in North Africa. He was a great man. He would be the first head of the Australian delegation in Vietnam and he didn't seem to mind that I was going as his number two. However, the Secretary of External Affairs Sir Alan Watt had noticed my given name, Pierre, and he instructed the head of administration to cancel my posting because of possible French sensitivities. Vietnamese sensitivities were not mentioned. So in October 1952, I arrived instead in Thailand.

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<sup>7</sup> John Paul Quinn, 1919-1961; Ambassador in Saigon 1952-54.

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I was to learn a lot in Bangkok about the practice of diplomacy from my wise and experienced Head of Mission, Bert Ballard.<sup>8</sup> He also spoke fluent Thai, very rare for a Head of Mission in 1952. At the same time I quickly developed contacts outside the diplomatic corps and within the corps, which only numbered 23 Missions.

When Bert Ballard was on leave, a new American Ambassador arrived. The young Australian left in charge (me) called on General William “Wild Bill” Donovan, who founded and directed throughout the Second World War, the OSS – America’s first covert intelligence service.<sup>9</sup> Speaking to me as a representative of a firm ally, he explained why President Eisenhower had asked him to go to Thailand.

I had very little guidance, except the Mission’s account to the Department, before going to Thailand. There were just no diplomatic staff officers in External Affairs with experience of this exotic country and my predecessor, the late Bob Hamilton, was available for only a few weeks.

Apart from a short appointment made by the Secretary, Sir Alan Watt, in early 1953 for me to be Head of Mission in Burma, my first posting as Head of Mission was High Commissioner to Nigeria in 1970. This is not an easy post for any of the Australia-based staff with constantly oppressive climate, the charmless and overcrowded capital Lagos (which of course is no longer the capital), the health hazards (including plenty of malaria), bad accommodation for junior staff and the feeling that Canberra was indifferent to what we

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<sup>8</sup> Bertram Charles (Bert) Ballard, 1903-1981; Minister of the Australian Legation in Bangkok 1952-54.

<sup>9</sup> Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA.



were reporting, quite in contrast to Southeast Asia where there were major issues affecting Australia.

Sir Arthur Tange wrote to me in late 1996 that he had never found the answer as to how Heads of Mission in smaller posts could be involved in the policy-making process. Then there was the White Australia policy, the elephant in the room. It only became extinct as my posting in Nigeria was ended in 1973.

I had herding and reporting responsibilities for 28 per cent of the land mass of Africa. Apart from Nigeria, this embraced Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Niger. Equatorial Guinea was run by a deranged person; fortunately I sent John Dauth to find out what Equatorial Guinea was like and I never actually got there. I really couldn't cover that amount of area but in some countries they were repeat visits. In Niamey, the capital of Niger, the President seemed to be always available for an informal chat.

I travelled by station wagon, a Holden Kingswood without air conditioning, to most states and federations. The Biafran Civil War had not long ended and by getting to remote state capitals before my more cautious diplomatic colleagues the welcome was possibly much warmer. I turned up by invitation at university degree-conferring events, state funerals, ceremonial durbars (adopted from India) and even to Nigerian Federal Police gymkhanas.

On a Saturday afternoon, I was snoozing when a British Deputy Federal Police Commissioner phoned to remind me of a police display far from the Australian residence that very afternoon. Having no driver to take me was the only challenge – if I would drive myself, a motorcycle escort would soon arrive. With my small son Paul at least enjoying the trip, the

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escort proceeded to hurtle to the Federal Police display on one of the few six lane highways out of Lagos. But we were on the wrong side of the highway. Speeding cars simply stopped in amazement, as the police sirens were never given a rest. We more or less arrived on time, about the only member present from the diplomatic corps. As Virgil says in the Aeneid, “Virtue has its own reward.”

I had lost in Lagos an Australian-born public official of the new Papua New Guinea Parliament. The head of Foreign Affairs, Sir Keith Waller, and the later Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Michael Somare, were understandably perturbed. It was to the same British Deputy Federal Commissioner of Police that I appealed, rather than to protocol through the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With my wife Judy and five Huttontots,<sup>10</sup> we were leaving Nigeria in 48 hours. The Deputy Police Commissioner simply said the missing VIP would be found; and he was, within hours.

The Biafran Civil War is understood, to the extent that people have any interest in it, by a prize-winning novel called *Half a Yellow Sun* by a US-based Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie.<sup>11</sup> She was not likely to be objective over the former head of state, General Yakubo Gowon, or Jack to his friends, yet before he defeated the Igbo rebel army, he had said there would be no Nuremberg trials, no firing squads, and he kept his promise.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Pierre Hutton, a word coined by Peter Hastings to describe the Hutton children, a play on “Hottentots”.

<sup>11</sup> Chinamanda Ngoji Adichie, Nigerian novelist, 1977 -.

I never met Ms Adichie, but I had as a house guest Chinua Achebe,<sup>12</sup> perhaps still the finest novelist to come from Africa, south of the Sahara. His first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, has been described by literary critics and authors as a classic of modern African writing. Eventually I got Achebe to Australia under the Special Overseas Visitors Fund (SOVF). Apart from a shadowy member of the US Embassy, I seem to have been the first member of the diplomatic corps to visit Enugu, the capital of Igboland, after the rebel army surrendered.

I met General Philip Effiong, who happened to be the man that had surrendered the Biafran forces. There he was with all those Igbos who had backed the right horse. At the end of the day, when my successor, the late Bill Bray presented his credentials in June 1973, the Nigerian Head of State spoke as follows, “I accept the letter of recall of your distinguished and worthy predecessor Mr Pierre Hutton, who endeared himself to a cross-section of Nigerians and did much, so much, to foster good relations between Australia and Nigeria.” Speeches on such occasions are normally formal and filled with such platitudes, but when I saw the text of what Gowon had said I knew it had all been worthwhile in my first post as Head of Mission.

### **James Ingram AO FAIA**

During these ten or eleven years – they are really an important part of my own career – I had five different assignments.

First in the Southeast Asia branch, while the policy on West Irian hadn't been decided. I believe I did play a useful part in

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<sup>12</sup> Albert Chinualumogu Achebe 1930-2013.

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that with albeit as a senior advisor to Barwick. But I believe that Sir Patrick Shaw in Jakarta was really, in many ways the most important influence in bringing about changes. We were moving towards it slowly, but were held back by the extraordinarily myopic analysis that was still being presented to ministers right up until very close to the actual decision. Pat Shaw clearly had a great deal of influence, not through the department, where we spent nearly all of our time on it (I didn't, as I didn't agree with the policy). But we spent a lot of effort in the department sort of refuting Shaw. I'm sure that Shaw had his own routes to the minister and perhaps the prime minister.

In Jakarta, where I later went, I was there during the first part of the *Konfrontasi*. The only point that I want to make is that it is hard for those who were not there before the burning of the British embassy and during that period to understand just what a terrible time it was for anybody in the British or Australian embassies in Jakarta at that time. Mick Shann in fact evacuated all the wives because of the Indonesian mobs. It was all organised, of course. The mobs sacked the houses of the British staff; they were housed next to us. It was quite frightening to hear the mob in the house next door smashing the furniture and then setting the lot on fire. It was not pleasant.

So it was after the fact, but this was really the factor that led us to conclude that Indonesia saw Australia quite differently, as permanent in the area, not a colonial power. It was, in fact, that they didn't do any of these things to us. They showed a sophistication and maturity that we perhaps underestimated. They were pretty sophisticated people, people like Subandrio.

My next assignment was to the UN Mission in New York. This was the time when Australia was under a lot of pressure over PNG policy and also similarly for Nauru. I was working

on economic issues but we were all fully aware of what was going on in the Trusteeship Council. This was also the period when the G77 was created.

The G77 changed the United Nations in many respects because it led to the consolidation of blocs in a way that it hadn't before. It was quite evident to anyone who was working in the economic area that independence was the passion in the hearts of the Africans especially, but also other countries that had newly come to independence. There was no way Australia could keep on dilly-dallying forever, without actually modernising its whole policy in relation to PNG and giving independence to Nauru.

It's an example of how the threads of foreign policy intertwine. On one hand, you have people like me in economics, but somehow it doesn't get brought together properly in the government and there may be many reasons for that at the time. I would also have to say that Australia, again the Department of Trade (I was working pretty closely with them), took an important initiative in UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, founded in 1964). The context for this was that they were the first country to try and provide some kind of economic preference scheme for developing countries.

I compliment editors James Cotton and David Lee on their history of Australia in the UN.<sup>13</sup> They do mention it, but the fact is that the man behind it, the late Allan Fleming, the former National Librarian, generated that idea. It was a very good initiative by Australia, which countered the impact of our colonial policy.

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<sup>13</sup> James Cotton & David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations*, DFAT & Longueville, Barton, 2012.

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Now to come to my dealings; I only had close dealings with two ministers, Hasluck and McMahon.

I worked very closely with Hasluck. I came back and headed up this very large branch with five sections. When I was assigned to it from New York, I was told that the minister attaches enormous importance to ASPAC, the Asian and Pacific Council, and he's going to judge the department on the way you handle ASPAC over that period.

ASPAC is one of those associations in which the secretariat rotated yearly from capital to capital. I had to be told to focus on it because we were the secretariat, as well as we had five other branches. Hasluck attached importance to it for many of the reasons that have been expressed. He was a man who had a real feeling for a fundamental trend from the post-war period and perhaps even a little bit before.

In Australian policy, we are in the region we have to build our relationships with our neighbours. Well with ASPAC, Hasluck took the step of doing something, it didn't always work well and, of course, times change, but he took the bold step of combining the Asian SEATO members with Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea as an attempt to broaden our whole approach to regionalism.

ASEAN, which hasn't been referred to, had been set up at the same time that I became head of the ASPAC secretariat and I found Malaysia a very reluctant member of ASPAC. Indeed, I got the impression that this is the sort of thing that historians perhaps should look at. I'm not a historian. I haven't spent any time on any of this. I got the impression at the time that Malaysia expected quite a bit. I suggested that Malaysia was somehow implying "why don't you think that, instead of this ASPAC nonsense, why don't you join ASEAN?"

My last post in this period was ambassador in Manila, and one day I was called to General Romulo's house.<sup>14</sup> I can't remember the year, although I was there from 1970 to 1973. Romulo (who was foreign minister of the Philippines) said to me in a very serious statement, if Australia wishes to join ASEAN, the Philippines will give its full support. Well I reported all of this and I never got any reaction of any kind back from Canberra, which says something about the way things were managed in those days. Hasluck had monthly meetings with the ASEAN Ambassadors and they were a great success for him personally. It brought about an intimacy of relationship between him and the Heads of Mission, in a very good way and they just loved as Ambassadors being brought into his thinking on all of the issues.

Also, because they came from a somewhat disparate group of countries, it did help to promote what I believe was his ultimate idea; the first step in many subsequent attempts by Australia to create regional gatherings. I accompanied him on visits to Pakistan and Thailand. I found him always very courteous, very friendly. I would have to say in Canberra, and I saw him all the time, I never once found him difficult or awkward. He occasionally thanked me, not often, and he never wrote rude things on any of our submissions that I can recall, so I think he is not perhaps as extreme in this regard as some of us thought at the time. My impression of him was different.

I found Hasluck more like an academic historian, if I may say so in the presence of so many. He sought the truth; his main reason for going to Pakistan was to find out things for

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<sup>14</sup> General Carlos Pena Romulo 1898-1985; Secretary of Foreign Affairs of The Philippines under a number of Presidents; President of the UN General Assembly 1949-50.

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himself. His main reason to go there was to go to Dacca, to East Pakistan at the time. That was very interesting because he really dug into it and the sort of conversations he had were very penetrating. He may have been a good journalist perhaps too, a very penetrating questioner. I was really impressed by the way he reached the conclusion that Pakistan was finished, basically, and sooner or later the East would separate from the West. He reached that conclusion by himself. We didn't brief him on it at all — that's why he went to find it.

On the other hand, I found Hasluck very cautious, again perhaps not like a leader or a bold leader. He was not willing to take the initiative. I did something on a few things but when he found it would cost \$150,000, which was too much. He wasn't willing to fight for things like that, although he thought they were good ideas.

There was, however, a slightly nasty side to Hasluck, which was never directed towards me. I do think that he showed himself to be vindictive and vengeful in relation to two very senior colleagues of his from the time that he was in the Department. It was in my presence and I was utterly shocked by that behaviour. He was vengeful, not a man who doesn't bear grudges, which I think can be quite important in assessing the character of a foreign minister.

During this whole period, I haven't gotten to McMahon but I worked very closely with him too. I found him to be more pleasant than other ministers I had ever dealt with. He was very receptive to your advice. I went with him to a conference in New Zealand and again he acquitted himself very well, in no way outstanding but quite adequately and I didn't have to clear up any messes.

What I do want to say as a final point is that the real foreign minister was Menzies. Throughout this period, Menzies is the



only great man among them. They all, when it came to the point, shared the same basic ideological approach: of anti-communism and feared threats from the North.

The theme of developing relations with Asia is one that Menzies himself, in many ways, had begun. After the war, it remained and it still remains the foundation of policy. I think with all of these men, while Menzies was there, the real policy decisions rested with Menzies. Some of them were very good implementers. Hasluck in many ways was very good, as was McMahon in my short encounters with him.



*The panel on “Memories of Serving Australian Interests Abroad” at the Australian Institute of International Affairs Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs’ 1960-1972. Left to right: Geoffrey Miller AO FAIIA; Andrew Farran; Robert Furlonger CB. (Australian Institute of International Affairs).*

## Discussion

### **Geoffrey Miller AO FAIA:**

Some very interesting encounters with people before and after this position became Minister for Foreign Affairs in that period. We've got about ten minutes for questions to any of the speakers or comments by any of the people who would like to share or to add to the anecdotes.

### **Zara Kimpton OAM:**

Concerning the last comment you made about Menzies being the real foreign minister, do you think that was unusual when you look at before and after? I know that Michael Wesley wrote a book about the Howard years, which is not about Downer, it's about Howard.<sup>15</sup> Is that, would you say, unusual? Would, say, Gareth Evans have been different?

### **James Ingram AO FAIA:**

I changed my job. I know Gareth Evans very well but only in his ministerial post; I never worked for him while I was a public servant. I did work with him after I retired with the United Nations as a consultant and I found him the most intellectually stimulating of any Minister for Foreign Affairs that I had encountered. Far more than Hasluck, because Hasluck played his cards so close to his chest. You could witness Hasluck, when you accompanied him, interacting with people. You couldn't engage him yourself, whereas Gareth Evans loves intellectual debates.

I don't know about how I feel [about subsequent ministers]. I just look on like the rest of us. I gave an address at the

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<sup>15</sup> Professor Michael Wesley, *The Howard Paradox: Australian Diplomacy in Asia 1996–2006*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2007.

Institute in which I set out my views.<sup>16</sup> I think that their commitment to the United States gets stronger and stronger. That seems to be the dynamic that drives policy. So whether there is any real difference, I don't know, whether there's any real leadership.

I do know that, in theory, Menzies over such a long period starting from before the war showed that he could learn. He made mistakes, but he learned and he had a vision. I believe that showed he was right.



*Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies (left) as he addressed the plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 5 October 1960 with Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard C. Green (right). (UN Photo: Yutaka Nagata/DFAT: HIS-0254).*

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<sup>16</sup> James Ingram, <[www.internationalaffairs.org.au/.../a-time-for-change-the-us-alliance-and-australian-foreign-policy-by-james-ingram-ao-faiia/](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/.../a-time-for-change-the-us-alliance-and-australian-foreign-policy-by-james-ingram-ao-faiia/)>

## Discussion Panel

### **Zara Kimpton OAM:**

What about Whitlam?

### **James Ingram AO FAHA:**

Whitlam is the only other one. When I was an ambassador, Whitlam was the only Australian minister that I actually ever brought before President Marcos or Prime Minister Trudeau that I was never slightly ashamed of. I'm not talking about policy – Whitlam had presence. He could relate to another head of state, whereas often I think Bury was like a little school boy. I mean he was full of confidence and all that, but he's a Treasury man. I don't want to single him out, it is just that he was in my mind. I wouldn't say that it's like that now, because I was impressed by Gareth Evans. I found them – and it sounds sort of arrogant to say it – I felt embarrassed that this was the best I could crop up.

### **Jeremy Harder:**

Andrew, just a glimpse into what you said about the causation for Gordon Freeth losing his seat, the only foreign minister who's done so, I believe. I have a letter from him some years ago, in which he said he didn't think it was so much Plimsoll's fault or his own fault for consequently upsetting the DLP and those sort of people. He said that his electorate and a wider part of Western Australia had absolutely no interest in foreign affairs issues. Secondly, it was, he said, Gorton's centralist tendencies that really upset the people in Western Australia. There were some other factors that he mentioned, such as agriculture, that he thought were key reasons why he lost his seat.

### **Andrew Farran:**

Well yes, his electorate was changing in character and he had won quite comfortably previously. The campaign that the

DLP and the League of Rights people ran was rather vicious and if you look at the election results affected by it, the cause and effect may not have had quite proportional results.

The thing that Freeth reminded me of many times was that Western Australia is always three years, at least one election, behind the trend of Australia. So the following election Whitlam won and maybe Western Australia was anticipating that in the election before 1972. So there is a kind of undercurrent, or cycle, there that you just can't resist.

**Ian Dudgeon RFD:**

Now a question to the departmental people. Communication generally in the period we are talking about, and preceding that, varied between slow to sometimes reasonable. I was in Malaysia in 1969 when the riots took place and somebody pulled the plug at the local post office. We actually used the telephone to phone the call through to Singapore and that was unheard of, that you would use the telephone. When I was in Chile, I remember this machine called Noreen for classified cables,<sup>17</sup> and you could float a bottle across the Pacific faster than the line you'd receive. All of this was an issue in terms of the dialogue between the Department and Australian ministers, particularly when you come to policy.

To what extent in the period we are talking about were ministers willing to delegate responsibilities to heads of mission? I'm wondering about the extent to which you could or could not exploit that, because you had the power within a given period of time, and if you either dictated those issues in that period of time or you exercised your delegations. To what extent did you get it right and to what extent did sometimes the ministers respond in an adverse sense?

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<sup>17</sup> BID590 Noreen crypto unit, used extensively 1960s to 1980s.

## Discussion Panel

### **Andrew Farran:**

All I can say about that is that Freeth and I were in Kuala Lumpur just a few days or a week or so before the election when the racial tension was building up. But nobody really suspected what was going to happen and the severity of those riots took people by surprise. I don't think having a telephone or not having a telephone would make a great deal of difference if you didn't know what to communicate.

### **Mack Williams:**

A classic case I have often used is the tension in Cambodia when Prince Norodom Sihanouk was kicked out. My ambassador was overseas and I got a message at 6:30 at night to be at the inauguration of President Lon Nol at 6:30am the next morning. No communication with Canberra at all was possible, so all one could do as a young officer was talk to the French and a few others and turn up, and then get a message eighteen hours later saying "please attend."

To come back to Professor Bolton, particularly with William McMahon. This is really about policy driven intelligence, about which you have strong views. My US contacts on the morning of the election, when Gough Whitlam was elected, my colleagues very indiscreetly let me know that the CIA had predicted that McMahon would be re-elected, that the Department of State was wavering but that the US Embassy thought Whitlam might win. Of course, the US wanted McMahon re-elected very strongly. So it is interesting to see what the US call was at that stage.

### **James Ingram AO FAHA:**

Well I think that the reaction of Dean Rusk showed that McMahon wasn't held in very high regard. This probably would have been about 1968. That surprises me, because although they might not have trusted Gough Whitlam

(perhaps they were scared of him) I don't think it was through any love of Billy McMahon.

**Geoffrey Miller AO FAHA:**

Ladies and Gentleman, I think we now have to bring this session to a close, so could I ask you all to join me in thanking our speakers.

## **Closing Remarks**

### *Professor Robert O'Neill AO FAIA*

This forum has taken us across a very interesting phase of the development in the way that Australian foreign policy has been made. We are fortunate to have had, among our participants, some of the significant players from the 1960s and 1970s, such as Bob Furlonger, Pierre Hutton, Jim Ingram, Geoff Miller, Garry Woodard, Phillip Flood, Jeremy Hearder, Mack Williams and Andrew Farran. That is a very impressive line-up! They played a major role in our evolution into a fully independent nation. We are grateful for their contributions both to the nation and to our discussion today.

I cut my teeth on the way Australian foreign policy is made when I had the opportunity, as official historian for the Korean War, to read the files on all the key decisions of that era held by the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, External Affairs, Defence, the armed services and various other Australian Government agencies that were relevant to the story of our participation in the Korean War. Australia's participation in that war was very much an act of foreign policy rather than of defence policy, led in the crucial years of 1950-51 by Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender. His strategic aim had little to do with the conflict in the Korean Peninsula. His intention was to exploit the crisis in order to gain a formal alliance with the United States, despite Prime Minister Menzies' scepticism that this was an achievable objective. This aim tended to put the spotlight on our qualities as an ally. As such, our national political leaders chose to emphasise the positive and demonstrate that Australians were good allies to have.



Many of the Menzies Government's advisers disagreed with this approach. I was surprised to discover the intensity of the internal debates in the Department of External Affairs on issues such as the wisdom of crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and occupying North Korea in October and November 1950. These arguments were not carried upwards into inter-allied diplomacy and we behaved in the 1950s more as a group of "yes-men" than as independent partners.

During the 1960s this strategy continued in effect, even if somewhat attenuated, as our senior diplomats and public servants became more experienced and the world generally became a more complicated place for the governments of medium and smaller powers. But, at least during the 1960s, Australians were becoming increasingly aware that our national interests were not identical to those of our major ally. If we continued to act as though they were, our government would run out of credibility and support at home, while being unable to live up to the hopes and expectations of our major ally abroad.

Of course, as Geoffrey Bolton and Peter Edwards have shown in their papers, that is what happened to the Liberal-National Government during those years. The decade began with a good Minister for External Affairs, Garfield Barwick, in office from 1961 to 1964. In my judgement, Barwick wins the prize for being the best Australian Minister for External Affairs of the 1960s. His successor, Paul Hasluck, who was in office for five years, tended to see major international issues too starkly in black and white terms and missed the opportunity to steer us more adroitly through the perils of the Vietnam War. His successors Freeth, McMahon, Bury and Bowen, for various reasons, had little impact in terms of reshaping Australian foreign policy in the years 1969-72 and it was not until the Australian electorate chose to shift its

support to the Labor Party under Gough Whitlam that Australia's foreign policy began to adapt itself seriously to a significantly changing world.

A second major set of problems arose in the 1960s as Australia's other major ally, Britain, faced the consequences of having a set of security commitments in Southeast Asia that it could no longer support adequately. The result was the British withdrawal from east of Suez and the initiation of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, leaving a situation in which Australia had to carry a greater responsibility for regional, as well as its own, security.

Australia began the decade with some well-designed policies under the political leadership of Garfield Barwick, advised by his departmental head, Arthur Tange, a man with a deep insight into Australians' interests, our needs and the dangers to which we had exposed ourselves. Tange and his departmental colleagues worked well with and through Barwick and the department had notable successes in shaping policy towards Indonesia, especially relating to West New Guinea and Confrontation. Sadly Barwick's strength and willingness to state his case publicly left him exposed as a target for critics. When he upset the United States over the possible need for an ANZUS guarantee for Australian troops in Borneo in 1964, Menzies advised Barwick to return to his legal career. Tange stuck to the last in the Department of External Affairs but without support from the Prime Minister.

Barwick's successor, Hasluck, was inclined to follow Menzies' lines of policy rather than think out new ones for new circumstances. Tange was sidelined by Menzies and Hasluck and was sent off to New Delhi in 1965 for four years. The mid-1960s showed how dominant the political actors were, especially Menzies, Hasluck and Minister for Defence Shane Paltridge, in terms of forming and implementing

Australian foreign policy. Tensions remained between these leading ministers and the Department of External Affairs, but without Tange, the Department lost some of the vital leverage that it had enjoyed in the early 1960s.

The situation changed in the early 1970s, even before the Coalition lost office, when Tange was brought back from New Delhi to become the Secretary of the Department of Defence. He set about introducing some wide-ranging and much-needed reforms. The organisation of the higher levels Department and the structure of some key interdepartmental committees were changed to make them more strategic in their responsibilities and capacities and less purely military. Tange's reforms were strengthened by his bringing in strategic specialists from the Department of Foreign Affairs, such as Bill Pritchett and Bob Hamilton, and regional experts such as Gordon Jockel.

It was, of course, too late to save the Coalition Government from the consequences of committing itself so strongly to the US cause in the unpopular Vietnam War. However, the new departmental structure meant that in future decisions on involvement in war there would be a wider range of opinions brought to bear on the question than previously. This change did not save Australia from participation in the invasion and occupation of Iraq – a decision in which the political leadership of 2002-3 made up its mind under strong Prime Ministerial leadership and with possibly no alternate views under consideration. Perhaps when Australia is out of Afghanistan, and emotions have settled down a little, another strong reformer can be brought in to survey the scene, analyse what happened in the years after 2001 and set in place a more rational decision-making structure that will shape a course for success rather than impasse or failure.

In these remarks I have focused on foreign policy and those who have shaped it directly. I must not omit other groups in our democratic society that also played a role in forming our foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s: the media, academia, think-tanks embodied by the Australian Institute of International Affairs and public opinion.

During the 1950s a group of journalists emerged who were experts in regional affairs such as Denis Warner, Peter Hastings and Donald Horne, to name but a few. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of major opportunity for them. Australians read their writings with real interest not least because they illuminated the ways in which governments of the region developed their foreign and defence policies and how well or ill countries of the region governed themselves. The development of television further reinforced the influence of the media through the 1960s.

As the universities developed their capacities for research and teaching on Southeast Asian affairs, so academics became strong leaders in the public debate. I think particularly of John Legge, Herb Feith, Jamie Mackie, Heinz Arndt, Tom Millar and Stephen FitzGerald. There are many others that I could add to this list.

As public opinion became more directly engaged in the national debates on foreign and defence policy in the 1960s, so special interest groups arose concerned with issues such as the Vietnam War, conscription, relations with Indonesia and human rights. Many still remember the age of public demonstrations and Moratorium marches, which demonstrated the tensions between the government and major sections of the electorate on which it depended for re-election. As we have seen during the past decade, Australian public opinion has remained active in demonstrating its views on international policies. Governments which defy public wishes

in a spectacular way, as did the Howard Government in 2003 over Iraq, will eventually have to bear heavy political costs.

Bridging all these and other groups in the 1960s was the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA). With the foundation of the federal director's office in 1963, the AIIA went from a collection of disparate state-based organisations to a national body, well-connected in Canberra and with a much higher public profile. An essential contributor to this success was the first national director, Alan Watt, a former senior diplomat and Secretary of the Department of External Affairs during the Korean War period. The leadership and momentum that Watt built up during his six years of tenure were sustained by his successor, Tom Millar, who was in office from 1969 to 1976.

The quality of the AIIA's national conferences, the Australian Outlook journal and the AIIA's other publications all built up over the years. The AIIA has become braver and more skilled in the field of fundraising. The AIIA has advanced to having younger directors but still ones whom are well known internationally in their own fields. The current National Executive Director Melissa Conley Tyler has initiated the Fellowship program, which enables the AIIA to draw into its ranks those whom will add to its expertise and influence. The AIIA is in a good position for exerting a strong presence in the continuing national debate on foreign policy.

Finally, as a historian, let me record my satisfaction at seeing such a strong group of historians taking part in this forum. I shall not name the 15 historians that I see on the list of speakers and participants but I am delighted to see them all here and to have been enriched by their knowledge and judgements on the subject of discussions.

## Concluding Comments

*Melissa Conley Tyler*

Recently I was pleased to attend the launch of the *History of Australia's Involvement in the United Nations*, edited by James Cotton and David Lee.<sup>1</sup> It is an excellent publication and the Australian Institute of International Affairs was delighted to be involved in its gestation by holding a workshop for contributors.

I caught up with Moreen Dee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Historical Publication and Information Section and she paid me the nicest compliment: she said that she thought I'd really grown into the job during my seven years as National Director of the AIIA. I asked her how she could tell? Her answer: She had seen me become aware of the importance of history.

I could not agree more. To my mind it is a sign of wisdom to understand the importance of history. The average observer might just follow the play of current events and not look beyond. But the astute observer looks deeper for all the reasons usually given (and quotes misattributed), such as "those that forget history are doomed to repeat it" and "history may not repeat, but it rhymes." Apart from the insights into current events gained from history, it is also intrinsically interesting to observe the decisions of the past.

In these discussions we have seen examples of history "rhyming," with many issues discussed having strong contemporary relevance. Themes that remain relevant today

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<sup>1</sup> James Cotton & David Lee (eds), *Australia and the United Nations*, DFAT & Longueville, Barton, 2012.

include Australia and the United States (the image of Australia being pulled by the US chariot is also a contemporary concern); China's destabilising role in the region; the success of some military deployments but not others; and how Australia balances its relationships with powerful friends while maintaining its access to markets. All remain current in today's debates.

We also saw differences between the two eras. The one that was most striking to me was pointed out by Joan Beaumont, when she discussed the ideological nature of the era. By contrast, the current era views itself as non-ideological or post-ideological. While I am sure that future historians will disagree, this attitude gives a different tenor to debate.

There were also many stories I will remember from our discussions. I was struck by the role of personalities and relationships – whether between the prime minister and foreign minister, or between ministers and departmental heads – and how these factors affect the course of foreign policy. I am delighted to know that the shape of the Japanese character for the NARA Treaty is perilously close to a more profane one and the story behind the stuffed tiger proudly displayed at the Claremont Football Club.

Gaining a better sense of the period is particularly helpful in understanding the dynamics of Australia's relationships in the region. I appreciated Peter Drysdale's characterisation of the period as the crucible for Australia's relations with Asia.

At the same time, the day left me with puzzles that may never be solved around why various events proceeded as they did. How can we explain various decisions? What might have been different if different decisions had been made? These are great questions to ask and continue to keep asking to discover

Melissa Conley Tyler

more about the past and to help make smart foreign policy decisions in the future.

The discussions at this Forum have been everything I could wish. I feel I've been educated and entertained by all of our speakers and I thank them all.

It has been a great example of the Australian Institute of International Affairs' role as a platform for debate by bringing together extraordinary people to share their views and recollections. It has been a privilege to hear today's discussion.

Finally, it is important to thank a number of people that have contributed so much to the success of the forum. I thank the AIIA's Patron, Her Excellency the Governor-General and her staff at Government House. I thank the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Historical Publications and Information Section for its support of this series. I thank the organising team led by Deputy Director John Robbins.

I hope that the Australian Institute of International Affairs will be able to continue this ongoing series of events and publications on former Ministers of Foreign Affairs to fulfil its role in remembering the past in addition to all of its valuable work on contemporary issues.





## **List of Ministers 1960–1972**

### **Australian Ministers for External Affairs:**

4 February 1960–22 December 1961: Robert G. Menzies

22 December 1961–24 April 1964: Sir Garfield Barwick

24 April 1964–11 February 1969: Paul Hasluck

### **Australian Ministers for Foreign Affairs:**

11 February 1969–12 November 1969: Sir Gordon Freeth

12 November 1970–22 March 1971: William McMahon

22 March 1971–2 August 1971: Leslie Bury

2 August 1971–5 December 1972: Nigel Bowen



## **Contributors' Biographies**

### **Zara Kimpton OAM**

Zara Kimpton completed her BA in Political Science, Fine Arts and Economics at Melbourne University. She subsequently pursued a career in stockbroking with William Noall & Son in Melbourne, the mining/investment industry with Consolidated Gold Fields Australia in Sydney and banking with Banque Nationale de Paris in Melbourne. She then worked in New York in the interior design industry and later In 2011 Zara was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to international relations through executive roles with the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria.

### **Garry Woodard FAHA**

Mr Woodard served as the Australian Ambassador to Burma from 1973 and the Australian Ambassador to Beijing until 1980. During this time he led the Australian negotiating team responsible for the conclusion of the Japan-Australia Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. In 1984 Mr Woodard published *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*. In 2002 Woodard was awarded the National Archives of Australia Frederick Watson fellowship. Mr Woodard served as a past National President of the Australian Institute of International Affairs and is currently a Senior Fellow of the School of Political Science, Criminology & Sociology at the University of Melbourne. He has written extensively about Australian foreign policy at the University of Melbourne and currently writes for *New Matilda*. Mr Woodard also contributed to the AIIA's first publication in

this present series, *R.G. Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-60*.

### **Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA**

Geoffrey Bolton has held chairs of history at four Australian universities and was foundation professor at the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian History at the University of London. He is senior scholar in residence at Murdoch University, emeritus professor at Edith Cowan University and adjunct professor at Curtin University of Technology. His professional associations include Fellowships of the Royal Historical Society, the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Royal Society of Arts. He was ABC Boyer Lecturer in 1992 and Citizen of the Year (professional category), Western Australia 2003. He is an Officer of the Order of Australia and Chancellor of Murdoch University. Geoffrey Bolton is the author of numerous books, including most recently *Edmund Barton: The One Man for the Job* (2001) and *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia from 1826* (2008). He continues to research and write on Australian history, British Commonwealth history, and 18th and early 19th century British and Irish history.

### **Professor Peter Edwards AM FAHA**

Peter Edwards AM is an historian who has published extensively on Australian defence and foreign policies. He has held academic appointments across Australia and consultancies with several Commonwealth departments and agencies. As the official historian of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian conflicts for 1948-75 (Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam), he was author of *Crisis and Commitments* (1992) and *A Nation at War* (1997), and general editor of the nine-

volume series. Professor Edwards AM is also the author of *Arthur Tange: Last of the Mandarins* (2006), *Permanent Friends? Historical Reflections on the Australian-American Alliance* (2005) and *Prime Ministers and Diplomats* (1983); and the editor of Arthur Tange's posthumous, personal memoir, *Defence Policy-Making: A Close-up View* (2008) and *Australia through American Eyes 1935-45* (1979). Professor Edwards also contributed to the AIIA's first publication in this present series, *R.G. Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-60*.

### **James Cotton FAIIA**

James Cotton (PhD, London School of Economics) is Professor Emeritus of Politics, University of New South Wales, ADFA. He was a Procter Fellow at Princeton University, and also studied at the Beijing Language Institute. He has held academic positions in Western Australia, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Singapore, the Australian National University, and Tasmania; he has held visiting professorships at the LSE and the University of Hong Kong. He joined the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington DC, in 2009, and was Harold White Fellow, National Library of Australia, 2013. James Cotton was a member of the Foreign Minister's Advisory Council (1997-2003); he is a Fellow of the AIIA and of the Royal Asiatic Society, London. His most recent books are: (with John Ravenhill), *Middle Power Dreaming: Australia in World Affairs 2006-2010* (Oxford University Press/AIIA, 2012); (with David Lee), *Australia and the United Nations* (Dept. Foreign Affairs and Trade/Longueville, 2012); *The Australian School of International Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

### **Dr David Lee**

David Lee is Director of the Historical Publications and Research Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. With Stuart Doran he edited Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and Recognition of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1972, Canberra, 2002 and with James Cotton edited Australia and the United Nations, Canberra, 2012. In 2010 he published a biography of Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, Stanley Melbourne Bruce: Australian Internationalist, London and New York, 2010. He is currently researching the history of Australia's post-1960 minerals booms.

### **Professor Robert O'Neill AO FAIA**

Robert O'Neill has worked in the fields of international relations, history of war and strategic studies since 1961. He was Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the ANU, Canberra, 1971-82, Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, 1982-87, and Chichele Professor of the History of War, All Souls College, Oxford, 1987-2001. He served in the Australian Army 1955-68 and was mentioned in dispatches for his work in Vietnam, 1966-67. He was Chairman of the Council of the IISS 1996-2001 and of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, 1997-2001. He was elected a Fellow of the AIIA in 2008. He wrote the official history of Australia's role in the Korean War (2 volumes). He was awarded an honorary D Litt by the ANU in 2001.

### **Melissa Conley Tyler**

Melissa H. Conley Tyler was appointed National Executive Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs in

2006. She is a lawyer and specialist in conflict resolution, including negotiation, mediation and peace education. She was previously Program Manager of the International Conflict Resolution Centre at the University of Melbourne and Senior Fellow of Melbourne Law School. She has an international profile in conflict resolution including membership of the Editorial Board of the *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. In 2008 Ms Conley Tyler was selected to participate in the Australia 2020 Summit. Later in 2008 she was selected by the Fletcher Alumni Association of Washington D.C. to receive its Young Alumni Award for most outstanding graduate of the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy under 40. She is a member of the International Advisory Council of the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy. During seven and a half years with the AIIA, she has edited more than 40 publications, organised more than 60 policy events, overseen dramatic growth in youth engagement and built stronger relations with other institutes of international affairs worldwide.





## **Forum Program**

### **Australian Institute of International Affairs Forum on Ministers for Foreign Affairs, 1960-1972**

Government House, Canberra  
The Sir David Smith Meeting Room  
Tuesday 19 February 2013

**Arrival** **9.15-9.30**

**Welcome to the Forum** **9.30-9.45**

Ms Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice-President, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Mr Garry Woodard FAIIA, Senior Fellow, University of Melbourne and former National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Launch of *R.G. Casey: Minister for External Affairs 1951-60*

**Session 1: The Importance of the Period** **9.45-11.00**

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO FASSA, Murdoch University

Moderator: Professor Joan Beaumont FASSA FAIIA, Dean of Education, Australian National University

**Morning Tea** **11.00-11.30**

**Session 2: Southeast Asia: Confrontation and the Vietnam War** **11.30-12.45**

Professor Peter Edwards AM FAIIA, Deakin University

Moderator: Professor Jeffrey Grey, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales

**Lunch** **12.45-1.30**

**Session 3: East Asia: Relations with China and Japan**  
**1.30-2.45**

Professor James Cotton, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales

Dr David Lee, Director, Historical Publications and Information Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Moderator: Emeritus Professor Peter Drysdale AO FAIIA, Head of the East Asian Bureau of Economic Research and East Asia Forum, Crawford School, Australian National University

**Afternoon Tea** **2.45-3.15**

**Session 4: Memories of Serving Australian Interests Abroad**  
**3.15-4.30**

Mr Andrew Farran, Principal Private Secretary to Gordon Freeth, former diplomat, former senior lecturer at Monash University and former President, AIIA VIC

Mr Robert Furlonger CB, former Director-General, Office of National Assessments

Mr Pierre Hutton, former Head of Mission to Burma, Nigeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, The Sudan and Switzerland, Delegate to UN General Assembly 1956 to 1958, Rep. on UN Development Program Council 1966; Rep. on

Forum Program

World Food Council 1980, Rep. on UN Human Rights  
Commission 1982-1983

Mr James Ingram AO FAIIA, former senior diplomat,  
Director-General of the Australian Development Assistance  
Bureau and Executive Director, UN World Food Programme

Moderator: Mr Geoffrey Miller AO, former senior Australian  
diplomat and former National Vice-President, Australian  
Institute of International Affairs

**Closing Remarks**

**4.30-4.45**

Professor Robert O'Neill AO FAIIA

Ms Melissa Conley Tyler, National Executive Director,  
Australian Institute of International Affairs



## **List of Forum Attendees**

Dr Andrea Benvenuti, School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales

Professor Bob Bowker, Adjunct Professor for the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University

Dr Moreen Dee, Executive Officer, Historical Publications and Information Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Ian Dudgeon RFD, Presidential Associate, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Mr Philip Flood AO, former Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Mike Fogarty, Australian Defence Force Academy

Mr John Goodlad, President, WA Branch, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Mr Jeremy Hearder, Consultant, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Clive Hildebrand AM, former National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Mr Garth Hunt, ACT Branch Council Member Australian Institute of International Affairs

Dr Marie Kawaja, School of History, Australian National University

Dr Ann Kent, Visiting Fellow, College of Law, Australian National University

Professor Michael L'Estrange AO, Head, National Security College and former Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Robert Lowry, Treasurer, ACT Branch, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Professor William Maley AM, Foundation Director, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University

Mr Neville Meaney FAIIA, Department of History, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, University of Sydney

Ms Nina Markovic, Vice-President, ACT Branch, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Professor Anthony Milner AM, Basham Professor of Asian History, Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University

Mr Colin Milner, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AIIA ACT Branch

Mrs Sally O'Neill

Dr Russell Trood, National President, United Nations Association of Australia

Mr Mack Williams, former senior Australian diplomat and former President, AIIA NSW

Forum Attendees

### **AIIA Forum Organising Team**

Mr John Robbins CSC, National Deputy Director

Mr Adrian March, former intern, Australian Institute of International Affairs

Mr Robert Ware, AIIA Research Intern

Ms Chelsea Jacka, AIIA Research Intern

Ms Rachel Davies, AIIA Research Intern

Mr Max Feng, AIIA Research Intern





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