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AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY : CONTINUITY AND SHIFT

Foreign Policy of a nation, however complex the forces are to formulate them, are shaped and applied with a perceptive awareness of the essential characteristics of the existing international framework which also determines the limit to possible achievements. The essence of history is change and the essence of the international order is a blend of the past and present. Therefore, the responsibilities of formulating foreign policy lies on the decision makers who should understand the nature of forces to "transmute the features dominant in one period into those dominant in the next".¹ The crucial problem in the administration of foreign policy concerns the interrelationship of two milieus, internal and external. It the international milieu Australia has a special set of interests reflecting the values of a small liberal democracy in a dangerous and divided world and has always preferred for a peaceful resolution of conflicts, recognised the claims of distributive justice for the weak. Its foreign policy concerns and postures over the years have taken a dynamic course reflecting the expediencies of domestic compulsions on the one hand and adjustment to changing international environ on the other. There has also been a discernible continuity within shifts that Australia appears to have experienced in its external relations. The present article is an attempt to analyse Australia's foreign policy of

1. Gordon Greenwood, Norman Harper (Eds), *Australia in World Affairs, 1960-1970*, Melbourne, Cheshire Publishing Pty Ltd., 1974, p. 3.

the past half a century. The analysis covers the major milestones in contemporary Australian history and focuses on the main issues of Australian foreign policy concern.

Australja Under British Imperial Protection

The Commonwealth of Australia lying in the Southern hemisphere between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific is most isolated of the six continents, surrounded by great oceans with only a thin broken chain of islands linking the Asian Mainland. This island continent has been called the oldest continent and the last of Lands in the sense that it was the last continent to be discovered and explored by Europeans. It was Captain James Cook of the British Admiralty who sailed into the South Pacific and discovered Australia in 1770 and was the first European to take possession of Australia's eastern half for Britain². It provided an alternative penal settlement in Port Jackson (Sydney) to that of North America which was closed by the war of independence. The beginning of white Australia was marked in 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip of the British Royal Navy landed with the first fleet at Botany Bay in 1788 with 1030 British settlers, 136 of whom were British convicts³. Its original population were the Aborigines who crossed the land bridge from Asia formed by the Malaysian Archipelago and numbered 300,000. It was declared as British Colony on January 26, 1788.⁴ The Commonwealth of Australia was formed on January 1, 1901, by the federation of former British Colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia all of which became federal states.⁵ Today, the Commonwealth of Australia is a prosperous independent nation

2. Hugh Collins, "Challenge and Options for the Department of Foreign Affairs in its 50th Year", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, Canberra, Australia, Vol. 56, No. 11, November 1985, p. 1078.
3. *The Far East and Australia, 1983-84*, Fifteenth edition, 1983, London, p. 158.
4. *Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Yearbook*, Hong Kong 1983, p. 107.
5. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, Vol. 2, 15th edition, p. 399.

of some 12,700,000 people united under one government of whom 80% are of British stock and only 1% are non-white.⁶ The legislative power is vested in a federal parliament consisting of the Queen of England represented by the Governor General, a Senate and a House of representatives.

The indigenous inhabitants of Australia were too few in number and too backward to play any influential role in the affairs of the island-continent, domestic or foreign. A relatively homogeneous population and continuing family links with Britain ensured that the Australians would look upon the rest of the world from the British perspective. Until the Second World War Australia continued to harbour the illusion that the British navy would be able to protect it from any possible foreign threat. Thus, although the Department of Foreign Affairs was established by the Australian Government in 1935, it was inclined to be guided by the British Foreign Office, rather than take any independent initiatives in any matter other than trade.⁷ Abroad, Australian interests were looked after by British diplomatic missions. The first overseas diplomatic posts were set up in London, Washington, Tokyo and Ottawa in 1940⁸.

Australia's foreign policy has been shaped with the challenges of 50 years' momentous series of world wide social and political changes: World War II, the cold war, the disarmament debate, the rapid growth of independent States, a new awareness of its position in Asia Pacific region, the emergence of new regional alignments and conflicts, which effected a change in the Australian policy. Japan's entry into Second World War as an Axis Partner in December 1941 and the rapid southward thrust of the Japanese military power came as a threat to Australian security, particularly after the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.⁹

6. *ibid.*

7. T.B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War, External Relations 1788-1977*, Australian National University Press, Canberra 1971, p. 15.

8. *ibid.*, p. 33.

9. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.*, p. 420.

The Japanese victories during the subsequent months intensified Australia's threat perception. Thousands of Australian soldiers became prisoners of war with the fall of Singapore. Darwin was soon bombed followed by Australian protectorates. Port Moresby and New Guinea were threatened. Faced with the possibility of an imminent invasion Australian Government demanded a more direct voice in the determination of Allied war policy. Prime Minister Curtin (ALP Prime Minister, elected in 1943) also demanded that Australian forces serving in the Middle East be returned to Australia proper for its own defense. He also made it clear that henceforth Australia would look upon the United States as its closest ally.¹⁰ Australia became the principal base from which US General MacArthur conducted his operations to drive the Japanese back.

The Allied victory did not fully restore the pre-war imperial defence links, because it became apparent that a weakened Britain might not be in a position to offer protection in the event of another conflict threatening Australia.¹¹ As a matter of strategic necessity Australia felt that it was to rely primarily on the United States for its security needs. But at the end of the War the United States did not see the security of Australia as a matter of continuing commitment like the British did. The Australia-Britain defence link was thus reenergised, whereas that between Australia and the United States quickly deteriorated.

There was a bipartisan support for the idea of a Pacific Pact between Australia, New Zealand, Britain and the United States, but it did not receive any encouragement from the American side. Indeed, in his famous speech to the National Press Club in Washington on 12 January, 1950 Secretary of State Dean Acheson excluded Australia and New Zealand, as well as Korea from America's "defensive perimeter." Acheson said, "should such an attack occur the reliance should be on the people attacked and then upon the commitments of the entire

10. *ibid.*

11. R. Catley, "Australia and the Great Powers, 1932-1983", *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 37, No. 3, December 1983, p. 143.

world.¹² It seems likely that this statement encouraged the communist North Korean Government and as a result five months later, on 25 June, 1950 North Korea launched an attack on South Korea. Australia contributed naval and air assistance as well as ground forces to the defence of South Korea where US and Britain also committed forces under a subsequently arranged United Nations mandate.¹³

Korean War to Vietnam : Facing Communism

In the immediate post-war years Soviet Union did not loom as a threat to Australia. Australia was troubled, but not threatened by communist insurgencies and other activities in various parts of Asia, until the outbreak of the Korean war. What Australia was more concerned about was the possibility of a resurgent Japan as a result of wrong-headed policy followed by the US and other allies. Australia wanted a weak Japan, economically and military, so that the latter would be unable to launch another aggression in the Pacific.

Even after the outbreak of the Korean war in which Australian forces fought alongside US troops, Australia did not favourably look upon the US policy of building up and supporting Japan. Australia opposed the idea of US offer for a 'soft' peace treaty with Japan on the grounds that the proposed peace treaty would only allow Japan to rearm and give an opportunity to be aggressive again without allied supervision. In the face of American and British determination, however, Australia did not wish to appear isolated and signed the peace treaty.¹⁴

Before signing the Japanese Peace Treaty Australia made sure that a formal alliance (ANZUS) was signed with the United States and New Zealand on September 1951 as an insurance against rearmed Japan.¹⁵ This was the first time that a security pact was

12. T.B. Millar, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

13. *ibid*, p. 179.

14. *ibid*, p. 270.

15. *ibid*, p. 180.

signed by Australia without the participation of Britain. London sought in vain to have an observer appointed to meetings of the ANZUS Council.¹⁶

One of the lessons of the Second World War was that the security of Australia was connected with the situation in South-East Asia. Australia could not look without concern the growing communist insurgency in Malaya and actively took part in ANZAM (the arrangement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand over the defence of Malaya) talks that began in Washington in October 1952. Eventually these talks, after the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, would lead to the establishment of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. In 1955 Australian ground troops, fighter and bomber aircraft were committed to Malaya to fight against guerillas, ostensibly as a contribution to SEATO.¹⁷ This was a follow up of what Mr. Percy Spender, the Foreign Minister said on 20th April 1950 that Malaya was of vital concern to the Australian Security.¹⁸

On 4th September 1959 Laos appealed to the United Nations for an emergency force to resist Viet Minh aggression. Australia favoured political settlement which took place in a conference in Geneva exclusively devoted to Laos. Meeting between May 1961 and July 1962 the conference resulted in an agreement that Laos would be removed from ambit of SEATO and became a neutral State.¹⁹ Thailand, for its part had been so perturbed over developments of communist military activity in neighbouring Laos that Australia joined United States in responding to a Thai request to station forces there. For the first time in its history Australia stationed forces on a contingency basis in a foreign country.²⁰ Almost simultaneously, Australia announced its military involvement in the

16. *ibid.*

17. *ibid.*, p. 239.

18. *ibid.*, pp. 179, 182-3.

19. *ibid.*, p. 261.

20. *ibid.*, p. 262.

neighbouring Vietnam. The initial Australian commitment of 30 instructors in 1962 increased to more than 8000 men five years later.²¹

In the meantime, there have been notable changes in the domestic political perspectives in Australia. By early 1970s public opinion moved demonstrably in favour of opposition Labor Party which favoured foreign and defence policies more in consonance with Australian characteristics and needs. The validity of the policy to keep in step with US military commitment without regard to the Australian national interests was put to question. Moreover, there was wide disillusionment with the US policy in Vietnam. All these brought in a discontinuity of bipartisanship in Australian foreign policy making.

The Whitlam Years : Towards Independent and Diversified Foreign Policy.

The Liberal Party under four Prime Ministers, Sir Robert Menzies (1949-66), Robert Holt (1966-67), John Gorton (1968-71) and W. McMahon (1971-72) held office for thirty three years. In December, 1972 the Labour Party won the election and its leader E.G. Whitlam became Prime Minister as well as the Foreign Minister.

E.G. Whitlam was committed "towards a more independent Australian stance in international affairs and towards an Australia which will be less militarily oriented".²² Essentially this meant a departure from the attitude of generally uncritical acceptance of American views on foreign affairs, which had characterized Australian policies since the Korean War. Whitlam did not want the United States to give up its role as a guarantor of Australian security. What he did want was that Australia should not be seen as subservient to and dependent upon the United States. The interests of the United States and the interests of Australia were viewed to be not necessarily identical.

21. *ibid*, p. 263.

22. *ibid*, pp. 405-6.

Australia's own national interests were recognised to be more important.²³

One of his first acts as Prime Minister was to distance himself from the war aims. As a demonstration of such policy he sent a protest to Nixon administration when it ordered the resumption of bombing in North Vietnam in December 1972.²⁴ He also acquiesced in a maritime unions boycott of American shipping which, however, was quickly lifted when American unions retaliated.²⁵

He began to reduce Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore and withdraw the remaining military advisers in Vietnam. He downgraded Australian involvement in SEATO and wanted the organization to redefine its objectives to make them closer to reality. In Whitlam's view the security of the region depended on different factors from those obtaining before and external military forces were no longer readily acceptable nor available. Australia would henceforth never send its troops to fight in Asian mainland wars, he declared.²⁶ Australia would seek new forms of regional cooperation without ideological overtones.

The most important change in foreign policy brought about by Whitlam was the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Whitlam government's difference from its predecessors in relation to foreign policy matters centred to a great extent also over Sino-Australian relations. Even before Whitlam's coming to power the Australian Foreign Office recommended that the Liberal Government, then in power, should make a move to recognize Communist China, even at the risk of breaking diplomatic relation with Taiwan. But the Liberal government was unwilling to make such a bold move. When Whitlam took as Prime Minister he quickly recognized PRC as the sole legal government of China.

23. *ibid.*, p. 407.

24. *ibid.*, p. 406.

25. *ibid.*

26. *ibid.* p. 410.

The fundamental assumption behind American thinking about South-East Asia in general, and Vietnam in particular, which had been accepted by the Australian Liberal government in power throughout 1960s and until 1973, was that the chief threat to the stability of the region came from the Chinese ideological expansion, especially through guerilla warfare. It was also accepted by government leaders both in Washington and Canberra that should South Vietnam fall, other countries in the region would fall like a set of dominos.²⁷

Changing US priorities in a region of Australia's strategic concern led to a reassessment of its defensive alliances, especially ANZUS which had been regarded as the cornerstone of Australian Foreign and Defence policy. The new government line was that Australia relied not on ANZUS alone to meet its security needs but on the whole complex of the international milieu in which it had to operate. Thus, the government of Whitlam took a posture of independence from the influence of not only United States, but also United Kingdom. To shed the image of dependence and subservience to London the Australian national anthem was changed from the British "God Save the Queen" to "Advance Australia Flag" except only for the ceremonies attended by the Vice-Regal (Governor General) who represented the Queen of England.²⁸ All legal appeals to the British Privy Council were abolished by his government. Multinational corporations of Britain were viewed by Whitlam only to be the means of dominating the Commonwealth.²⁹ Mr. Whitlam raised the status of his country by opening an embassy in Peking and at the same time by establishing wider diplomatic relations with North Vietnam, East Germany, Cyprus, Poland, Vatican, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and many other States.³⁰

Whitlam could no longer support the military orientation of Australian Foreign Policy. The basis of the military policies of Australia

27. *ibid.* p. 406.

28. *ibid.* p. 407.

29. *ibid.* p. 407.

30. *ibid.* pp. 408.

by which she became a member of SEATO and ANZUS was 'forward defence' — a fear of Japan, fear of China and Chinese backed Asian communist or nationalist movement.³¹ At a later stage Whitlam redefined the objectives of SEATO close to reality by taking out the Australian garrisons overseas in Asia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia.³² He however, did take this step only after Great Britain and United States took their forces home from these regions and the Australian forces were no longer needed.³³ Whitlam also did not take Australia out of SEATO in deference to the sentiments of America and New Zealand.

The philosophy behind such a stand is aptly elaborated by himself. According to him Australia considered that "political, economic and social change in Asia will occur and is indeed desirable, we believe that Australia should not intervene militarily even when the contest for power and for control over the change leads to violence. Australia shall never send troops to fight in Asian mainland wars".³⁴ The implication of this statement was that no external power could help any small State when threatened by a larger neighbour. But in practice it was not possible for the Whitlam government to remain totally aloof from the region. Therefore, though he reduced the strength of the Australian troops the Royal Australian Air Force base and squadrons remained in the region both during his and his successors' governments.³⁵

Whitlam had turned to non-military regional arrangement as distinct from the regional defence role for Australia. To insulate the region against ideological interference from great powers, there were already some institutions of co-operation namely the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for

31. *ibid.* p. 408-9.

32. *ibid.* p. 409.

33. *ibid.*

34. *ibid.* p. 410.

35. *ibid.*

Asia and the Far East (ECAFE, later ESCAP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and some Ministerial assemblies. The Whitlam government shifted its focus on these and viewed a greater role of Australia in these cooperation arrangements and movements. His government supported the ASEAN proposal for establishing a Zone of Peace, Neutrality and Freedom (ZOPFAN), and the proposal for a Zone Peace in the Indian Ocean. By doing this he obtained a place for Australia on the relevant United Nations Committees. Australia supported the national liberation movements in South Africa, Rhodesia and Portuguese colonies. It also recognised the governments that came to power in Vietnam, Korea, Namibia, and Cambodia. Whitlam recognised Guinea Bissau well ahead of its independence.³⁶ He could no longer back Taiwan as sovereign State and severed relations with her and acknowledged Soviet sovereignty over the three Baltic States comprising the present day Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the eastern shores of the Baltic.³⁷

There was also a discernible change in Australian trade relations commensurate with the changes in diplomatic ties. China emerged as an important customer for Australian products. It ranked fourth amongst Australia's customers. Wool and wheat were the main products sold to China. Apart from these trading relationship Whitlam realized that Taiwan would not be able to keep its sovereignty for long and has to succumb to its unification with mainland China,³⁸ For Australia's own lasting future good relationship with China was considered to be more important and thus relation with Taiwan was severed.

All these suggest that under the Whitlam government the foreign policy of Australia assumed an independent line consistent with the new government's own consideration of national interests and its pers-

36. *ibid.* p. 413.

37. *ibid.* p. 419.

38. *ibid.*

pectives on the way Australia might play its due role in international politics. There has also been a significant diversification of Australian relation with the external world as distinct from the earlier period.

Fraser and After : Economy and Moderation

It appears that any change of government in Australia would lead to certain changes in its foreign policy, especially in its relations with the United States. Such a change came in 1976 when the electoral victory of Liberal Country Party Coalition led to Malcolm Fraser becoming the new Prime Minister. The two governments headed by leaders with conservative philosophies (at that time conservatives were in power in Washington), seemed to be on the same wave-length. Soon, however, there was a change of administration in the United States with Jimmy Carter as the new President, whose perceptions were different from his predecessor. Thus, while Fraser government was stressing the importance of close alignment with the United States, on some important issues they failed to see eye to eye. A case in point is China's punitive strike against Vietnam in February-March 1978. Carter administration made clear its intentions not to get involved in conflict between Asian Communist nations. By contrast, Australian government declared its sympathy towards China. It may be noted however, that divergence on matters of detailed nature apart, the relation between Australia and the US continued to be friendly and no major changes were visible.

At a time of deepening international economic recession the Fraser Government took office and directed its foreign policy through Andrew Peacock, the versatile Foreign Minister to reduce its effect on Australia. Guided by overriding compulsions Australia began to devote increasing attention to using its external relations as an instrument for its economic objectives, EEC is the second largest market for Australian exports after Japan. Major exports are raw and processed minerals, wool and other rural products. EEC is also the largest source of Australian imports supplying more than a quarter of the total. To facilitate the recovery from the recession Australia appoin-

ted a Minister in EEC for negotiation and made representations in four West European countries as well as Britain in May-June 1977.³⁹

Fraser resented over EEC's barriers to Australian primary exports through its Common Agricultural Policy and tariffs on processed minerals whereas Australia was giving reasonable access to the Community's manufactured products by reducing her tariffs. By this the trading balance had shifted from approximate equality to nearly 4:1 in EEC's favour.⁴⁰ The community was also undercutting Australia in its traditional markets by heavily subsidising exports of its own already subsidised primary production.⁴¹ On the other hand, Australia found herself the defendant rather than the plaintiff in the ASEAN region. Australia was attacked over her high tariffs at an ASEAN Summit meeting in August 1977 and over the fact that she had a favourable balance of trade with every member except Singapore.⁴² ASEAN countries demanded the kinds of concessions which Australia was demanding from the EEC. They made it clear that generous additional aid was no substitute for low tariffs. "Australia was reluctant to practise in Asia what she preached in Europe."⁴³ As a result Australia was rebuffed when Fraser wanted a closer relationship with the regional grouping of ASEAN. ASEAN countries made it clear that they welcome the Australian fund but they would not welcome any intrusion in their deliberations.

On another plane, however, the Fraser government was successful in attaining some diplomatic gains. Fraser and the new conservative Prime Minister of New Zealand Muldoon encouraged the South Pacific Forum members to reverse their policy on the Pacific as a nuclear free zone. An Exclusive Maritime Economic Zone (EEZ) on which successive Law of the Sea conferences were unable to agree was

39. *ibid.* p. 428.

40. *ibid.* p. 429.

41. *ibid.* p. 428.

42. *ibid.* p. 429.

43. *ibid.*

proposed to be established as a desire of Australia. All members of the Forum agreed to establish 200 mile fishing or economic zones as quickly as possible and permissible under international law and a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agency open to all South Pacific countries.

Politically, Fraser did not believe that a real detente existed except perhaps in Europe and North Atlantic. Immediately after the invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnam in December 1978 Australia under Fraser joined ASEAN in condemning the Vietnamese action and terminated its cultural and aid programmes with Vietnam in January 1979.⁴⁴ Fraser's tenure was however, dominated by events in the domestic front. Economic issues particularly became most important. Government measures to improve the economy including wage freeze were controversial and as a result of the pressure of the Unions and the opposition ALP elections became imperative. Bob Hawke was elected as the Labor Prime Minister in the election of March 9, 1983 defeating national-liberal party coalitions.⁴⁵ The federal Attorney General and his state counterparts established the timetable for the severance of legal links between Australia and Britain from January 1, 1984, i.e., the right of appeal from State Supreme Courts to Privy Council in London which was effected by the Whitlam government in 1975. The legislation to this effect was tabled in the later part of 1983. The High Court of Australia was decided to be the final Court of Appeal under Australian Law.⁴⁶ Mr. Hawke conducted Australia's foreign policy on the same established framework of the previous governments in respect of the ANZUS and accepted US military bases as a necessity and resumed economic aid to Vietnam after consultation with both USA and the ASEAN.

44, H.S. Long and S. Silwoods, "Australia and the Kempuchea Crisis", *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 40, Number 2, August 1986.

45. *Asia Yearbook*, 1986, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hong Kong, 1986.

46. *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, 1983, p. 32512.

The United States alliance, Cambodia, South Africa and French nuclear testing in the South Pacific were the major foreign policy issues during 1985. The Labour government improved its relations in Indonesia and extended its links with China. Its relation with the former colony of Papua New Guinea were put on a new footing. Australian export trade with China expanded to an excess of Australian \$ 1 billion for the first time. Chinese Communist Party Leader General Secretary Hu Yaobang was shepherded around North-western iron ore fields when he came to visit Australia in April 1984.⁴⁷ Economic interests therefore continued to dominate diplomatic relations.

Kampuchean crisis was the main foreign policy issue where the Hawke government differed from Fraser. The Hawke government did not regard Vietnam as an extension of Soviet global expansion as Fraser had done. His government's approach was to ensure that Vietnam was not driven further into the Soviet camp. The Labor government was keen to seek solutions to the Kampuchean impasse. It embarked on a diplomatic odyssey to play the role of an "honest broker" in the Kampuchean crisis aiming to establish a new dialogue between the protagonists by seeking for a common ground rather than helping to stress the differences.⁴⁸ Australia was elected into the Security Council for the first time in ten years. His government was seen as moderate. It took a high profile on the UN on disarmament. And Hawke presented the Australian proposal for a nuclear free zone in the South Pacific. Nine South Pacific countries signed a draft treaty at the South Pacific Forum of local leaders.

Hawke's government protested vehemently to the French Nuclear testing at Murora Atoll in the South Pacific and bombing of the Greenpeace vessel, the Rainbow Warrior, the flagship of the international environmental "Group of Greenpeace" on July 10, 1985. In France this issue became a national scandal. Australia continued its ban on uranium sales to France. Australian relationship with

47. *Asia Yearbook 1986, op. cit., p. 103.*

48. H.S. Lang and S. Silwoods, *op. cit., p. 101.*

France was deterred when Bill Hayden on 27th November, 1985 referred to the French Oceanic Territory of New Caledonia as one of the last vestiges of colonialism in South Pacific. Australia also undertook a difficult balancing act to keep parallel bilateral relations with New Zealand and the USA during the ANZUS crisis provoked by New Zealand's refusal to allow US nuclear ships into its ports. Bob Hawke had been on pains to express his opinion that the US was right on its side and qualifications are not placed by allies on each other as New Zealand had done.⁴⁹

Australia's dismal economic performance was reflected in its foreign affairs during 1986. Australia's trade crisis in Southeast Asia deepened during the year despite Government's initiatives in the area and trade advantages of its weakened dollar. Australian exports to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore fell during the first half of the year and the balance of trade was reversed in Thailand's favour. A serious dispute took place between Australia and her major ally, the US in the field of trade when the US government subsidised huge wheat sales to the Soviet Union which was Australia's vital wheat market and thereby causing a huge loss. Both the Australian political parties Labour and Liberal were outraged by US action and their leaders travelled together to Washington to protest against the US policy but without any result. Bill Hayden and Beazley argued skillfully that Australia could not meet its defence obligations to its ally and cannot afford to enter into new defence contracts with the US agricultural subsidy policy.⁵⁰

Australia's relations with Britain have also been strained due to UK's refusal to impose sanctions on South Africa and finding of an Australian Royal Commission that Britain has been less than honest with Australia over nuclear tests conducted in Australia in the 1960s.⁵¹ The ANZUS alliance was also strained due to New Zealand's intra-

49. *Asia Yearbook 1986*, Hong Kong, 1986, p. 104.

50. *Asia Yearbook 1987*, Hong Kong p. 100.

51. *ibid.* p. 99.

nsigence on the Nuclear ships issue. Bob Hawke's decision to resume Uranium sales to France inspite of their continued use of the Pacific for nuclear testing dented the relationship with Papua New Guinea and other Pacific countries.

Relation with Indonesia also soured once an Australian newspaper published an article on Indonesian President Suharto's family business links. Hawke appeased Indonesia by recognising Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor. Foreign Minister Heyden proposed for Combodian solution by advocating a tribunal to examine the guilt of Pol Pot and the credentials of Khmer Rouge. Bob Hawke's ASEAN counterparts were less critical of this proposal than his previous efforts to act as the region's honest broker. These and subsequent Australian postures demonstrate Australian commitment to moderation and peaceful solution of disputes as distinct from confrontation.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that Australia's foreign policy has been shaped by the challenges of the 50 years of momentous series of world-wide social and political changes specially the rapid growth of independent States, forces of geopolitics, specially, awareness about its position in Asia and the Pacific region, the World War II, the cold war, the disarmament debate, the emergence of new regional alignments and the like. While there has been a basic continuity in Australian foreign policy there have been shifts in nuances and tactics in her foreign policy pursuits.

For quite some time British link has been a decisive factor in Australian foreign policy in terms of her security needs and international alignments. But events in the Second World War exposed that Britain was unable to protect her from Japanese onslaught and other threats. This, however put her in a serious dilemma, while Australia perceived that her security would best be served by aligning with the US, there was a basic incongruity of security perception between US and Australia. This made the US less forthcoming toward Australian overtures for a Pacific Security system. She also differed with US with respect of Japanese threat and postures toward the latter. Such

divergence of perception was also reflected in her relations with China although US also established the same with the former. A trend of independent posture in Australian foreign policy emerged from an

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A second element of continuity in Australian foreign policy has been the realization and persistence of her interests in South-East Asia, although, again there were difference from regime to regime in terms of details as we have seen earlier.

At the individual level, Whitlam brought in significant changes in Australian foreign policy pursuits. Specially his policy of distancing Australia from the war aims of the West, US in particular, in South-east Asia and pursuance of a more constructive policy of cooperating with South-east Asia at regional level were manifestation of this. The subsequent regimes also followed more or less the same policy with respect to South-East Asia. Australia pursued a more pragmatic and less ideology biased policy with respect to Kampuchea and Afghanistan. Hawke conducted Australian foreign policy on the same framework.

Divergence in terms of details of security perception, as mentained earlier, does not appear to have significant strategic value so far her link with the West is concerned. Australia belongs to the ANZUS in which US plays a leading role. Australia hosts certain strategic military installations of the US. Moreover, in regard to the fissures between the US and New Zealand, Australia played a moderating role for the greater interest to the alliance. This also may be regarded as an element of continuity in Australian foreign policy in terms of its preference for peaceful solution of disputes as against confrontation.