

ASIA-NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION • BUILDING NEW ZEALANDERS' KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ASIA

Outlook

EDITION
3
TRACK II

STANDING TOGETHER, IN SINGLE FILE

AUSTRALIAN VIEWS OF NEW ZEALAND AND ASIA

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STANDING TOGETHER

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE LONG STOOD TOGETHER in their post-colonial aspirations for engagement with (or, for some, more hopefully as part of) Asia. In the early days of World War II, when speaking about the different security outlooks of metropolitan Great Britain and Australia, Sir Robert Menzies noted, “what Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near North... the primary risk in the Pacific is borne by New Zealand and ourselves”.¹ Menzies’ Foreign Minister, Percy Spender, in conversation with American Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Dean Rusk, concurred that: “since we saw the security of each of our countries in terms of the security of both of them, Australia would certainly not want New Zealand to be excluded from any American commitment”.²

Australia’s perception of standing together with New Zealand in relation to Asia, especially with the gradual withdrawal of Great Britain from the region, was institutionalised in 1951 by the signing of the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) Security Treaty. ANZUS is still the United States’ only trilateral alliance in Asia and one founded on shared Australian and New Zealand concerns about Northeast Asia’s greatest power at the time, Japan, and its evolving relationship with the new global and resident Asian superpower, the United States. In 1995 at the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Post-Ministerial Conference, the then Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, when discussing Australia in East Asia, went further and included both Australia and New Zealand in the newly coined East Asian Hemisphere:

“The second relevant concept is that of the ‘East Asian Hemisphere’. We are all familiar with the expression ‘American Hemisphere’ or ‘Western Hemisphere’ to describe North and South America together, even though these two continents do not literally stretch half way around the globe: the segment of the earth’s sphere stretching from longitudes west of China to east of New Zealand is a similarly large slice of the globe. And there are similarly strong ties binding Australia together with North and Southeast Asia, notwithstanding all the obvious differences between our various countries.”

“The old preconceptions or paradigms based on ‘Asian’ and ‘European’ identities are losing their utility. Australia may not be an ‘Asian’ country any more than it is ‘European’ or ‘North American’, but it is definitely part of the East Asian Hemisphere. Our culture and society are uniquely Australian, but they encompass qualities which are increasingly influenced by the cultures of our near neighbours. These influences will inevitably grow as economic, defence and people-to-people contacts accelerate the interaction between us. The term ‘East Asian Hemisphere’ captures not only the geographical reality, but a good deal of this culture and social flavour as well.”³

Flash forward to today, and much seems the same. New Zealand’s then Prime Minister Clark was the first foreign leader to meet with Prime Minister Rudd (revealing the level of comfort between the two countries, on his back porch in Brisbane).⁴ New Zealand was the first port of call for Richard Woolcott, Prime Minister Rudd’s envoy for the Asia-Pacific community initiative, Canberra’s latest Asia-Pacific regionalism idea. The change of government in Wellington in November 2008 led New Zealand to be the only prospective community member that Woolcott visited twice in his initial, inter-hemispheric listening tour.

Reflecting this same trans-Tasman union of interests, New Zealand quickly added its support to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crimes first convened by Indonesia and Australia in 2002, with 38 participating governments from the Asia-Pacific region. In the Process’s second meeting in 2003, New Zealand agreed to coordinate Process activities to increase regional and international cooperation.⁵ On 1 January 2010, the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into force, the first FTA that the Closer Economic Partners, Australia and New Zealand, have signed together, and the first one that ASEAN has negotiated with more than one other country.⁶

1 Cited in Sir Robert Menzies. *An Australian Looks at East and Southeast Asia*, The Dillingham Lectures. East-West Center, Honolulu, 4 November 1969.

2 Cited in Hiroyuki Umetsu, *From ANZUS to SEATO – a study of Australian foreign policy, 1950-54*, University of Sydney, 1996.

3 Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia Gareth Evans. *Australia, ASEAN and the East Asian Hemisphere*. ASEAN PMC 7+1 Session, Bandar Seri Begawan, 2 August 1995.

4 Simon Kearney, Rudd to rule from front bench, back porch. *The Australian*, 10 December 2007.

5 Australia, New Zealand and Japan co-fund the Bali Process, website www.baliprocess.net.

6 As of 12 January 2010, four ASEAN member-states – Indonesia, Thailand, Lao PDR and Cambodia – had yet to complete the necessary legislative requirements to begin implementing the Agreement. Agreement on Australia-New Zealand FTA enters into force. *ASEAN Secretariat*, 12 January 2010.

“Australia and New Zealand also often stand together in mutual consternation on the outside looking in on East Asian regional efforts.”

Recent Asia-Pacific regional initiatives generated outside Australia and New Zealand have also followed this “standing together” theme and reinforced the fact that many capitals to our north, echoing Sir Robert Menzies, naturally pair Australia and New Zealand together when they consider the two countries’ places in the wider Asia-Pacific region. In 2005, Australia and New Zealand, along with India, were invited to join the ASEAN+3 countries in the newly created leaders-level East Asia Summit. New Zealand and Australia are also keen participants in Indonesian President Yudhoyono’s Bali Democracy Forum, with Australia co-hosting the first Forum in 2008. In this Forum, both Australia and New Zealand are defined as Asian participants, unlike their Asia-Pacific peers the United States and Canada, which are simply classified as outside observers.

Australia and New Zealand also often stand together in mutual consternation on the outside looking in on East Asian regional efforts. While ASEAN has invited Australia and New Zealand to the annual East Asia Summit, along with the not-so-East Asian India, both countries have been excluded from the ASEAN+3 process initiated in 1997 and officially designated as the “main vehicle” for East Asian community-building in 2005.⁷ This apparent snub followed Australia and New Zealand, despite their express interest, being excluded from East Asian countries’ most geographically ambitious outreach effort, the annual Asia-Europe Meeting process established in 1994. This inter-regional forum first brought together the members of the European Union with the members of ASEAN, Japan, China and South Korea. To help bridge the yawning continental gap between western Europe and East Asia, India, Mongolia and Pakistan were added in 2006 along with Bulgaria and Romania.

Dual exclusion from these regional and inter-regional bodies feed both Australia’s and New Zealand’s long-held fears about their geographical location – New Zealand being the most geographically isolated country in the world,⁸ with Australia not far behind – and their exclusion from the councils of Asia to their collective north. Exclusion may eventually carry material costs too for the two economies if the excluding East Asian organisations ever fulfil their regional integration aspirations. According to calculations by the Asian Development Bank (which also includes Australia and New Zealand as Asian members), an ASEAN+3 preferential trade agreement would lead to a small loss in total income for Australia (0.41 percent) and New Zealand (0.27 percent). An East Asia Summit-wide agreement would deliver a 3.91 percent boost for Australia and a 5.24 percent one for New Zealand.⁹

7 Malcolm Cook, The United States and the East Asia Summit: finding the proper home. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30 (2) 2008.

8 Andrew Clark, *Air Force or Air Corps? Does New Zealand need an independent air force in a joint environment?* Canberra, The Aerospace Centre, 2002.

9 Masahiro Kawai and Ganeshan Wignaraja, EAFTA or CEPEA: which way forward? *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 25 (2) 2008.

IN SINGLE FILE

HOWEVER, OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS in Asian regionalism show that Australia and New Zealand are not standing side by side, arms intertwined. Rather, mirroring their respective geographical locations in relation to Asia, their positioning is in single file, with the bulkier and more assertive Australia perceiving itself at the head, facing forward and, at times, leaving New Zealand behind. Australia is entering Asian regional organisations and pondering new ones to the exclusion or in advance of its only southern neighbour. While Australia sees Asia as its near north, Australia sees itself as New Zealand's near north that has shielded the smaller, weaker and more distant New Zealand from Asia. R.G. Casey, Australia's Minister for External Affairs from 1951 to 1960, noted in his diary that New Zealanders "do not feel the hot breath of Asia on their necks to the extent that we do".¹⁰ New Zealand's own Asian engagement strategy seems to acknowledge this asymmetry as it is definitively shaped by Australia's own Asian engagement strategy, even if many in Wellington and beyond query some of Australia's Asian engagement policies.¹¹ The reverse is not true.

This year (2010), in another member of the Commonwealth, the most vivid and globally broadcast example of this less comforting trans-Tasman positioning will take place. For decades, the Socceroos and the All Whites have fought it out to be the champion of the Oceania Football Confederation, then faced a play-off with a second-tier Asian or South American national team for qualification to the FIFA World Cup, the world's most watched sporting event. At the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, if things go very well, the two teams could meet in the later rounds, with New Zealand again representing the Oceania Football Confederation and Australia, for the first time, representing the Asian Football Confederation. In this case, football diplomacy does mirror real diplomacy. In security and defence policy, building on the ANZUS and the United States-Japan alliances, in 2005 the United States, Japan and Australia announced the formation of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD), which first met at the ministerial-level in Australia in 2006. Beyond institutionalising regular trilateral foreign minister meetings, the TSD includes a defence arm, the Security and Defence Cooperation Forum, which allows the defence forces of the three regional powers to work more closely together. The formation of the TSD in 2005 played a facilitating role in the negotiation of the 2007 Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, the first such declaration that Japan has entered into with another

country.¹² The second was with India in November 2008. Australia, following a similar script, has also signed security declarations, with South Korea in 2008 and India in 2009. Influential voices in Australia are calling for Canberra to leverage its membership in the newly empowered G-20 grouping of "systemically significant economies" to advance its Asian regionalism interests by advocating an East Asian (including Australia) sub-grouping within the G-20.¹³ There is even some talk of such a caucus as a regional institutional innovation that could satisfy the goals of Prime Minister Rudd's struggling Asia-Pacific community initiative and its concert of regional power pretensions. This year, Australia, along with Russia, will be a first-time participant in the biennial ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) to be held in Brussels in October. New Zealand is still waiting for its invitation.¹⁴

Australia does perceive that the two trans-Tasman countries stand together in relation to Asia – this paper itself is an example – but the perception is more one of standing in single file looking forward than side by side. The rest of this paper will first look in more detail at the impressive level of cooperation between the governments in Canberra and Wellington when it comes to their mutually shared national interests in Asia. Then it will look at four factors in Australian foreign policy and its engagement with Asia that help explain why New Zealand may be drifting more and more into the background of Australian views of Asia, while at the same time occasionally elbowing its way to the front in Asia, to Australia's chagrin.

It is boilerplate for leading figures in Australia and New Zealand to laud the fact that the two countries are the most closely bound together and fraternal of each nation's bilateral relations. Yet discussions of trans-Tasman ties, more loudly and frequently in New Zealand than in Australia, also often fret about the two countries and societies drifting apart, despite their strong historical ties as Western liberal democracies and former British settler colonies, in the southern approaches to Asia.¹⁵ Government officials in Wellington and Canberra also echo each other when they repeatedly claim that their policy actions are drawing their respective countries closer to Asia (claims strongly supported by opinion polling and immigration and trade flows in both countries). In many ways, this paper upholds these claims and the inherent tensions between them.

10 Umetsu, *From ANZUS to SEATO – a study of Australian foreign policy, 1950-54*.

11 This point comes from the insightful comments of one of the paper's anonymous reviewers. Thanks.

12 The TSD and the annual 2X2 ministerial meetings (foreign and defence ministers) that are part of the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation guarantee Australia regular access to Japan's leaders, just as ANZUS does to the American ones. In contrast, when Foreign Minister Nakasone visited New Zealand in 2009, he was the first Japanese foreign minister to do so in a decade.

13 Stephen Grenville and Mark Thirlwell, *A G-20 Caucus for East Asia*. Policy Brief, Lowy Institute for International Policy, October, 2009.

The other members of this proposed caucus, all also members of the East Asia Summit, are Japan, China, India, South Korea and Indonesia.

14 Murray McCully. *New Zealand: a bridge between Asia and Europe*. Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, 14 December 2009.

15 Examples of this include Bob Catley, (ed.), *New Zealand-Australia Relations: moving together or drifting apart*. Wellington, Dark Horse Publishing, 2002 and Colin James, *An ethnic accident*, in Stout Centre/IPS conference on Australia-New Zealand, Wellington, 2001.

IMPRESSIVE PARTNERSHIP

IT IS WORTH THE RISK OF REPETITION TO REVISIT just how enduring and varied Australia-New Zealand cooperation towards Asia has been. All the non-bilateral cornerstones, controversial or not, of Australia's engagement with Asia have also been cornerstones of New Zealand's own engagement with Asia.

Both:

- contributed to defending Malaya during the Malayan Emergency and Malaysia and Singapore during Indonesia's brief *Konfrontasi* aggression
- were major participants in the Colombo Plan (with Australian Foreign Minister Spender claiming much of the credit for it)¹⁶ to help stabilise Southeast Asia
- fought in the Korean War on the same side
- were signatories of the ANZUS alliance, although New Zealand has since taken a different path and established a cornerstone of disengagement from the Asia-Pacific security region. Australia still holds the alliance as the cornerstone of its security and defence and foreign policy
- in 1954, joined the short-lived and oddly named anti-communist Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) along with the United States, France, Great Britain, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan
- fought in the Viet Nam War on the same side
- in 1966 became founding regional members of the Asian Development Bank
- are part of the Five Power Defence Arrangements signed in 1971 for the protection of Malaysia and Singapore
- Australia became ASEAN's first dialogue partner in 1974, followed quickly by New Zealand in 1975. In 2004, ASEAN convened the ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Commemorative Summit to commemorate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-Australia and ASEAN-New Zealand dialogue relations
- actively participated in the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) and its successor, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), both led by Australia
- were founding members of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) in 1989, a successful Australia-Japan regional initiative
- joined the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994 on the basis of being ASEAN dialogue partners
- participated in the Australian-led International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) and its successor the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) from 1999 to 2002. Both countries still have significant numbers of troops in East Timor. Australia was the largest contributor of troops to INTERFET, followed by New Zealand. New Zealand's INTERFET contribution was its largest military contribution since the Korean War¹⁷
- in 2005, joined the East Asia Summit after signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. New Zealand signed this entry pass to the Summit first and with less consternation than Australia, suggesting that, at times, New Zealand's engagement with Asia is quieter and more effective
- in 2009 signed and ratified the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA.

This truly is an impressive list that cannot be replicated with any other of Australia's diplomatic partners, including the United States. It may well be hard to create a similar list for any two non-major powers and their non-bilateral relations with their neighbouring region, except possibly for Australia and New Zealand in the South Pacific, their nearest north.

¹⁶ Percy Spender, *Politics and a Man*. Sydney, Collins, 1972.

¹⁷ Hon. Derek Quigley, The evolution of New Zealand defence policy. *Security Challenges* 2 (3) 2006.

NEW ZEALAND BEHIND

THE ABOVE LIST COULD FIND PRIDE OF PLACE in any political speech about the ties that bind the countries together. When considering it, the 2,250-kilometre expanse of the Tasman Sea that divides the pair really can be portrayed simply as a “ditch”. Moreover, this list strongly affirms that the trans-Tasman fraternal relationship has shaped and aided each country’s engagement with Asia from their very beginnings as sovereign states. This list, and more recent efforts by Canberra to get Wellington to sign on to the stumbling Asia-Pacific community and to take Japan to the International Court of Justice over whaling in the Southern Ocean, also reflect how New Zealand’s engagement with Asia is shaped by Australia’s engagement initiatives, often formed with limited prior consultation between Canberra and Wellington.

However, looking at the trans-Tasman relationship from an Australian perspective, there are at least four Australian perceptions about New Zealand and its place in (or out of) Asia that can support the worries about Australia-New Zealand drift and differences of interests in Asia. These worries paint a picture of the Tasman Sea as it really is, a substantial body of water that imposes a substantial distance between the two nations.

SIZE MATTERS

After a decade as a foreign correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Geoff Thompson returned home in 2009. Reminiscing on what he had learnt as an Australian journalist overseas, he noted,

“There is one unfortunate fact however which might come as something of a shock. The rest of the world regards Australia with much the same level of interest as we regard New Zealand. Horrible, I know.”¹⁸

Defence analyst Robert Ayson, a resident New Zealander in Canberra at the time, picked up a similar theme when he wrote about the 2008 election in his homeland:

“For a Rudd government shifting its gaze to the great power dynamics of Asia, this may well reinforce the essential irrelevance of New Zealand as a defence actor in the wider region. New Zealand will still want to be part of all the regional gatherings and Mr. Rudd’s Asia-Pacific Community discussions but will lack even a modicum of strategic weight to go along with its interests in regional diplomacy and trade.”¹⁹

Hugh White, Ayson’s colleague at the Australian National University, wrote in a similar vein about Australia’s future defence policy, contrasting Australia with New Zealand:

“Australia today probably does have this choice to make. Other countries, like New Zealand, do not: their economy is not big enough to sustain strategically significant forces. But Australia might just be just big enough to support forces that would provide real strategic weight in Asia. Today our air and naval forces make us the major maritime power south of China and east of India.”²⁰

White clearly advocates for Australia to not follow in New Zealand’s footsteps but to remain committed to maintaining strategic weight in Asia. Australia’s 2009 muscular Defence White Paper fully agrees with White on this point.

Size and weight and how Australia stacks up on these measures regionally and globally are a fixation at the centre of Australian foreign policy and self-identity, regardless of which party is in power and despite their deep philosophical differences on foreign policy. “Punching above our weight” is the most hackneyed and oft-used expression in Australia to describe our foreign policy and our broader engagement in the world.²¹ Hence, Australia may be the most gleeful and possessive member of the G-20 and its provision for Australia of an exclusive seat at the world’s table and the best example of Australia’s significance being recognised globally.

18 Geoff Thompson, *Homeward Bound*. Radio National, 13 December 2009.

19 Robert Ayson. *Is the NZ Election Almost Irrelevant for Canberra?* lowyinterpreter.org 21 October 2008.

20 Hugh White, *Beyond the Defence of Australia*. Sydney, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2006.

21 Australia is not alone in this self-image. One reviewer of this paper noted that New Zealand, from a lower weight class, also claims to “punch above its weight”. This is true of many Commonwealth states, with the United Kingdom even claiming that it coined the term in 1993. *UK’s world role: punching above our weight*. BBC News/Open University 2001.

“As with New Zealand, Australia’s geographical isolation and cultural distinctiveness from neighbouring Asia have created fears of exclusion and irrelevance globally and among the great powers.”

The Rudd government, borrowing from a longer academic (and Labor Party) tradition that is particularly strong in Australia, Canada, South Korea, (oddly) Japan, Malaysia and now Indonesia, defines Australia as a “middle power”.²² The previous Howard government rejected this “middling” classification as belittling of a considerable power like Australia.²³

Australia’s geography helps explain the deep roots of this concern with size and weight and global position and the constant desire for more. As with New Zealand, Australia’s geographical isolation and cultural distinctiveness from neighbouring Asia have created fears of exclusion and irrelevance globally and among the great powers. In the post-World War II negotiations over the status of defeated Japan and in the build-up to the ANZUS alliance, Canberra sought to be recognised as the standard-bearer of Commonwealth interests in the South Pacific and a power worthy of independent representation in the councils of post-war Asia. As Roger Bell notes,

“Three days before the Tokyo conference, Chifley announced that he intended to make available ‘an Australian force to participate in the occupation of Japan itself.’ This decision implied that Cabinet opposed a British recommendation that Australia contribute to a combined British Commonwealth Occupation Force, comprising Australian, British-Indian, New Zealand, and Canadian troops. Chifley acknowledged that the decision was prompted by a desire that an Australian force should ‘have the same status as the occupying forces being supplied by the United States, Britain, China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.’ It aimed to reinforce Australia’s claim to be recognized ‘as a primary and not a secondary Pacific power.’”²⁴

Australia’s sense of itself as a power is added to by the fact that Australia is much larger in all senses than its closest neighbours, including New Zealand. The only exception to this is Indonesia, Australia’s only Asian neighbour with a population now roughly 11 times larger than Australia’s but with a much smaller economy

in market exchange rate terms and a landmass one fourth as large. The vastness of the Australian landmass (the only country that is also a continent) also feeds this permanent fixation with national size and weight and the belief that Australia should be seen by others as larger and more important than they are. Australia also claims the third largest maritime exclusive economic zone in the world, with its maritime claims covering nearly twice the area of its continental landmass.²⁵

In the case of New Zealand, it is more often than not the “small power” contrast to Australia’s self-identity as a significant “middle or more” power, particularly in reference to the Asia-Pacific. This positioning means that Australia often pays little attention to New Zealand, particularly in its consideration of Asia, which holds the world’s greatest concentration of major powers. Hugh White’s and Robert Ayson’s quotations earlier reflect this trans-Tasman contrast, as did the largely bemused Australian response to Wellington’s decision in 2000 to cancel the F16s contract and end the country’s air combat capabilities. For many in Australia, the F16 decision was consistent with its neighbour’s ANZUS politics in general. It is an article of faith in Canberra foreign and defence policy circles that the ANZUS alliance contributes significantly to Australia’s real and perceived weight and influence regionally and globally. New Zealand’s exit from ANZUS is thus read as a sign of wilful influence reduction and voluntary irrelevance in Asia by an introverted Wellington, an action that is inconceivable in the halls of government in Canberra.

A quick read of the most recent White Papers to be produced by the Australian government reflect the fact that Australian foreign policy focuses on Asia as a strategic arena of major power interaction. Australia’s worldview does not only look north to Asia, it also looks up at its larger powers. The South Pacific on the other hand is perceived as a strategic arena of interaction with much smaller and weaker powers. The 2009 Defence White Paper is shaped by Australian fears of great power frictions to its north. This leaves little space and time for other middle powers and even less for smaller ones.

22 Recent examples from the Asia Pacific of this academic field include Yoshihide Soeya, Diplomacy for Japan as a middle power. *Japan Echo* 35 (2) 2008, Carl Ungerer, The “middle power” concept in Australian foreign policy. *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53 (4) 2007, Jonathan H. Ping, *Middle Power Statecraft: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Asia Pacific*. Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2005.

23 *Australia more than a middle power*, Downer says. ABC News, 26 November 2003.

24 Roger Bell, Australian-American disagreement over the peace settlement with Japan, 1944-1946. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 30 (2) 1976.

25 Sam Bateman and Anthony Bergin, In need of a sea change. *The Australian*, 13 June 2009.

“New Zealand is a trusted friend of Australia’s but it’s not a major focus of Australian foreign policy’s Asian engagement pillar.”

In the White Paper’s Chapter Eleven on alliances and international defence relationships, New Zealand is covered only after the United States alliance, the Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia and before the South Pacific and South Asia (oddly, covering only Pakistan and Afghanistan).

The 1997 *In the National Interest: Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy* focuses on what the Howard government then determined were Canberra’s four key bilateral relationships: the United States, Japan, Indonesia and China in that order. Later it would add India to the list. In this White Paper (1997), New Zealand is mostly noticeable by its absence.

Its 2003 successor, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, does focus more attention on New Zealand, noting that:

“New Zealand is Australia’s most important ally in the South Pacific and an important partner beyond. Over many decades, New Zealand has made valuable contributions in areas of high priority to Australia, most recently in East Timor, Bougainville and Solomon Islands and in responding to people smuggling.

“Australia and New Zealand share a special relationship as allies, as close economic partners and with unique inter-governmental structures and people-to-people links. But we remain two sovereign nations which must manage that uniquely close relationship. For both countries it will be important to deal with each other realistically and pragmatically, deciding on a case-by-case basis whether our individual national interests require us to work together or separately.

“The trans-Tasman relationship will necessarily evolve as differences in economic strength, political systems, ethnic composition and strategic outlook become more apparent. But Australia has a strong and direct interest in a dynamic relationship with an outward-looking and economically strong New Zealand.”

New Zealand is a trusted friend of Australia’s but it’s not a major focus of Australian foreign policy’s Asian engagement pillar and its goal of providing a “secure south” for East Asia, as Australia is self-described in the 1997 White Paper.

LOCATING NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALANDERS MAY WELL HAVE A MUCH FIRMER and more thought-out understanding of Australia's position in New Zealand's worldview and in its engagement with Asia than Australians have of New Zealand's. This is not surprising given New Zealand's simultaneous fears of Australian domination, as expressed by the then New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon when thinking about the post-ANZUS environment and Australian abandonment as expressed in the 1987 New Zealand White Paper on foreign and defence policy and its prime objective of ensuring that Australia remains interested in New Zealand and the trans-Tasman security relationship.²⁶

One of the few recent books on Australian foreign policy to come out of Australia, *Making Australian Foreign Policy* by Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley (the inaugural and serving Executive Directors of the Lowy Institute respectively) inadvertently stokes this latter fear. When describing Australia's position in the world in the Introduction, under the sub-heading Australia *sui generis*, they write:

"This tiny fraction of humanity lives on an island continent comprising just over 5 percent of the earth's land surface. It shares a land border with no other country: its 36,735-kilometre coastline is bordered by vast expanses of ocean. Its east coast, along which live more than two-thirds of its population, is washed by the earth's largest ocean, all 165 million square kilometres of the Pacific. Its west coast looks onto the earth's third-largest body of water: the 73 million-square-kilometre Indian Ocean. To the south are the frozen expanses of the Antarctic: to the north, first the island archipelagos and then the vast landmass of Asia, closer, but so different in history, language, culture, society, economy and politics".²⁷

When Australians consider their own splendid (or not) isolation, they often do so to the exclusion of New Zealand. This problem of defining New Zealand's place in Australia's worldview though, is more complicated and enduring than the occasional omission. New Zealand has many different roles and national personalities for Australia, more than any other country. It is a fraternal country closer to Australia than any other in history and culture, as shown in the passion of the sporting rivalry, and that both are "other governments" in the United Nations' anachronistic Western Europe and Other Governments country grouping, and members of the globe-spanning Commonwealth. It is the country with which Australia has the closest bilateral relationship, including a largely free labour market, Wellington's seat at the Council of Australian Governments meetings to manage relations between Canberra and Australia's states and territories, and a slow-burning debate about currency union. It is the second-most-important country after Australia in the troubled South Pacific through which Australia's defence forces and aid agencies have forged particularly close interdependent relationships. Finally, it is a fellow Oceania traveller when it comes to Asia-Pacific regionalism, but one that is smaller, weaker, more distant and less engaged, as shown by its more diverse trade portfolio and divergent defence decisions.

New Zealand's multiple roles and positions in Australia's worldview and their order of importance is reflected in both public views of New Zealand in Australia and official government documents. The two countries' shared interest in Asian engagement is far from the dominant of these. Rather, it could well come last, helping to explain why, when it comes to Asia, Australians often find it hard to locate New Zealand.

When the Lowy Institute, for the first time, polled Australians on their view of the world in 2005, New Zealand easily topped the list of countries and regions about which Australians had warm feelings, at 94 percent, followed by the United Kingdom at 86 percent and Europe at 84 percent. This result was repeated in 2007 when New Zealand again was number one followed closely by Great Britain.²⁸ In 2009, when Great Britain was dropped for Canada, New Zealand again came tops with antipodean Canada a close second.

²⁶ Quigley, *The evolution of New Zealand defence policy*.

²⁷ Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*. Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²⁸ New Zealand was dropped from this question in 2006 and 2008.

“Australian foreign policy focuses mostly on the bilateral relationship with New Zealand and its common location within the troubled South Pacific.”

In each Lowy Institute poll, a Western member of the Commonwealth has come out as the most liked foreign country. New Zealand’s proximity, cultural, historical and geographical, and its common membership in the Commonwealth seem to define Australian popular views of New Zealand and why it tops the warmth thermometer when it is included. Views on Asian countries, particularly neighbouring Indonesia and looming China, seem to be informed by very different, less comforting factors in the minds of most Australians.

As reflected in the placement of the New Zealand section in the 2009 Defence White Paper and in the citation on New Zealand in the 2003 Foreign Affairs and Trade White Paper, Australian foreign policy focuses mostly on the bilateral relationship with New Zealand and its common location within the troubled South Pacific, not on New Zealand’s and Australia’s engagement with Asia. In the 1997 Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper, New Zealand is excluded from the section on the rise of East Asia and the changing relativities of power and influence and the charts comparing Australia with “its neighbours”. The 2003 White Paper also firmly situates New Zealand in the South Pacific, a position that is supported by the immense challenges facing this region and the fact that Australia and New Zealand are alone among developed economies globally in their level of direct national interest, engagement and bilateral cooperation in this region.

Following suit, the 2009 Defence White Paper states in section 11.28 that: “The Government especially reaffirms its commitment through this White Paper to working with New Zealand to promote security stability and development in the Pacific and East Timor”. Likewise, high on the agenda in the first meeting between Helen Clark and Kevin Rudd for the Australian leader was bilateral cooperation in the South Pacific.

Australia’s recent debate over guest-worker schemes for Australia’s labour-short horticultural industry strengthened this location of New Zealand in and of the South Pacific. Australian policy planners studied then copied on a much more modest scale New Zealand’s established Registered Employer scheme for South Pacific guest-workers.²⁹ This led to a burst of coverage in the mainstream media about New Zealand’s programme and the benefits and problems Australia could expect from its own. Moreover, there is some appreciation in Australia of New Zealand’s deeper and more intimate relations with the South Pacific and the much larger share of the New Zealand population, especially its young population, of Pacific Islander descent.

Abusing history a little, Australia’s view of New Zealand today is still more akin with the 1944 ANZAC Agreement and its focus on the South Pacific as the region of Australian primacy with New Zealand support than the 1951 ANZUS alliance and its focus on the much wider Asia-Pacific region and supporting and benefiting from American global primacy.

²⁹ Michael Klapdor, *New Zealand’s Seasonal Guest-Worker Scheme*. Background Notes. Canberra, Parliament of Australia Parliamentary Library, 13 May, 2008.

INTENSITY OF ASIA

IF THERE IS SOME APPRECIATION IN AUSTRALIA of New Zealand as more deeply engaged in and affected by the South Pacific, the opposite is truer when Australia thinks about Asia and New Zealand. The two overriding foci of Australian foreign policy since the end of World War II have been support for the ANZUS alliance and engagement with Asia. The most sustained and public foreign policy debates in modern Australia have also figured around the ANZUS alliance, engagement with Asia and how the two work in favour or against each other. Both the Liberal and Labor parties claim paternity for the ANZUS alliance and the Asian engagement strategy and its export successes. Partisan debate over Australian foreign policy is constantly framed by Labor accusing the Liberals and the Liberals accusing Labor of misplaying both the alliance and Asian engagement.³⁰

In strategic and defence terms, the ANZUS alliance is seen as key to both Australia's security from threats emanating from or via Asia and a major support for the country's deeper security engagement with Asia. The TSD and the joint declarations on security cooperation signed with Japan, South Korea and now India all offer recent evidence of this last connection.

On the economic side, engagement with Asia has been a very good news story about Australian uniquely complimentary economy in regards to Asia, particularly Asia's largest markets, and the boon this has meant for Australian exports. Ross Garnaut's seminal government report, *Australia and the Northeast Asian ascendancy*, written in the same year that Australia proposed APEC, captures this now widely understood mutually beneficial and deep trading complementarity.³¹

More abstractly, engagement with Asia has also been a key feature in Australia's own journey from a Commonwealth outpost of questionable origins to a modern, dynamic independent state with a bright future. The importance of Asia to Australia's modern discussion about itself has left little room for other Western countries, excluding the United States, in Australia's considerations about Asia and Australia. New Zealand's location south, not north, of Australia and its shared history as a Commonwealth outpost play against Australian considerations of New Zealand in Australian views of Asia, despite New Zealand's own similar story with Asian engagement and changing self-identity.

Export figures have long taken precedence in Australian discussions about the benefits of engagement with Asia. This is no surprise as they clearly show how intensely important Asia is for Australian trade, particularly Asia's largest markets that absorb such a high share of Australia's total exports and that have been the most globally ascendant in the last four to five decades. New Zealand's export portfolio, like those of East Asian countries themselves, is significantly more diversified regionally and much less dependent on Asia's large markets than Australia's. The two countries' import portfolios from Asia are much more similar in terms of the overall importance of major Asian markets for imports to both countries and the make-up and ranking of their top ten import markets.

TABLE 1: AUSTRALIA TOP TEN GOODS EXPORT MARKETS (2008)*

COUNTRY	AMOUNT IN \$ MILLIONS
Japan	41,229
China	27,068
South Korea	15,215
India	11,288
United States	10,290
New Zealand	7,938
United Kingdom	7,877
Singapore	5,365
Thailand	4,493
Indonesia	3,620
EAST ASIAN MARKETS' SHARE (INCLUDING INDIA)	80.5 PERCENT

* Only national markets considered

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), *direction of trade statistics*, 2009.

30 Recent examples of this debate and analyses of it include Rowan Callick, *Dysfunctional diplomacy*. *The Australian*, 15 January 2010, Michael Wesley, *The Howard Paradox: Australian diplomacy in Asia 1996-2006*. Sydney, ABC Books, 2007, and for a historical take, Mads Clausen, 'Falsified by history': Menzies, Asia and post-Imperial Australia. *History Compass* 6 (4) 2008.

31 Ross Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian ascendancy: report to the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs*. Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989

“These projections also feed into Australia’s longstanding security concerns in East Asia and in the northern approaches to the Australian land mass, and the need to plan for them even at the cost of higher defence spending.”

TABLE 2: NEW ZEALAND’S TOP TEN EXPORT MARKETS (2008)*

COUNTRY	AMOUNT IN \$ MILLIONS
Australia	7,089
United States	3,097
Japan	2,570
China	1,787
United Kingdom	1,212
South Korea	983
Indonesia	727
Malaysia	686
Germany	651
Singapore	621
EAST ASIAN MARKETS’ SHARE	38.0 PERCENT

* Only national markets considered

Source: IMF, direction of trade statistics, 2009.

TABLE 3: AUSTRALIA’S TOP TEN SOURCES OF GOODS IMPORTS (2008)*

COUNTRY	AMOUNT IN \$ MILLIONS
China	32,435
United States	25,346
Japan	19,128
Singapore	14,728
Germany	10,651
United Kingdom	9,470
Malaysia	9,151
New Zealand	8,640
South Korea	7,117
Italy	6,030
EAST ASIAN SOURCES’ SHARE	57.5 PERCENT

* Only national sources considered

Source: IMF, direction of trade statistics, 2009.

TABLE 4: NEW ZEALAND’S TOP TEN SOURCES OF GOODS IMPORTS (2008)*

COUNTRY	AMOUNT IN \$ MILLIONS
Australia	6,207
China	4,530
United States	3,258
Japan	2,836
Singapore	1,545
Malaysia	1,490
Germany	1,472
Qatar	1,047
South Korea	955
Thailand	940
EAST ASIAN SOURCES’ SHARE	50.6 PERCENT

* only national markets considered

Source: IMF, direction of trade statistics, 2009.

The impressive growth in Australia’s economic engagement with East Asia (especially Northeast Asia), combined with East Asia’s historically unprecedented record of sustained high levels of economic growth, has justifiably led Australian policy-makers and exporters (not investors though) to focus much of their attention and excitement on Asia’s economic future and the riches it holds for Australia. At times though, it does lead to overly optimistic linear projections of Asia’s economic size, projections that ironically over-state Australia’s comparative smallness and slow movement.

“Australia’s closer proximity to Asia and its greater economic engagement with the continent than New Zealand work to lessen, not negate, consideration of New Zealand in Australia’s Asia.”

The 1997 White Paper on Australia’s Foreign Affairs and Trade Policy erroneously predicted that:

“Ten years ago only one East Asian economy (Japan) was larger than Australia. By 1995 this number, measured in \$US GDP terms, had risen to three (Japan, China and the Republic of Korea). By 2010, according to forecasts by the Centre for International Economics, Taiwan and Indonesia will join this list. Only a few years ago, Australia’s GDP was larger than all of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries combined. By 2010, the GDP of ASEAN’s five largest economies will be about three times that of Australia.”

According to the CIA World Factbook 2009, in \$US GDP terms, Australia was still 13 percent larger than South Korea (twice ravaged by economic crises), while Taiwan was less than 40 percent the size of Australia and the Indonesian economy was still only 56 percent the size of its southern neighbour. The five largest ASEAN economies also came in at 1.4 times larger than Australia’s, less than half what the 1997 White Paper predicted.

These inflated projections also feed into Australia’s long-standing security concerns in East Asia focused on the northern approaches to the Australian land mass and the need to plan for them even at the cost of higher defence spending. Defence spending as a share of GDP is already more than twice as high in Australia than New Zealand with this disparity bound to grow.

Australia’s closer proximity to Asia and its greater economic engagement with the continent than New Zealand work to lessen, not negate, consideration of New Zealand in Australia’s Asia. The same is true with longstanding perceptions that Australia is more willing to prepare for security threats emanating from or via Asia and that these threats are greater for Australia than they are for its neighbour to the south.

BILATERAL COMPETITION

NEW ZEALAND DOES FEATURE AS A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC COMPETITION for Australia when it comes to Asia, an element that is bound to grow with Asia's rising economic importance globally and the apparent breakdown of global trade negotiations and the glacial pace of East Asian and Asia-Pacific ones. This is one domain where Australians express concern that New Zealand is trying to elbow itself ahead of Australia in Asia and beyond.

For five years, Australia and New Zealand had been in competition to be the first Oceanic state to sign a trade deal with booming China. In the common spirit of engagement with Asia and particularly its leading and most dynamic economy, Wellington and Canberra were the first Western countries to offer China "full market economy status" under the World Trade Organization, with Wellington beating Canberra to the punch. Beijing demanded this recognition as a prerequisite for bilateral trade talks.

In response to the fact that New Zealand was also the first developed economy to begin, then successfully complete, negotiations with China for a bilateral preferential trade deal, Canberra officials classified Australia as the first "major" developed economy to begin such negotiations with China. This irregular classification relegates first-moving New Zealand to the rank of non-major or minor developed economies.³² When it comes to China and trade deals, it does look like Wellington's quicker movement has benefitted New Zealander exporters. New Zealand's Trade Minister Tim Groser could happily note in Beijing that New Zealand exports to China grew by 47 percent in 2009.³³ As part of the trade deal with China, tariffs of New Zealand wines are scheduled to disappear by 2012, down from the pre-deal level of 14 percent. It looks likely that New Zealand may also beat Australia to the punch on a trade deal with the other billion plus Asian consumer market, India. The growing importance of Asia's major export markets for New Zealand and its quicker trade diplomacy with China and India will likely shrink the huge difference in export concentration to Asia between Australia and New Zealand noted above.

In regards to the last of the three big Asian markets, both Canberra and Wellington have been seeking a similar trade deal with Japan. In 2007, in the same bilateral visit during which the Australia-Japan Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was signed, Prime Ministers Howard and Abe agreed to start free trade negotiations. In a 2005 study, it was estimated that an Australia-Japan preferential trade agreement could lead to a 52.2 percent reduction in New Zealand exports of sugar to Japan, a 38.5 percent decrease for meat and a 12.8 percent decrease for dairy products.³⁴ At the moment, Australia-Japan trade negotiations are moving very slowly, while New Zealand has yet to start talks with Japan.

On a more positive note, the Trans-Pacific Partnership may play a similar role to that of APEC two decades ago, that of being an attractive regional alternative to the stalled World Trade Organization negotiations. New Zealand is a founding member of this "small power" partnership along with Brunei, Singapore and Chile. Changing its complexion, middle power Australia, along with Viet Nam and Peru, was a later invited joiner. This year, the Obama administration has expressed interest in joining the partnership, which could well lead Japan and South Korea to deepen their interest as well. The partnership is an example of the greater ease that smaller, like-minded countries have in working together and the benefits this can provide to larger ones, if they are invited to join. This is one clear case where New Zealand has stood in front and Australia has followed up in the rear, thankful for New Zealand's support.

32 Dr. Geoff Raby. Speech to AKF Conference Dinner. Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 4 August 2006.

33 Hon. Tim Groser. Address to KEA China. Beijing, 3 February 2010.

34 Nina Winchester, *Chasing the Rising Sun: a computable general equilibrium evaluation of potential Australasia-Japan FTAs*. University of Otago Economics Discussion Papers 0523. Dunedin, University of Otago, 2005.

STANDING STILL

IT CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT AT TIMES SIMPLY TO STAND STILL when faced by forces pulling in opposite directions. Looking into the hazy future of New Zealand's place in Australia's consideration of Asia, this could be the best analogy. At least three forces already touched on above are likely to grow in importance and tempt Australia to think even less about New Zealand when it comes to Asia.

First, the vexed problems of the South Pacific, reaching from Fiji's dictatorship to Timor Leste's challenges in state and society construction to the environmental and economic viability of micro-states, will likely place even greater policy demands on both Canberra and Wellington. This will likely further consolidate the association of New Zealand with the South Pacific region in Australian eyes. Second, the deepening and diversification of the ANZUS alliance and its benefits for Australia's engagement in Asia are also likely to continue. Australia is now a regular participant in the annual United States-Thai Cobra Gold naval exercises. New Zealand is only an observer. Likewise, through the purchase of Aegis radar capabilities, Australia, along with South Korea and Japan, will become a more central partner in the United States' war-fighting plans in Asia. Finally, if multilateral and regional trade efforts, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, continue to stall, the bilateral trade diplomacy and commercial competition across the Tasman could intensify, with both countries trying to push ahead of the other into Asia, the world's largest and most dynamic source of future growth.

On the other hand, three forces could encourage Australia to locate New Zealand more squarely in Asia and in Australia's Asia engagement. First, if the interests and actions of major Asian powers in the South Pacific continue to grow, the historic divide between Asian engagement ("their patch") and dealing with the South Pacific ("our patch") could crumble. Only a couple of years ago both Canberra and Wellington expressed deep concern to both Beijing and Taipei about their diplomatic actions in the South Pacific, particularly in the Solomon Islands. Second, the United States-controlled hub-and-spokes system is gradually being supplemented by more open fora of security cooperation that include non-allies and lapsed ones. The Proliferation Security Initiative is one example of this that includes both Australia and New Zealand. Even more promising, there are signs that Washington may be easing its restrictions on engaging with the New Zealand Defence Force.³⁵

Finally, on a more pessimistic note, Australia could fail in its efforts to keep a seat at the table in Asia among the major powers: the United States, China, Japan, India, Russia and potentially a unified Korea and Indonesia. If this were to occur, "middle power" Australia south of Southeast Asia might be forced to focus more on its relations with smaller, closer powers like New Zealand in its engagement with Asia. If a concert or balance of powers does develop in Asia, it may not contain Australia or New Zealand. If so, this would leave them little choice but to work more closely together in engaging an Asia to their collective north whose own eyes are cast elsewhere.³⁶

³⁵ *US ban on NZ military exercises may end*. NZPA, 9 January 2010.

³⁶ Anthony Bubalo and Malcolm Cook, Horizontal Asia. *The American Interest* 5 (5) 2010.

PROFILE: MALCOLM COOK

Malcolm Cook, Program Director, East Asia at the Lowy Institute for International Policy, completed a PhD in International Relations from the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. He also holds a Masters degree in International Relations from the International University of Japan and an honours degree from McGill University in Canada, his country of birth. Before moving to Australia in 2000, Malcolm lived and worked in the Philippines, South Korea and Japan and spent much time in Singapore and Malaysia. Before joining the Institute in November 2003, Malcolm ran his own consulting practice on East Asian political and economic policy risk analysis.

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