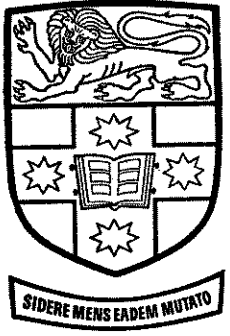


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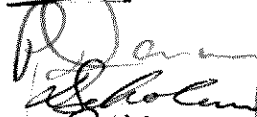


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MENZIES' INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIAN

FOREIGN POLICY 1949-1966



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for Master of Economics

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Introduction

Robert Gordon Menzies held the Prime Ministership of Australia continuously for sixteen years. The following thesis is an attempt to estimate his effect on Australia's international position over that time. In order to isolate his opinions, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates were used extensively. Throughout the work an attempt was made to isolate themes and to extract consistent attitudinal responses in order to minimise the possibility of confusing his political philosophy with current political expediency. Although, obviously, these will overlap on many issues it does not mean that because a genuine political attitude was used to capitalise on a specific instance, that the attitude is any less genuine. What does emerge is that Menzies was extremely adept at mixing his political philosophy with political expediency and reinforcing his position by the use of as many legitimising factors as could usefully be brought to bear. Consistency of approach was used as a guide to determine genuine attitude and two major themes, Democracy and the Commonwealth, used to crystallize and focus Menzies' general attitudes and approach to international events. A major limiting factor was the unavailability of documents from Cabinet meetings and the Cabinet divisions (this would have been particularly relevant over the Suez issue) over important

issues.

In attempting to isolate Menzies' attitudes little attention was paid to the time scale and this gives a rather abstract conceptual definition of attitude, although time is not altogether omitted as a variable it is not considered to be the key variable. More attention is paid to the chronological working out of policy in Chapters Four, Five and Six, where attitude is related to events. The aim of this section is to isolate themes in Australian international politics and to estimate the effect Menzies had on the direction of Australia's alliances and international situation, politically and economically. This requires an analysis that will indicate which areas of international politics were of specific interest to Menzies and in which particular events he took an active or controlling part. The basis of this analysis is the previous attitudinal approach, now related directly to events. As no detailed information on Menzies' actions within Cabinet is available, much of this can only be imputed, using a combination of historical event and Menzies' attitudinal approach to arrive at a conclusion as to the weight and direction of his influence.

2. Communism and Democracy - World Dichotomy

In the discussion of Menzies' attitudes towards communism and democracy it must be recognised that he did not hold his views in isolation, the attitudes that he expressed represented those held by a large proportion of the Australian population and, at least in the early 1950's were similar to those held by many western leaders notably Winston Churchill. Menzies was not out of step with the general feeling towards communism and it is difficult to judge how much his popular rhetoric was conditioned by a genuine belief and how much by the value of the term in its emotional context for political ends. His persistent references to communism as if it was monolithic despite his recognition in 1960 of the Sino-Soviet split indicate an apparent inconsistency in his interpretation. However he may have considered that use of the term would evoke certain emotional responses from the electorate that were predictable and that, for this purpose, distinctions between Russian and Chinese communism were unnecessary. Alternatively he may have been caught in his own rhetoric and because of it viewed the situation from an emotional standpoint that permitted little differentiation between the two main forms of communism on the emotional level. The following study treats Menzies in isolation not because he was in

isolation but in order to examine his attitudes and lines of approach.

Essentially his approach to communism was through a conspiracy theory of communist action. He saw all communist overtures, whether by Russia or China as containing a veiled threat to democracy. In the 1950 attempt to outlaw communism in Australia, Menzies left no doubt that he considered communism to be conspiratorial. At the same time he assumed that communist attitudes, expressed mainly by Russia at that time, were accepted uniformly by all communist countries. This was probably more accurate in the early 1950's but persisted beyond the fact and was almost constantly assumed by Menzies despite his recognition of Sino-Soviet split in 1960. Against the duplicity of communism he contrasted the sincerity of democracy, the conspiracy was then against truth.

In 1950 he claimed that communism was an "organization of conspiracy" and "an international conspiracy against democracies, organized as a fifth column in advance of hostilities ... a subversive movement challenging law, self government and domestic peace."¹ In his concept of international politics as

1. Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 207, (27/4/1950), pp. 1996-1997.

power politics¹ and of national security implying defence through alliance and arms it was communism that was regarded as the militant aggressor. The world was divided into major power blocs, democracy and communism. Democracy was seen as standing for peace and truth, while communism stood for war and suppression. The ideological nature of this conflict contained certain mystical elements and identification of forces for good and forces for evil stemmed in part from this simple dichotomy between two methods of government. Menzies' attitude towards communism can be approached on two levels. The religious mystical level of communism as an evil, non-moral force bent on the destruction of peace and truth² and the material level of communism as a non-monolithic hegemony of states, not necessarily sharing the same views, with which Australia may trade and carry on normal relations.

The mystical and emotive element that provided such a successful electoral method remained fairly constant

1. R. G. Menzies Speech is of Time P.34 "the only effectiveness which an international contract possesses is either that which arises from the goodwill or sense of honest obligation of the contracting parties, or that which can be physically enforced."
2. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.66.

over the whole of Menzies' term in office. The practical relations of Australia to the rest of the world changed markedly during the Menzies' period, in part conditioned by the changing face of communism on the material level. As the Sino-Soviet split developed it became more and more obvious that an approach to communism which assumed it was monolithic must be reviewed and Australia's international relations changed. While it was still possible to talk about communism on an ideological level as if it was unified in purpose and method, on the practical level it became impossible to ignore the growth and independence of action that China was exhibiting. Consequently it became necessary to decide which communist sphere of influence was of greatest importance to Australia. By 1966 it had been decided by Menzies that South East Asia was of greatest importance to Australia and that China was the communist power which presented the greatest potential threat. The important balance of power had shifted from Europe to Asia and the Pacific.

Menzies approached international relations through the assumption that at the basis of all international arrangements lay power relations. He emphasised that peace could only be maintained through a balance of power and that "there is no doubt that for years past

the communists have been restrained from major war by the democratic superiority in nuclear weapons".¹ He also stated that "I thought that everybody knows today that unless we have a deterrent in the free world then the free world is more subject to attack and defeat than perhaps it has ever been in its history".² Consequently the balance of power must be kept in order to ensure peace - the aim of democratic countries. Opposed to the democracies in aim and method was communism which had a vested interest in war and revolution. On the ideological level the dichotomy was simple. This was repeatedly made explicit by Menzies who claimed "we are for peace, we do not understand aggression, but we will resist it with all we have and are".³ In 1960 Menzies again stated, "that what I will call the Western Powers desire disarmament is quite clear. The whole Western social, political and economic system depends for its success on peace".⁴ Contrasted

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.53-4.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (9/4/1957), p.654-5. See also R. G. Menzies Speech is of Time P.9.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 208, (6/7/1950), p.4838.

4. C.P.D., Vol. 208, (6/12/1960), p.3573.

to this was communism, in 1950 equated with the Soviet Union, which Menzies saw as "the prime mover in the world's present disorders and want of peace, and the prime cause of the fears of millions of peace loving people all over the world".¹

The area of conflict was between those peace loving democracies, all of which had the "freedom of man" as their aims and communism which had the aim of subjection and which demanded power for its own sake. Conflict was therefore inevitable as the only valid international method of expression was through power. Menzies' thesis led him to support military alliances and to advocate and applaud the existence of power blocs which would contain communism. Casey had made it clear that Australia, New Zealand, United States Treaty Alliance (ANZUS) was signed and the American Peace treaty with Japan accepted by Australia because "it represented a further restriction to communist expansionary aims".² But the negative reasons (i.e. defence against possible aggression) for much of Australian commitment was based on emotive anti-

1. C.P.D., Vol. 207, (27/4/1950), p.2003. See also C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), p.577 and following.

2. J. G. Starke, The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, (MUP) p.59.

communism as well as expressions of anti-communism directly linked to Australia's defence or economic requirements. Although, it could be argued, anti-communism is always linked directly or indirectly to defence.

The metaphysical attitude that Menzies took related religion and by implication, the absolutism of religion to democracy. In this religious context democracy and the values implied (to Menzies at least) by it were unequivocally correct and must have been universally valid. In this situation it was possible to talk about the "right" decisions and aims. Democracy and the organizations, particularly the British Commonwealth, that stood for democracy gained in Menzies' eyes, a stature that built their organizational importance out of all proportion to their economic importance, or to their importance for defence.¹ The quasi-religious mission of these organizations was to promote truth, a truth that was reliant on the organizational framework of democracy. At the basis of the religious aspect of democracy, Menzies saw Christianity as a binding force. This must therefore have been tried when the

1. Again the British Commonwealth is a good example. It was seen by Menzies as being good for its own sake.

Commonwealth became, as well as multi racial, a multi religious organization in which Christian precepts were by no means the universal standard. Disagreement with organizations and nations that supported democracy in Menzies' sense, must have been regarded as evil. The dichotomy between freedom and power seeking was paralleled by a religious good-evil dichotomy that would allow the application of moral as well as practical judgments of international affairs.

Menzies claimed that "we are, with all our imperfections a Christian nation, believing in man's brotherhood, anxious to live at peace with our neighbour, willing to go to the second mile to help him if he is less fortunate than we are",¹ and "Christianity from the beginning was never the enemy of law and order".² Communism then represented the anti-Christ, the opposer whose aim was death and the destruction of human civilization. To foster this end of destruction Menzies claimed that the communists would "use cunning or bloodshed, fraud or fury with callous indifference to all moral and spiritual

1. C.P.D., Vol. 208, (6/7/1950), p.4838.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 207, (27/5/1950), p.1995.

(He disregards the Roman origins of Christianity and the Crusades.)

considerations"¹ and that this was "their immoral approach to international relations".² The original thesis that international relations rested on power relations was then overlaid with considerations of morality. The use of power could, following this approach, be judged as either good or bad, necessary or unnecessary by determination of the morality involved in using it. Similarly any action construed as anti-democratic by Menzies could be categorised as communist. This tactic was used throughout the Menzies' electoral campaigns in relation to the internal political situation. Labour was identified with communism and branded undemocratic and immoral.³

Internationally this simple formula was used consistently to condemn any international act that could effect "our great and powerful friends". To this end Menzies stated that "it is desperately

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.66.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), pp.577-9.

3. Although expediency and political manoeuvring were the major components in the decision to use the communist menace so widely, the fact of this use does not contradict Menzies' philosophy.

important that the world should see this as a moral contest, a battle for the spirit of man".¹ This confusion of religious attitude with democracy, of accepting received opinion about morality, religion and democracy as the repository of good, of forcing a simple dichotomy onto world affairs, marked Menzies' approach to the whole question of democracy and its definition. This ideological and mystical approach towards democracy as an institution allowed a great deal of leeway in interpretation of actions. Almost anything could be justified on moral anti-communist grounds and divisions of opinion between democracies (like that over Suez between U.S.A. and Britain) could be interpreted as differences over method, not over aim. On this level of abstract democracy the U.S.A. and Britain were seen as inextricably linked and to speak as if their aims could differ was, in Menzies' terms, to misunderstand the nature of their union.

Menzies' ideological and theoretic approach to both communism and democracy was very useful in justifying actions or castigating opposition. But, in practice, relations with communist countries still existed and Menzies expressed opinions concerning the material side of communist action.

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.66.

Even if the theoretic basis for all his judgments of communist action implied that he would interpret this action as potentially or actually aggressive, his attitude remained latent until he expressed it in relation to specific instances. If communism was anti-democratic it must do anti-democratic things that could give meaning to the charge. Apart from labelling all peace movements as communist inspired Menzies did see communism in a practical international role.

Internationally Menzies saw communism as the new Colonialism. In this sense he endeavoured to channel India's antipathy towards colonialism into an active anti-communism that would strengthen Australia's treaty alignments in the South East Asian area and also provide a stronger defence line for the Pacific. If America had bases in India then communism (in this case Chinese Communism) would be contained by a ring from Japan, through Formosa, the Philippines, Guam and on to India. Australia would then be a second line of defence with little probability of becoming involved with war on its own shores. In pursuance of this end, Menzies consistently drew attention to Russian 'colonialism' and attempted to transfer the anti-colonial feeling from Britain to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In a speech given to the United Nations after a

speech by Khrushchev, in which it was stated that, "Nations who oppress other nations cannot themselves be free", Menzies declared, "I venture to say that it is an act of complete hypocrisy for a Communist leader to denounce colonialism as if it were an evil characteristic of the Western Powers, when the facts are that the greatest colonial power now existing is the Soviet Union itself".¹ This attitude of Menzies and his identification of communism and particularly the Soviet Union with colonialism was a final explicit statement, to an international body, of an approach that had been forming for some time. In 1951 Menzies claimed that "the great war, the danger of which I have been discussing must - and let us speak quite frankly about it - be one conducted and promoted by imperialistic communism".² Again in 1956 he claimed that "in the modern world the Soviet Union has made itself a great Colonial power".³ As well as labelling the Soviet Union with colonialism Menzies also contrasted the scope and aim of this new colonialism with that of the old British Colonialism. He identified the motives

1. C.P.D., (20/10/1960), pp.2264-2274.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 312, (7/3/1951), pp.78-9.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), p.2118.

of Communist Colonialism as aiming to destroy self government and reduce people from 'independence to subservience'. As concrete examples of this he instanced Poland and Hungary which were reduced to the state of being satellites of Russia. This attitude towards Russian action, expressed at the United Nations, was consistent with Menzies' ideological viewpoint and his identification of communism as seeking power for its own sake and intent upon the subjugation of freedom.

Contrasted to Russian Colonialism was British Colonialism. The contrast was between despotic dictatorship and benevolent assistance in government - a difficult contrast for India to accept. Nevertheless Menzies stated that the British procedure had been "to promote dependent countries into self-government",¹ and that the very ambition of the British was to advance these dependents to self government as soon as the capacity for self government was developed. He assumed that there would be agreement by both Britain and the developing country over the time at which this point had been reached and that conflict would not arise between them. He instanced, as proof of the good intentions of Britain: Burma, India, Pakistan and

1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (5/8/1954), p.66.

Ceylon. This attitude towards communism as a colonialist aggressor was developed continually through Menzies' term in office and coloured his approach to all international communist action. Seeing communism as both a colonial power and an aggressive power meant that international action would be interpreted as furthering world revolution or acquisition of new satellite countries. Consequently, no matter what a communist power did, on the material level it was seen in this light, the interpretation then reinforced by invoking the moral attitude of democracy versus aggression.

In this light all communist attempts at conciliation were seen as mere propaganda. A subtle form of propaganda at once trying to split the democratic world internally and also to present an acceptable face to nonaligned countries which could then be drawn into the communist ambit. Menzies claimed, in the one hand that Russia was, through propaganda, trying to expunge from the memory of the free nations the nature of communist suppression in the Baltic states, in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland. Against this he demanded that the early stages of British imperialism be forgotten by those countries which had been conquered and he urged the representatives of new

countries "to put bitterness out of their minds. So far as they are concerned the past has gone. The dead past should bury its dead. It is the present and future that matter".¹ Again this double standard of evaluating action, based on Menzies' two levels of approach to democracy and communism committed him to a justification of British and allied actions and a blanket condemnation of all communist action. He also stressed the importance of both the ANZUS and SEATO links with the U.S.A. and the consequent protection that close association with a major democratic power would bring. He stated that "the formulation of SEATO with its backing by the United States of America, the defence planning done under the ANZUS Treaty in collaboration with United States and New Zealand and that done in collaboration with Great Britain and New Zealand are all part of the one pattern".² SEATO was seen as "the overall predominant conception" by which Australia would be protected from aggression and which, in turn, protects the South East Asian members. The two treaties are practical examples of the co-operation of Australia and the United States and the unity of interest that

1. C.P.D., (20/10/1960), p.2270.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 16, (19/9/1957), p.795.

the two countries shared. Menzies had previously stated that "we would be strangely blind if we did not see that ... she (the United States) has become, in the most liberal sense, vital to the existence of the free world" and that "the friendship and co-operation of the U.S. are vital to our own safety. In effect our natural friendship and intuitive understanding coincide with our legitimate self-interest".¹ Co-operation and unity between the United Kingdom, the U.S.A. and Australia was therefore a necessity in Menzies' scheme of things. If this was the basis of security for the West then it followed, in Menzies' terms, that a major aim of communist policy would be to prevent the effective action of these two powers by forcing choices onto them that would cause dissention and ultimate division. One element in this attack was through propaganda, a propaganda designed to exaggerate all the differences of opinion between the two countries and ultimately to destroy any working partnership that may have existed. "I am more convinced than ever that the propaganda efforts of the communist powers are cleverly and comprehensively directed today towards the creation of a division between the great democracies and, in particular, to carping and critical attitudes towards

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.47-8.

the United States."¹ He had stated earlier that unity was a requirement against aggression and the proposition that the aim of communist propaganda was to "divide and rule" was restated throughout Menzies' parliamentary term.

A practical expression of propaganda, as Menzies saw it, was through peace movements on the local level and the Russian advocacy of disarmament at the national levels. Both these approaches and organizations were regarded as subversive and a cover for Menzies' communist conspiracy theory of action. He claimed that "the so called peace movement with its attendant conferences and propaganda has been a recognised instrument of communist policy in the post war period",² and that the communists' emphasis on peace was "calculated to sow discord between Western governments". The reason that these specious peace conferences were seen to be effective propaganda was that the Western Powers, themselves wedded in fact to peace, would be persuaded that communist countries were not aggressive and would consequently weaken their own position by believing the communist claims. Not all democratic governments would be taken in by this claim but those that were would

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.47-8.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 1, (16/9/1953), p.257.

cause a rift in the non-communist world. This, Menzies saw as the aim of the communist bloc in supporting peace conferences. Again the conspiracy theory of communist action was manifest in Menzies' approach. A primary aim was then to foster dissension between the United States and Britain. A secondary aspect that must be taken into account was the attitude to disarmament that was held by both the communists and the democracies. The practical approach both to peace conferences and to disarmament altered radically as there was general recognition of what a nuclear war would mean. The whole concept of a nuclear war altered the nature of international relations and the balance of power.

Menzies saw the cold war as a reaction to the new concept. He approached war as either 'global' or 'confined'. Of necessity the aggressiveness of communism was practically reduced but Menzies saw it as reorganised and channelled through the cold war and "armed conflicts short of general war". Nevertheless, he saw that "the communist powers will continue to press their aims through all the varied cold war techniques of subversion and insurgency and other threats to the integrity of states which they wish to bring under their domination".¹ In other words he saw

1. C.P.D., (10/10/1964), p.2715.

the form, aggression by communism, as a constant, only changed by the forced change in expression that the new nuclear global war concept had initiated.

Australia's role, in the case of a global war, was seen as essentially one of support for the great powers, a maintenance of treaty alliances and assistance "consistent with our interest, our resources, and our sense of responsibility".¹ Menzies argued that, possibly because of the improbability of global war, that the scope and number of limited wars "may well increase and that Australia's involvement is likely to be much greater in limited wars than would be the case in global war" in which Australia would play a relatively small part. Despite this and despite his insistence that a limited war might break out with no warning, as those in Suez and Korea did, nothing was done to increase the size of Australia's defence forces of 1957 for a further seven years. If the need was so pressing and given the aggressive intentions of active communism, Menzies' attitudes and actions over defence seem inconsistent. His strong and consistent demand for military preparedness could be contrasted with the lack of defence preparations (in terms of equipment and expenditure on capital) that he attempted to justify by

1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), p.571-2.

stating "we have, quite frankly, disturbing deficiencies on the equipment side. Such, however, have been the immense social advantages of national service training that we have been reluctant to modify that great scheme. I say 'modify' because we have never thought of abandoning it".¹ He claimed that alliances and treaties would be maintained in the case of global war but also stated that global war was an unlikely eventuality. Limited war was instanced as being most probable, most unexpected and requiring direct involvement. To this point all Australian defences were anchored in alliances, in ANZUS, ANZAM and SEATO, while practical defence preparations in the form of training and equipment were relatively minimal. Australia's preparations were limited to token participation in alliances, a participation that was not reinforced by defence preparations that were implied as necessities by Menzies' statements over defence and power politics. Australia could not hope for independence of military action and consequently relied on alliances the requirements of which could be met without high expenditure on defence preparations. Action virtually contradicted attitude. The implicit justification for

1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), p.573.

this was the claim that "security in the area must be a collective concept".¹ Collective defence was therefore a necessity and the treaties provide this collective defence even though Australia's contribution was effective in name only.²

A corollary of the new concept of global war was the attitudinal change to disarmament. An aim which previously meant little, increased in importance with the realization that a thermo-nuclear war could well mean the end of the whole civilization. In this context both peace movements, spontaneous or contrived and disarmament councils on the international level were bound to be thought of as of increased significance by at least a large proportion of voters and parliamentarians. Consequently both peace movements and attempts to initiate disarmament talks increased in international significance.

Menzies saw all talk of international disarmament as ineffective, although the ineffectiveness was not

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1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), p.571-2. (In the same speech Menzies reduces national service under the claim of 'modification'.)
 2. As early as 1951 Menzies gave no more than three years as a liberal estimate of the time available to prepare for defence.

C.P.D., Vol. 312, (7/3/1951), p.78.

inherent in the notion of disarmament, but inevitable in a world situation with aggressive communism as one of the controllers of nuclear force. He saw all attempts as being blocked by the Soviet Union which refused to allow for effective international control. In turn the proposals put forward by the Soviet were regarded as completely ineffective. That the Soviet delegate to the United Nations at the time of Kennedy's "United States Declaration on Disarmament" attacked this plan "cast doubts on the sincerity of the Soviet claim that they genuinely seek disarmament".¹ Menzies' case against communist sincerity rested on the unwillingness of the Soviet to agree on the form of control set out by the United States.² (The Soviet was agreed in principle but advocated that control be enforced through a 'troika' in which each delegate would have a veto - this, to Menzies, would be equally unacceptable as he saw the Soviet making use of the

1. C.P.D., (11/10/1961), pp.1895-1896.

2. Menzies was advocating controls as necessary as early as 1953 to prevent despair "and who knows what a despairing democracy might do".

C.P.D., Vol. 1, (15/10/1953), p.1428. Whatever was done by the democracies it would seem, would be more in sorrow than in anger.

veto and assumed that the United States would not). The record of Soviet action through the veto power in the Security Council and the general ideological approach to the Soviet Union as the aggressor reinforced this view. Menzies considered that the motivation behind Russian participation in the disarmament talks was propaganda, aimed at giving the impression that the intentions of the Soviet Union were innocent and that the Soviet Union, in its turn desired peace above all else. The purpose of this subterfuge was seen to be that of weakening the determination of the Western Powers, dividing the democracies and one by one gaining control through aggression masked, as far as possible, by a pretence of following peaceful devices. Soviet veto was seen as the aim of the Soviet proposals for control and "that is so utterly wicked as a conception, that it is hard to believe that it could command support from any more than a few persons within the boundaries of the Soviet Union itself".¹ The immorality of the Soviet Union was therefore at the back of all Soviet proposals, an approach that was in accord with Menzies' general attitude towards communism.

In 1960 Menzies noted the tensions and possibility of a split within the communist bloc. He claimed that

1. C.P.D., Vol. 1, (15/10/1953), p.1427.

there were "clear signs of strains between the Soviet Union and Communist China" and saw the differences as operating essentially in relation to international attitudes towards revolution. "The Soviet Union has adopted the policy of peaceful co-existence, meaning by this, to be perfectly plain about it, that it does not desire to resort to war as the direct instrument for forwarding the communist cause, but that it prefers the weapons of propaganda, tied to economic aid, and internal subversion." Communist China, on the other hand has rejected this idea in order "to pursue the classical communist belief that in the struggle against capitalism, violence remains the vital instrument".¹ This complicated the previously oversimplified attitude towards communism held by Menzies, but he seems to resimplify the world situation on this new basis in such a way that the anti-communist claims that he had already made were still valid. Despite his recognition that communism was no longer monolithic he ignored the implications of this (at least on the emotional level). He reinterpreted the international situation on the basis of collaboration and competition between Chinese communism and Russian communism, claiming that the Chinese sphere of influence and interest was in Asia

1. C.P.D., (6/12/1960), p.3567.

and South East Asia, the Russian in Europe and the Middle East. He nowhere made explicit the obvious inference that if Russian and Chinese communism were distinct, then quite probably the different nations grouped under each division would be distinct also. He now treated Asia as if the communism that existed there was monolithic, and Europe and the Middle East as if the communism that existed there, was also monolithic, although of a different emphasis from that in Asia. Menzies committed the "absurdity of regarding Asia as a political monolith".¹ The basis for this approach was in his attitude to communism as a whole. Communist intentions were seen as uniform, even the new Russian approach aimed ultimately at world domination, and consequently it was meaningful in Menzies' terms to equate the communistic forms in Asia with a single aim. What Menzies implicitly did was to judge that the content was identical, it was only the form and expression that gave rise to specious ideas of difference.

Recognition of China and diplomatic representation there of Australia had long been a demand of the Labour Party. A demand that Menzies consistently rejected,

1. A. Watt, Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, (C.U.P., 1967), pp.190-191.

claiming "I do not discuss recognition of my enemy while I am in the field with him".¹ He admitted that recognition of Communist China was accomplished swiftly by the Labour Government of Britain and also by the Government of India, but stated that "I shall not devote two minutes of my time to this matter while the present miserable state of affairs exists".² The only justification given for non-recognition of China was that recognition of China involved also a recognition that Formosa (and some other islands) were a part of mainland China and subject to the laws of China. China was regarded as expansionist, another imperialistic communist country that desired power and territories for their own sakes. He claimed that "Communist China, being a Communist power, being devoted to an expansion of its jurisdiction and being, as all Communist powers are, imperialist in its quality, must have Formosa".³ The argument for non-recognition shifted from one of non-recognition of an enemy to non-recognition of an aggressor which would enslave ten million people. The act of recognition was also seen as the cause of the complete destruction of SEATO.

1. C.F.D., Vol. 1, (9/9/1953), p.10.

2. C.F.D., vol. 1, (24/9/1953), p.652.

3. C.F.D., (8/9/1960), pp.983-987.

In a considered over-estimation of the effect on China that recognition by Australia would have, Menzies prophesied that immediately Australia announced recognition, the implication would be "you may have Formosa", a diplomatic and strategic triumph for communism that would lead to complete control of Asia by communism. Invoking the "domino theory" of defence, Menzies suggested that "when people venture into the field of foreign affairs I suggest to them that they should take a vow that before going to bed each night they will have a good, long, thoughtful look at the map and try to realise where we live and where our friends live".¹ That Chiang Kai Shek also claimed that mainland China and Formosa were one was of no interest to Menzies. The expansionist aims of Chiang's corrupt government were accepted, presumably as a legitimate anti-communist national government striving to overthrow the unwanted and illegal despotism of a small powerful elite group that controlled China.

The action of non-recognition of China may also be interpreted as an attempt to cement friendly relations between Australia and the United States. From a defence point of view the United States was of paramount importance in the Pacific area, given

1. C.P.D., (8/9/1960), pp.983-987.

Australia's political alignment under the Liberal-Country Party government. Support of the American non-recognition of China would then have been an indication of friendship that could have carried some force in persuading that nation to give favourable attention to Australian proposals for treaties and defence organizations in the Pacific area. Australia limited disapproval of China to diplomatic non-recognition. Economically Australia sold more and more wheat and produce to communist China until it became the largest export market for wheat that could be relied on by Australia. America however, placed embargoes on all relationships, both economic and diplomatic between itself and Communist China, at the same time fortifying Formosa and informally guaranteeing to defend the surrounding offshore islands, the latter action being seen by Menzies as providing a further link in Australia's defence chain.

Menzies' attitudes towards communism can therefore be approached through his ideology and the actions of the government during his term in office. His personal approach operated on two levels. Ideologically he saw communism as the enemy of constitutional law, substituting force and command for the rule of law and replacing freedom of the individual with a kind of state

serfdom, controlled and directed by authoritarian leadership. This attitude, coupled with the religious and moral values expressed by democracy and denied by communism, was the framework within which judgment of communist action and interpretation of communist motives arose. On this level the inevitability of aggression by communist powers provided the link between communist reality and communist action.¹ Menzies' attitude towards the inevitability of aggression by communism leads to the practical consideration of the communist world. For much of his term no distinction was made within the communist bloc, it was regarded as monolithic in doctrine and interpretation. The new colonialism was shown to be the concrete effect and active expression of aggression. When a distinction was made between China and the Soviet Union and recognition of the split was accepted by Menzies, he still retained his basic ideological approach. But, he modified his interpretation of action to fit the new circumstances. China was shown to adhere

1. This approach is similar in kind to Marx's notion of conflict; philosophical conflict is, by itself, static - implying no action. When this is coupled to actual conflict of interests then this motive power makes the conflict actual.

to the dogma of world revolution while the Soviet Union changed the emphasis from active aggression to a subterfuge, propaganda and conflict on a narrower scale. This change in approach by the Soviet Union was seen to be the result of the new concept of war. Thermo-nuclear war potential made total destruction possible, so for a communist country with this potential, world conflict was reduced to a more restricted form of aggression. This did not mean that the underlying conditions had changed, just that overt expression of them had been forcibly limited. This definition of our enemies, the enemies of democracy, in part conditioned the definitions of our friends, our "great and powerful friends" whose power could protect our interests.

Menzies' Commonwealth

The British Commonwealth held, for Menzies, the emotional and practical relationships that would guarantee Australia's identity, foster Australia's own interests and incidentally lift Menzies into international significance. It was in Menzies' eyes an organization based on mutual understanding and community of interest that stretched beyond formal organizational relationships. His usual attitude towards the Commonwealth was in terms of the practical power wielded by a united Commonwealth, the notion of the rule of law and freedom of enterprise inherent in all members of the Commonwealth and through the personal identification of ideals and ideas with the dominant partner, Britain. The Commonwealth embodied Menzies' ideas of effective democracy and the emotional ties to the organization as both British and as standing for democracy were mutually reinforcing. To Menzies the Queen was the personification of the British way of life, the physical expression of an ideal and meriting all the respect and admiration that the ideal and the system commanded. Recognition by the Sovereign was therefore of great value as it implied the acceptance of Menzies as a part of the British establishment. It identified Menzies as a friend. The titles of Knight of the Thistle and Lord Warden of the

Cinq Ports were the tangible reward for Menzies' devotion to the British cause.

"The Queen, the Senate and the House of Representatives have met today not only according to the printed word of our Constitution but also in a rich, magnificent and human way."¹ To Menzies the Queen and the hierarchical system of organization in Britain would provide a pattern for the structure of the Commonwealth relationship. Sovereignty was a binding force that held the Commonwealth together. Allegiance to a sovereign meant recognition of common binding principles and would lead to unity of action that would ultimately be to the good of all. Menzies saw the Commonwealth as a family, bound by familial links of duty and obedience, each member expecting security and help:

"We recognise our homage and the duty of our allegiance but we desire to express much more than that - our love, our pride and our thankfulness to God that, whatever troubles may beset the world, and however man may be set against man

1. C.P.D., vol. 3, (15/2/1954), p.7.

in unhappy parts of the world, we of the great British family are priveleged to live in unity under a young and lovely Queen ... we are today, on this unforgettable occasion all the Queen's men, proud to be the members of her Parliament."¹

The Queen was undoubtably the centre of Menzies' Commonwealth. Acceptance of the Queen was therefore essential to a true Commonwealth in his terms, as the very act of acceptance meant recognition of the principle of Sovereignty and duty through an accepted system. Although Menzies looked on the organization of the Commonwealth as paralleling that of the family and presumably holding within it all the values and virtues that the family holds,² his practical approach was more along feudal lines. The old manorial system, owing allegiance and arms to the Lord and through the Lord to the Sovereign was very similar in nature to

1. C.P.D., Vol. 3, (15/2/1954), p.7. (The occasion was Queen Elizabeth's visit, 1954.)

2. For Menzies' approach to the family see The Forgotten People, (Angus & Robertson, 1943), p.3. "The home is the foundation of sanity and sobriety - it is the indispensable condition of continuity."

Menzies' approach to the Commonwealth countries. The unifying force in the Feudal system was that of the Sovereign, as it was in the Commonwealth, providing direction and meaning to action and integrating the otherwise divergent interests of the various Lords. This meant that concerted action could be taken through the Sovereign for defence of the total area and the centralizing of this function would provide security from external attack. Security as a provision of a feudal hierarchy is a closer analogy to Menzies' idea of the Commonwealth than his own parallel of the family relationship.

Together with the acceptance of the Sovereign as the unifying force within the Commonwealth Menzies saw that in the old Commonwealth (comprising Britain's dominions, all white and all bound in allegiance to the Crown, for example, Canada and New Zealand), "we all had great constitutional ideas in common, that we all believed in Parliamentary democracy, in the sovereignty of Parliament, and in the rule of law".¹ Over the period of his Prime Ministership, Menzies saw important changes within the Commonwealth and the changes meant a considerable threat to his concept of the Commonwealth and to his idea of the viability and

1. C.P.D., vol. 43, (18/8/1964), pp.286-287.

value of it. He saw the Commonwealth moving further and further away from his ideal as its membership expanded and the likelihood of concerted action consequently diminished. His suggestion for an inner Commonwealth stemmed from this fear of a breakdown in the organization's effectiveness because of the proliferation of viewpoints that would be brought to bear on every question. Concerted action, stemming from a common approach could no longer be guaranteed. In an effort to reinstate the old Commonwealth relationships, Menzies suggested that an inner Commonwealth be formed, comprised of those countries which recognised the Queen as the Sovereign. This was a return to the old Balfour formula with its notion of "the Queen in Parliament" and the consequent recognition of the sovereignty of the Queen in all realms of the Commonwealth (that had been proposed by Lord Balfour at Westminster in 1928). This would also incidentally have reduced the Commonwealth membership to the old dominions and a white, Christian and basically British membership. All the members of new underdeveloped countries, like Nigeria would be excluded as would India, leaving a small core of members that Menzies

thought would act in unison because of their common heritage. This approach (which could be interpreted in racist terms) was unsuccessful and would gain little sympathy in countries like India, which was still smarting from what was seen as the ignominy of British colonialism.

This attempt by Menzies to reduce the Commonwealth to an effective, British institution stemmed from his identification and allegiance to a specific concept of the British way of life, and an approach to tradition that saw it as "compounded of a sense of continuity, a conviction of responsibility a distrust of the vague and theoretical, and the laughter which set a rainbow across a cloud".¹ The tradition referred to was compounded of a pragmatic approach and a distrust of the vague and theoretical. As an example of the successful application of this British predisposition, Menzies instanced the rule of law² and its basis in the common law of England. This he saw as England's great contribution to Western society. A system of law based on precedents that was, by definition, grounded

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, (Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1958), p.41.

2. For Menzies' statement on the origins of law see, C.P.D., vol. 219, (19/8/1952), pp.381-382.

in practicality and an integral part of the society's working. The second great contribution to civilization was that of Parliamentary democracy and Menzies saw Walpole as the first of our modern constitutional Prime Ministers, the leader of a form of government that had "spread over so much of the world, and has stimulated the activities of so many men and women devoted to freedom and to the supreme rights of the individual".¹ The British system was then the originator of a form of government that stood essentially for freedom. A form of government that would liberate individuals in a society the boundaries of which were restrained and controlled by a system of laws that arose through inductive rather than deductive operation of the legal code. A system of laws based on interpretation and precedent. Menzies' assumption was that such a system would be relatively elastic and would allow for changes in the approach of society. Thus the system itself could exist anywhere, providing a blueprint for organizational structure.

This organization, based on the British concepts of democracy and justice was what Menzies desperately wanted to maintain as a viable international organization. The first blow to this hope came with the acceptance

1. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.73.

of India into the Commonwealth. This meant the end of the Crown as the unifying force. Menzies' fear was that the Commonwealth might become a purely functional organization, "lacking the old high instincts and instantaneous cohesion which sprang from the fact that we were, all over the British world, as indeed we remain in the old Dominions, the King's subjects and the King's men".¹ Nevertheless he urged that the attempt be made to preserve the many good things that were left after such a shattering of the basic Dominion relations with the Crown. The indivisibility of the Crown, Australia's explicit statement of the reason for following the United Kingdom into war in 1939² had been expressly denied as a criterion for membership of the Commonwealth by the inclusion of India. The Balfour formula of 1928 which gave, in Menzies' terms, a legal significance to the Crown that went beyond the mere techniques of law, ceased to

1. Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, (1950), p.3. (The British Commonwealth of Nations in International Affairs.)
2. Expressed in the debate over the Munich agreement 1938. Australia was "bound to the Commonwealth" by allegiance to the Crown. Canada and South Africa did not feel this binding principle.

operate and the special character of the British Commonwealth diminished. Menzies, at that point redefined the nature of the Commonwealth as a Crown Commonwealth within a Total Commonwealth.¹

Despite this early recognition that the nature of the Commonwealth had changed, Menzies continued to place great faith in the relationships (including the economic ones of "imperial preference") within it and continued to approach the organization as if it was still British. He consistently referred to it as the British Commonwealth and seemed to emphasise out of all proportion the British content and association within it. He spoke in glowing terms of the "splendid co-operation"² of the Prime Ministers at the various conferences. He emphasised that the conferences did not pass judgment on fellow members, did not have agenda or keep minutes and made no substantive decisions, but he claimed that "we learn a great deal. We find sometimes elements of unity of policy which we had not entirely expected".³ He was saying, in effect, that a close understanding may be gained by talks between international leaders. This said very little for the

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.25.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.46.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.46.

Commonwealth, its uniqueness or its value. The two major problems within the organization had been the conflict between India and Pakistan and the general disapproval of South Africa's policy of apartheid. Neither of these was solved by the Commonwealth and the aim of unity of action by the Commonwealth became a meaningless thing.

In 1951 Menzies saw the Commonwealth as "far from outmoded, it is still a special and precious association of nations and as such, has a unique common task and common responsibility".¹ He clung to this notion of the uniqueness and therefore the value of the organization, only admitting that the practical relationships within it made the functioning impossible as late as 1964.² By 1966, at Menzies' retirement, the membership of the Commonwealth numbered twenty-two, made up of: Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Cyprus, Gambia, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zambia (South Africa had withdrawn). The interests and affiliations of this group of nations were so large that concerted action would have been virtually

1. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), pp.73-74.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 34, (29/3/1964), pp.1163-1164.

impossible. This was a far cry from the London meetings in which Menzies found himself in instant accord with the attitudes and approach of all who were there. Menzies' final recognition that the Commonwealth was over as a viable organization came in 1966, with the decision that Australia would be represented at the Commonwealth Conference to be held in Lagos only by an observer who would take no active part. This was an implicit recognition that the days of the Commonwealth were over and a protest against internal dissention within the organization. It had been presaged by the proliferation of countries gaining membership and the proposed entry by Britain (to Menzies the mainstay of the organization) into the European Economic Community in 1962. From the entry of India as a member with no direct allegiance to the Crown to the withdrawal from participation in a Conference, both the internal and external pressures had been slowly increasing in importance.

Internally the Commonwealth was becoming unwieldy, very like Watts' "Miniature United Nations". The same criticisms that Menzies levelled at the United Nations could have been levelled at the Commonwealth. He, however, never applied these criticisms to the

organization to which he was so emotionally tied. He persisted in looking for the possible effectiveness rather than criticising the inherent weakness. He revised his attitude towards power when justifying membership. In the early days of the Commonwealth he had seen it as a potential power organization that could act independently to protect freedom and was therefore more effective than the United Nations, hampered as it was by the veto power in the Security Council. As this aspect of the Commonwealth organization became more unrealistic, Menzies shifted the grounds of justification from effectiveness in power terms (the basis of his criticism of the United Nations) to effectiveness in promoting mutual understanding between member countries. If the function was to promote understanding then the implication was that concerted action was highly unlikely because of the tenuous links between members and the lack of acceptance of recognised and specific goals. What Menzies had, in effect, succeeded in doing was to justify the Commonwealth links on virtually the same grounds as were used to indict the United Nations for ineffectiveness and incapacity for action. Menzies' attempt to organize an "inner Commonwealth" composed of members who recognised the Crown as being the centre of allegiance

can be seen as an attempt to resist the pressures that the multi-racial organization was facing both internally and externally. India had become a member of the Commonwealth in 1948, in a period of Labour Government when Australia-India relations were relatively harmonious, but the precedent was set, from this time the nature of the Commonwealth would almost inevitably change. Menzies' notion of the family and his identification of the Commonwealth relationships with family relationships was forced into a new perspective.

As the family meant, for Menzies, a sense of continuity and through it immortality of a sort, the British tradition and Australian association with it had special significance. The tradition itself was the proof of cohesiveness of the society and an expression of the continuity of the values of the society, values that Menzies himself felt were intrinsically good.¹ With the breakdown of the links that held the family together as a unit under one authority, went the loss of continuity of the values and convictions of the unit. As the home was seen as the foundation of sanity and sobriety within the society the family approach can be

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.33 and following "The English Tradition" for an enumeration of these values.

generalised and be seen to guarantee the health of the whole society.¹

This attitude, that the family was the basis of sanity and provided continuity when attached to the Commonwealth also implied that the members of the family had a common heritage (this is integral to the notion of continuity) and was reinforced by Menzies' claim that "I am firmly persuaded that the vast bulk, the overwhelming bulk, of Australians are utterly and soundly British".² Continuity, and in a sense immortality was therefore maintained through the close association of Australia within the family. This was threatened by the acceptance of India into the Commonwealth on the basis of non-recognition of the Crown as the head of India. The implication, in Menzies' terms, was that continuity was threatened. His reaction was to attempt to institute an inner Commonwealth of members who did recognise the Crown, the old dominions, who would guarantee the continuity that the increasing membership and reduced requirements for membership had threatened. At the same time he emphasised the potential of the new Commonwealth for

1. R. G. Menzies, The Forgotten People, p.3.

2. R. G. Menzies, The Forgotten People, p.47.

promoting mutual understanding and acting as an example of multi-racial integration to the world at large.

By the end of Menzies' term in office, at the time of his refusal to participate actively in the Conference held in Lagos in January 1966, the Commonwealth can be seen as holding divergent views on almost everything. Watts points out¹ that, in 1960 the United Nations General Assembly adopted by a vote of eighty-nine to none with nine abstentions a "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". Australia, Britain, and South Africa were among those who abstained, all the Afro-Asian Commonwealth members supported the resolution. In this the Old Commonwealth opposed the New, a major division within the organization. Within the Old Commonwealth, South Africa was the divisive factor, setting almost all Commonwealth countries against its policy of apartheid. Within the New Commonwealth, India and Pakistan were divided over Kashmir and were willing to accept, at the Tashkent conference, the intercession of the Soviet Union rather than that of the United Kingdom in effecting a cease-fire. Nehru had also made it clear that he did not

1. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965. (Cambridge University Press, 1967), p.269 and following.

regard the United Kingdom or the Commonwealth links as in any way binding when decisions over internal or international action had to be taken.

The Commonwealth was therefore split into two groups on the legal grounds of relationship to the Crown (these groups correspond to the Old Commonwealth which recognises the Crown as titular head and the New Commonwealth made up mainly of Afro-Asian members that did not recognise the Crown's absolute superiority). Within these groups there were also splits and alignments made that would internally cut across the Old-New dichotomy. Racially and culturally the Commonwealth was heterogeneous and there was no common religion. At best the ties were tenuous, at worst there was open dissension as with India and Pakistan.

Menzies opposed the declining importance and increasing tendency towards disintegration within the Commonwealth. He described himself as being sentimentally attached to the Commonwealth and insisted that in order to maintain the structure each member must grant internal autonomy to every other member. Interference in another's domestic affairs he claimed "violates the most classical precepts of foreign policy; it is quite contrary to the charter of the United Nations and it is, in my opinion, a matter which

could seriously damage intra-Commonwealth relations".¹ He also admitted that there were "deep divisions of opinion and of emphasis"² as to the relative significance of China for South East Asia. Still he was not at all despondent as to the viability of the Commonwealth organization although he stressed that Prime Ministers' conferences did not pass judgment, have set agenda or take minutes. Menzies was forced, therefore, to change his evaluation of the Commonwealth as a potentially powerful organization to that of an international discussion group, powerless to actually do anything but held together through a "special though undefined relationship to each other, that we exchange our experience and views with great vigour but with personal goodwill, and that we learn something from each other".³ He saw Australia as being in a different category from most of the new Commonwealth members because of Australia's emotional and inherited patterns of thought as well as Australia's treaty associations and special regional problems of security and survival. Exogenous affiliation and treaty membership outside the Commonwealth could also be seen to act as another

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1. C.P.D., Vol. 43, (18/8/1964), pp.286-287.
 2. C.P.D., Vol. 43, (18/8/1964), pp.283-284.
 3. C.P.D., Vol. 43, (18/8/1964), p.284.

disruptive force that could alienate members of the Commonwealth. Australia and Pakistan were members of SEATO, India was not. Australia and New Zealand were members of ANZUS, Britain was not and the United States was the dominant partner. In this situation it seemed inevitable that cross pressures would arise that would severely limit the effectiveness of the Commonwealth organization. The situation in which the Commonwealth found itself at the end of Menzies' term as Prime Minister was far from his hope that a united powerful Commonwealth could act as a third world power, "speaking with a common voice on some great issue" and whose influence would be "greater than the mere mathematical sum of the various influences of the individual members".¹

The external pressures imposed on the unity of the Commonwealth came from membership of independent organizations outside the Commonwealth which may have had conflicting interests with those interests the member countries held in common. Treaties like ANZUS and SEATO fell into this category and on Britain's side, NATO. Both the treaties that related to Australia included the United States. It was this

1. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), pp.73-74.

powerful western country, not a member of the Commonwealth whose tradition stemmed from isolationism in foreign affairs that was to become Australia's hope for security. Given the United States' independence of action and power in international affairs, it was almost inevitable that conflicts would arise outside the Commonwealth with some members aligned with the United States, some against. The unity of the Commonwealth could not be guaranteed on any issue that also involved the United States. (The Vietnam war in which Australia was allied to the United States in 1965 is a good example of this. Australia aligned practically with the United States and almost all the other Commonwealth powers deplored the whole situation and urged that an end be made to hostilities.)

Menzies saw Britain and the United States as "the two most powerful defenders of freedom"¹ and as such it was a requirement that both act in concert to defend freedom, the rule of law and parliamentary democracy from the communists who, with their overseas friends "will work incessantly to divide and destroy it".² Menzies saw it as integral to Australia's defence that America and Britain act in unison: "there must be

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), pp.67-68.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), pp.67-68.

world strategy and world preparedness and world co-operation if we are to be saved".¹ If communism was the main enemy of peace and an immoral force in the world then democracy upheld by Britain and the United States, our two great and powerful friends, was the world's potential saviour. This was a constant theme in Menzies' approach to Australian relations with Britain and the United States, that to see one as an alternative to the other was to misunderstand the function of allegiance.

It was for this reason, the necessity of unity of action between Britain and the United States to provide international security, that Menzies saw that "the propaganda efforts of the communist powers are cleverly and comprehensively directed today towards the creation of a division between the great democracies and, in particular, to carping and critical attitudes towards the United States".² In Menzies' eyes Australian defence depended on the close collaboration of both. To Menzies defence was of paramount importance as Australia was so vulnerable and so desirable to the communist forces of the world. It was therefore necessary to conclude treaties outside the Commonwealth

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), pp.67-68.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.47-48.

that would guarantee, as the Commonwealth did not guarantee, the effective defence of the Australian area. This area was originally seen as reliant on the Middle East and the necessity of maintaining trade and free passage through the Middle Eastern area to Britain, Australia's spiritual and at that time, economic mentor. The Middle East and the Suez canal area were inevitably in the path of Australian trade and provided, via the open trade routes, a tenuous link with Britain. The Middle Eastern trade route was, for Menzies, a kind of umbilical cord that attached the unprotected infant to the protection and security of the mother.

As the definition of our most likely enemy changed from Russia to China the relative importance of our greatest potential friend also changed from Britain to America. Possibly Menzies' distinction of war into global and confined war may have been instrumental in emphasising the changed importance of Russia and China. He had already defined China's sphere of influence as being South-East Asian¹ and this, coupled to the notion that the threat of confined wars by non-nuclear powers had risen would serve to point out China as the greatest potential enemy. Undoubtedly Russia was the more powerful of the two, having a thermo-nuclear potential

1. See Chapter 1, page 27.

that China did not possess but the implication of Menzies' concept of war was that global war was less likely to occur than confined war. In the case of confined war Menzies thought the likelihood of its occurrence was much greater and that it would be unannounced and unexpected. Because of the restrictions on overt action caused by the thermo-nuclear threat, Russia was forced to carry out its programme of infiltration by more peaceful, less obvious means.

Calculations as to Russian action then moved from a conflict orientation to a propaganda based one. This, in Menzies' eyes, would effectively reduce the Russian threat and increase the threat of actual combat from China. On this definition of enemies the acceptance of America as the greatest potential friend followed taking into account the American involvement in the Pacific area. This attitude towards America would be consistent with Menzies' statement that "I believe that one of the greatest things in foreign policy is that we should seek friends, make our friendships firmer and firmer, identify our friends and endeavour at all times to operate in harmony with them."¹

In order to operate in harmony with our friends they themselves must be in harmony in the first place.

1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (9/4/1957), p.652.

Much of Menzies' attention was devoted to speeches that either stressed the necessity of uniform action towards accepted goals or alternatively strove to point out that while on the surface there was conflict that basically all was in harmony. That conflict was only over means, never over ends. It was in this context that Menzies stated "we work incessantly for the closest collaboration between the British Commonwealth and the United States who, between them, are exemplars of peaceful pursuits and of high ideals, contain the bulk of the military and productive power of the free world, and offer no aggressive threat to others".¹

These were indeed our great and powerful friends who would shield Australia from the assaults of communism and provide a stable, peaceful, framework within which Australia could pursue her enlightened self-interests both politically and economically.

It was in this context that Menzies related the religious and the power aspects of international action. He stated that "in Australia, in Great Britain, in the United States of America ---- joint agreement and arms for defence do not imply a loss of faith in our religious foundations, they are a realistic acceptance

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.44.

of the fact that armed aggression cannot be stopped by words or hopes alone".¹

To Menzies therefore realism consists in the recognition that the world is made up of power blocs and that power relations are at the base of all international relations.²

The greatest threat to the stability and unity of the Commonwealth was caused by the alignment and attitudes to South Africa's policy of apartheid. Menzies continued to stress that apartheid was an internal and therefore domestic policy of South Africa and as such, should not be discussed at Prime Ministers' conferences. He was virtually alone in this attitude, all other Commonwealth countries saw the issue as being wider than a mere domestic one and emphasised that it should be discussed at Prime Ministers' conferences. Menzies saw that in upholding the principle of domestic jurisdiction the Commonwealth may have been strengthened by reducing the areas of disagreement. He also recognised that if South Africa could be legitimately taken to task over domestic policy then Australia could, potentially, also have similar criticisms and judgments passed over the administration of New Guinea. Menzies

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.66.

2. C.P.D., (29/3/1962), p.1164 "Thank God, we have a power bloc in the world".

stated that if South Africa was internationally castigated then Australia may also have been "subject to international condemnation and international jurisdiction".¹ This legalistic attitude would therefore perform, in Menzies' eyes, the functions of holding the Commonwealth together on one hand and guaranteeing that judgment would not be passed on Australia, on the other. The insistence that Prime Ministers' Conferences did not have agenda, did not have votes taken, did not have majorities and existed only to discuss matters of common interest was therefore a calculated attempt to hold the Commonwealth together and to protect Australia from criticism. Menzies stated that the "communique which emerged at the end of a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference - and it is always a harmless enough document as you know - cannot contain anything to the inclusion of which even one Prime Minister objects".² He had therefore used, as a justification for acceptance and as an indication of value, the same criterion by which he rejected the usefulness of the United Nations, that is, the veto power of one nation. The inconsistency of Menzies' approach was most obvious when comparing the Commonwealth to alternative international organizations.

1. C.P.D., (31/3/1960), p.787.

2. C.P.D., (31/3/1960), p.787.

In the next year, 1961, South Africa's application to remain a member of the Commonwealth was refused. Menzies commented at length on this exclusion when he stated that "I feel relieved of my previous inhibitions about public statements and will therefore, before I conclude, state my own condemnation of apartheid".¹ However, his attitude was that "the Commonwealth has been injured and not strengthened by the departure of South Africa",² and he restated his belief that the Commonwealth had much to do for us and for mankind. He then tried to define the differences between the Commonwealth and the United Nations. He saw the United Nations General Assembly as a deliberative body whose opinions carried great weight, presumably through the strength and number of informal and extra-legal sanctions that were attached to United Nations opinions. In this sense the United Nations was a powerful body if the opinions which it expressed were enforceable on a practical level. This was also a reversal of the earlier contention that the United Nations was hamstrung because the executive Security Council relied on unanimity for action. The implication of the statement that the opinions of the United Nations General Assembly

1. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.649.

2. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.649.

carry great weight was that they were also relatively effective in changing the actions of the countries against which they were directed. From this point of view Menzies had reversed his earlier condemnation of the United Nations for ineffectiveness.

He then defined the Commonwealth as a loose organization in which members stood in a special relationship to one another, one that derives from a special history and was not conditioned by the rules and restrictions that were imposed by the United Nations, on its members. An organization which was, in his own terms, ineffective but one which was justified emotionally. The emphasis that Menzies gave to the domestic jurisdiction argument was reduced although he still claimed that "the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another country is at the very root of Commonwealth relations".¹ The reason put forward that the exclusion of South Africa from the Commonwealth severely weakened the organization was that "it is not the Verwoerd Government that is out. It is the Union of South Africa; the nation evolved by the great liberal statesmanship of 1909".² This was

1. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.654.

2. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.654.

virtually stating that South Africa, or indeed any member, should remain a member regardless of the political regime in power. (The argument may be somewhat different if one of the newer members became Communist.) Menzies concluded his speech by restating his faith in the Commonwealth "in its value to its member nations, and in its ability to make constant and notable contributions to the peace and prosperity of the world and of its peoples".¹ How an organization that could not act in accord, that did not pass judgment and that was held together by extremely loose bonds could do this practically Menzies does not say. The Commonwealth to him was an act of faith, his justification of it a reaffirmation of that faith.

1. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.658.

Menzies' International Perspective

The approach taken towards Menzies' perspective attempts to define the basis from which he judged different countries and the relative importance he ascribed to them and their relations to Australia. His attitudes changed and were not necessarily consistent over time due in part, at least, to events and realignments within the external community and this element of change means that over time the relative importance of various alliances and treaties will change. A single statement of Menzies' perspective is therefore difficult although consistent attitudes that may form the basis of many judgments can be extracted from the study of Menzies' relations to specific institutions like the Commonwealth. A distinction is therefore made between the abstract basis for judgment which may not change over time and the practical application of this judgment in the formation of treaties and alliances where Australia's international alignment is made explicit.

Menzies' theoretic approach to international relations was in terms of power and he saw collective security as reliant on power politics and based in power relationships. It is this approach that allowed him to claim that it was a 'false dichotomy' which treated the two aspects of the same relationships as if

they were separate and unique entities possible of treatment in isolation. From this point of view reliance must be placed in those nations or organizations which can provide the greatest security by definition therefore, have the greatest international strength. Similarly, the greatest potential threat would come from those nations with the largest international strength.

The reality of this threat was, to Menzies, the cause of defence preparations and to neglect these preparations would have been unrealistic. The assumption that Menzies consistently makes is that offence will be the communists' method and preparation for defence a consequent necessity for democracy. The religious approach to democracy that Menzies took was not one of pacificism and did not prevent defence preparations. Menzies also saw the reality of the situation as demanding these preparations. The distinction is between preparation for defence and preparation for offence. He stated that "we are dealing --- not with the mild exercises of the debating society but with a programme deliberately considered".¹ He also claimed that "the free nations will either stand together and

1. C.P.D., Vol. 207, (27/4/1950), p.1999.

defeat aggression or they will stand separately and be defeated by it"¹ and stated that "when we are dealing with communists we are dealing with aggressors".²

Defence preparations were therefore a requirement and one which implied the formation of power blocs and the interpretation of international affairs in power terms. Not only the religion of the democracies but the whole social framework was seen as the target of potential communist aggression.

A secondary aspect of Menzies' approach to international relationships was that international agreements rested on the goodwill of the parties involved and the relative power of the parties involved to enforce any agreement that may have broken down (with a reduction in goodwill). Menzies' attitude would roughly fall into Morgenthau's second school of political thought. This approach sees that pluralist societies can only survive through a series of checks and balances as the world is inherently one of opposing interests and consequent inevitable conflict. This, in Morgenthau's terms, is 'political realism' and is based in the recognition that man is imperfect and in

1. C.P.D., Vol. 214, (16/10/1951), p.673 also Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.67, communism the "potential aggressor".

2. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.65.

order to survive one must rationally control situations recognising the imperfections and using the ambitions of one faction to thwart the opposed ambitions of another.¹ It is, in essence, a Hobbesian view of society carried into the international sphere, a realist approach to international politics which characterises Menzies' attitudes, in which "interest defined in terms of power" does provide a theoretic basis and measure by which international action may be judged.² This sets politics apart from other disciplines and gives it an independent existence within which decisions of a purely political nature can be made. Menzies recognised this when he stated that "the business of politics is of supreme importance. Politics is both a fine art and an inexact science".³ The uniqueness of political decisions and political actions sets the sphere of politics apart from other disciplines although obviously the decisions and actions have effects that are not confined to a political sphere but influence economic, religious and other areas.

1. H. J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations. (Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., 1960), p.4. "Six Principles of Political Realism".

2. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.69. Menzies' Seven Principles of International Organization.

3. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.183.

Political decisions are not made in isolation but must recognise the implications that the decision has within the society. Nevertheless this is true of all subjects and does not imply that because political action may influence and be influenced by the society that it cannot be separated and decisions made on grounds that may be isolated as political. It is the weighing of effects of actions and their consequences within all social spheres internally and the international repercussions externally that gives a political decision its uniqueness.

Menzies' approach to political decision making could therefore be justified from a theoretic point of view. From this basic approach to politics he saw that the "art" was mainly that of conveying political ideas, securing acceptance of them and creating a firm and understanding public opinion. As the political method was seen as specialised it followed that the representative must also, to a great extent be a leader. This Menzies saw as an essential part of the politician's character and this was the origin of his belief in the Burkean notion of a statesman, as one who offers his diligence and ability but not his morality to his electors. The representative of the people was therefore elected because of his personal

ability, his decisions were his own and were based on his own conception of what was the common good and what was the best and most expeditious way to achieve it. Once elected the implicit assumption was that the representative's concept of reality was acceptable to or the same as that of the electors. Menzies seemed also to take the Burkean approach over morality stressing that his morality was his own, his diligence his electors.

From Menzies' point of view, and this was reinforced by sixteen years in office, his approach to and conception of reality were those which were most acceptable in the Australian context. He continually reiterated his belief that freedom and truth were necessary and aligned himself with 'statesmen' rather than 'politicians' who "appeal to our selfishness and seek to dazzle our eyes, either with the promise of something for nothing, or with the somewhat more exciting promise of something at the expense of the other fellow".¹ He saw the expression of truth not as an easy thing but as potentially dangerous, although a necessary requirement of a true representative of the

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time. (Cassell & Coy., 1958), p.217.

people. He neglected to recognise that the 'truth' in the case of a representative chosen because his views correspond with those of the electorate (by his own definition of a representative) would be unlikely to endanger his position by expressing an attitude which already had implicit public approval.

Menzies' international realism is based essentially on his conception of the nature of international politics. This conditioned his judgment of the relative importance to Australia of the various allinaces, organizations and power structures that were either in accord or in opposition to his concept of Australia's self interest. His international attitude is conditioned by his concept of international reality and his actions may be related to this same political consciousness. His perspective then defines his conception of the international situation in terms of the importance, the position and the alignment of the participants.

It is this perspective that defined for Australia the most advantageous alliances, the most useful friendships and the areas in which Australia should endeavour to exert political influence. As collective security and power politics are interdependent then "military alliances are a necessity to prevent domination

by an armed aggressor". By explicitly taking this stand Menzies implicitly rejected the position, taken by the neutralist bloc, that there were any universally valid abstract principles which could be achieved and were prevented, by lack of education, understanding and the presence of obsolescent social institutions,¹ from unifying the world in a peaceful co-existence where only sporadic use of force would be required. Menzies' position indicated that military action was imminent and inevitable unless balanced by opposing force, that the balancing mechanism was only operative if the opposing force was sufficiently great to make the use of force of questionable value in furthering the self interest of the aggressor. Menzies' principle was that of "enlightened self interest".²

Menzies' criticism or approval of international organizations designed to promote collective security therefore revolved around his estimate of the potential

1. See H. J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, (Knopf, 1960), p.3, for a postulation of the first school of international politics.
2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.44. (The position of the neutralist bloc itself changed in the 1960's shifting more towards a recognition of military force as a method of negotiation.)

for the effective use of force by the organization. His criticism of the League of Nations was precisely that it was impotent and an invitation to an armed aggressor by being unarmed itself. On this view there must inevitably be continual international tension within which a 'status quo' attitude would imply the necessity of combating inevitable aggression at all stages. International organization aimed at maintaining the status quo must therefore, also be armed and prepared to fight to prevent changes in the international structure. From this standpoint the League of Nations had to fail.

The main criticism of the United Nations was that, because of the veto power within the Security Council, no effective use of force could be possible.¹ The United Nations therefore would not contribute to collective security and if it was to have a purpose and value, this must be sought elsewhere. Menzies saw the United Nations not as an organization for furthering peace settlements, but as one that would bring nations

1. C.P.D., Vol. 1, (15/10/1953), p.1427 and *ibid.* (11/10/1961), pp.1895-1896. The Russian veto of Security Council decisions is a consistent theme in Menzies' criticism of the U.N. as an effective international organization.

to the conference table and be the authority through which aid would be distributed to underdeveloped countries.¹ From this point of view the United Nations was therefore as meaningless, in effective power terms, as the League despite his more optimistic attitude towards it. Accepting this proposition as self-evident, Menzies was then logically able to argue that as peace settlements and collective security could not be obtained by use of the United Nations, then effective organizations outside this international body must be found if aggression was to be effectively combatted. Following his own theory of international relations, Menzies considered that Australia's position was continually threatened and the greater the strength of any alliances that could be made, the more successful had Australian foreign policy been. A measure of success of foreign policy was therefore the extent and solidity of alliances made between Australia and friendly powers.

Superimposed onto the network of alliances and, to Menzies, surpassing these in importance was the British Commonwealth, which held a special place in Menzies'

1. C.P.D., (6/12/1960), pp.3569-3571.

scheme of things.¹ He recognised the Commonwealth bond as the "first consideration" for Australian defence. In Australian alliances consequently the greater internal solidarity of the Commonwealth, the more effective could Australia be in world affairs. He tacitly assumed that his view of the function and nature of the Commonwealth would be shared by the whole, if internal solidarity was possible and that the combined foreign policy would not deviate significantly from Australia's own enlightened self interest.

Possibly the Commonwealth held this importance because of its potential, if unified, to exert force and have a meaning in international affairs. Menzies seemed to continually strive towards a situation in which he would have the ability to make important international decisions. To act like a statesman in an arena where statesmen were lauded rather than as the political leader of a small power whose decisions were swamped and whose force was negligible in international power politics. In the context of a unified and

1. The importance of the British Commonwealth link declined over Menzies' period in office, but for much of his term, he saw it as of paramount importance to Australia.

forceful Commonwealth Menzies could see himself as a 'tall tree' among the tall trees of European statesmen, in particular men like Churchill whom he admired so greatly and Kennedy who, over Cuba, "delivered the most powerful blow against Soviet expansionism that has been struck in post war history".¹ Menzies felt his international impotence strongly and it is probable that he saw, in a strong Commonwealth, the chance of exerting a part of the influence abroad that he undoubtedly exerted at home.²

To Menzies the Commonwealth, in power terms, was potentially equal to the United States and to Russia and could act as both an initiator of policies and a mediator between the two great powers. Towards the end of his term in office he included China as a third power and the emphasis changed gradually over the total span from warnings and threats about possible Russian aggression to strong warnings and insistence on the possibility of imminent Chinese attack. Dr. Bell makes the point that this fear of Chinese invasion had a strong tradition in Australian history, commencing in the 1850's and 1880's where "terms such as 'the

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1. Daily Telegraph, Tuesday, October 10th, 1967, p.32, Col. 6, an extract from "Afternoon Light".
 2. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), pp.73-74.

Chinese invasion' were used to refer both to a mere influx of population and to an imagined military operation".¹ Consequently there was a greater immediacy in the potential threat to Australia by China. Dr. Bell saw government policy since 1949 as the result of forces within which attitudes towards China were "the central or catalytic element"² and instances SEATO and the relationships between the non-aligned powers as an indication of this. However in the early stages of Menzies' term in office Russia seemed to provide a more immediate threat than did China,³ (partly because of Russia's nuclear power) but this tended to change over time. On the emotional level "communism" was often used as a term to include both.

Menzies' consideration that the Commonwealth should act as a third power required that the Commonwealth be

1. Coral Bell, 'Australia and China' in A. M. Halpern (ed.), Policies Towards China, (McGraw-Hill, 1965), p.167.
2. *ibid.* p.165.
3. C.P.D., Vol. 207, (27/4/1950), p.2003-9 points showing that Russia aimed at world domination through international revolution and that the greatest fear is "a coalition against the Soviet Union".

armed. Following his own thesis an unarmed Commonwealth would be at the mercy of any aggressor and an invitation to aggression. A well armed Commonwealth would also provide that force, outside the framework of the United Nations that would provide collective security and therefore peace to all Commonwealth members. This the United Nations could never hope to do because of the nature of its organization, the lack of specificity and agreement over goals and methods of achieving them and the internal conflict and disunity in both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

To Menzies a strong Commonwealth could have altered the character of international relations and the significance that this would have given to the leaders of the Commonwealth would have had a strong persuasive effect to one straining to impose the 'correct' balance onto a world that had not yet recognised it.

A secondary, though no less important motive for Menzies' ambitions to see a strong and unified Commonwealth was the emotional ties that psychologically held Menzies to the "British way of life". A way of life, idealised out of existence, with which he felt accord. He continually identified Australians with British and ascribed British character traits to them.

His view of the ideal world situation, from this standpoint, would be one in which the British held the mediatory power and exercised it for the good of all. The strength would then lie in a British Commonwealth imbued with British idealism ordering the world from the strength of British morality.

Menzies' personal identification with what he saw as British was particularly strong and his desire to be seen as "civilised" and "complex" stemmed from this. The British, personified by Winston Churchill were continually eulogised by Menzies, in what seemed to be a desperate attempt to establish a concrete identity for himself, a passion to be cast in an heroic role and identified with those who "burn more readily with inward passions than with the facile fire of the lips".¹ The Commonwealth as a unified, British institution yielding effective power to the political heads of the member countries could have provided the background for such a role.² A unified Commonwealth would, to Menzies, provide at once the power necessary for a statesman of international significance and the identity into which

1. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.35. See also p.34, para. 2; p.36, para. 2; p.37.

2. The proposals for an "inner Commonwealth" may have been prompted by this ambition.

such a role could be moulded.

Within the framework of Commonwealth orientation and following Menzies' view of international organization Australia concluded treaties in an effort to present a defence front that would prevent armed aggression by nations to which an unprotected Australia would be an open invitation, an approach that implicitly accepts the "domino" theory which is of questionable validity. In spite of his thesis that all international actions relied on power relationships and that neutralism was virtual suicide, Australia's armed forces and defence spending diminished continually after the Korean War until 1964, with little comment and virtually no political capital being made by the Labour Party out of this strange dichotomy between Menzies' avowed position and his actions. Presumably he thought that a symbolic preparedness backed by military treaties was sufficient to avert the threat of attack and to add to the strength of collective security outside the United Nations. A strong Britain, as head of the Commonwealth was also regarded as a necessity. For this reason Menzies applauded the Atlantic Pact as being "imaginative and realistic" as a force which supplied security to Western alignments outside the United Nations. In

Menzies' eyes a parallel treaty organization was SEATO, guaranteeing, as he saw it the security of the Pacific area and with the ANZUS pact, completing the system of defence alliances in the Pacific.

Both the ANZUS and SEATO treaties relied heavily on the United States rather than Britain, despite the ideological ties between 'British' people. Menzies recognised that a shift towards the United States was inevitable given the power situation and the seeming impossibility of practically welding the Commonwealth into an effective international power. Nevertheless this must have seriously upset his ambitions for the Commonwealth. Despite this he recognises the differences between 'British' and 'Americans'¹ and, by implication, the ideological unity of the Commonwealth, its separateness and its importance although he also stressed the similarities between the Commonwealth and the U.S.A.. He claimed that to move as far as possible towards America was to subscribe to "a pessimistic and distorted and therefore unreal view",² of the situation.

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1. Although he recognised that the U.S.A. and the U.K. had "great ideals in common" and were the "homes of democracy. See C.P.D., (13/8/1959), pp.185-191. Asserts Britain's place as a world leader.
 2. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.13.

An alternative was necessary as, "we the British Peoples of the World need the Americans. The Americans need us".¹ But the one he suggested was a compromise where "we preserve our British character and we must be assiduous in establishing not only understanding but co-operation with the United States of America".²

This attitude also changed over time as the links between Australia and the United States became stronger. A major reason for the shift towards America was the growth in nuclear potential of the communist bloc and Menzies, in 1955 saw that "the communists have been restrained from major war by the democratic superiority in nuclear weapons".³ In this attitude Menzies quoted Churchill as also recognising that the real restraint placed on communist expansion was possession of greater nuclear power by the 'democratic' nations, notably the United States. In this context Menzies stated that if nuclear arms were disregarded "the Soviet Union and Communist China would between them, have armed forces both on land and in the air terrifyingly superior to

1. Menzies, Speech is of Time, p.13.

2. ibid p.14.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.53-4.

the whole of the assembled armed forces of the democracies".¹ This reliance on America as "that other great home of freedom"² was reminiscent of Menzies' attitude when Prime Minister during World War II where he consistently looked to America for the support of "all the liberty loving peoples of the world".³ The relationship he looked for in World War II was that between "the greatest of the old democracies, Great Britain, on the one side and --- the greatest of the new democracies, the United States of America on the other",⁴ and this desire for unity of action between Britain and America to guarantee Australian security, and later world peace, was a consistent strand in Menzies' international perspective. Australian defence policies became progressively more reliant on American rather than British strength in the Pacific area, a change that was formalized by the ANZUS alliance (in which Britain did not participate) and SEATO. Australia's defence relations with America steadily grew through alliances and through action in Korea and later in Vietnam (where Australia isolated itself in the

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.53-4.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 164, (20/6/1940), p.16.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 168, (20/8/1941), p.9.

4. C.P.D., Vol. 167, (28/5/1941), p.13.

Commonwealth by supporting the American intervention).

A second aspect of Australian relations with America was that of the inflow of American capital investment to Australia. In this respect Menzies stated that private investment from America was "welcomed" as it would "make it less necessary for us to feel disturbed about our balance of payments and our international reserves".¹ He looked to America as a major source of investment in Australia and tended to approach the economic link between America, Britain and Australia in the same way as he approached the defence link. A basic assumption was that unity of economic action (as with unity of military action) should be fostered and, "looked forward --- to the advancement of the time when sterling and the dollar would become convertible".² An inflow of American dollars was seen as vital to the expansion of Australian industry and Menzies stated that dollars were "urgently needed --- to break bottle-necks and enable the expansion of Australia to proceed".³

America was therefore regarded as being vital to Australia both for defence in military terms and

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1. C.P.D., Vol. 7, (21/9/1955), p.802. See also C.P.D., Vol. 3, (9/4/1954), p.260.
 2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.50-51.
 3. C.P.D., Vol. 13, (30/10/1956), p.1887.

productivity in economic terms. A major difference between America and British economic relationships with Australia was that while Britain took a large proportion of Australian exports, America was in competition with Australia for many export markets and took a relatively small proportion of Australian goods. This provided a potential economic problem in Australia's overseas trade (one which was later partly solved through opening up markets for primary produce with Japan and China and through the discovery of increased mineral resources).

Menzies, however, continually advocated a strengthening of links with America and stressed the necessity for unity of action between Britain and America, a unity of action that would be to the benefit of the "free world". He also stressed the community of interest between the British Commonwealth and the United States as "the exemplars of peaceful pursuits and of high international ideals".¹ In this context he also saw the combination of America and Britain as guaranteeing world peace and consequently propaganda attempts would be aimed at disturbing the unity of the two powers. He saw propaganda therefore as "calculated

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.44.

to sow discord between Western governments - particularly between the United States of America and the rest of the Western World",¹ and stated that "we would be strangely blind if we did not see that on the world scene, the rise of the United States to supremacy in industrial power, her vast population, her intellectual and moral influence are all such that she has become, in the most literal sense, vital to the existence of the free world. And since in a hundred ways the character of life in the U.S. so strongly resembles that in the British communities our natural friendship and intuitive understanding coincide with our legitimate self-interest".² The American tie was therefore regarded as an essential and legitimate one for the interest of Australia and the preservation of international order.

The drift from strong involvement with Britain and concern over Europe and Britain's Middle East policy towards a closer involvement with the United States and concern with Australia's near north and Pacific interests, has been the most marked international trend during Menzies' term as Prime Minister.

1. C.P.D., Vol. 1, (16/9/1953), p.257.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), p.48.

Paralleling the drift from alliance with Britain to alliance with United States of America has been the changed emphasis over the most likely aggressor. Russia was identified as the communist centre of the world and was seen as the base from which all communist threats to the west were issued. Communism could therefore in the early stages of the Chinese Communist Party's control, be spoken of as a monolithic doctrine, the only effective international voice being that from Russia and regardless of how the decisions were made there was unity in their outward expressions. This idea of a monolithic communism persisted beyond its existence but was manipulated expertly by Menzies throughout his political career so that no single definition of communism could be extracted from his pronouncements. His general attitude was that the world, or at least all effective power in the world, could be divided into two opposing ideological camps, democracy and communism. He saw the world divided into "those who believe in the spirit and significance of man (the West) and those who believe in power for its own sake (the East)".¹ This attitude was consistent with his view that it was essential to be armed and

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, (Cassell, 1958), p.14.

prepared to fight in order to maintain a nation's identity. His view of the East as an aggressor, latent or actual, justified his claims that an unarmed country or organization was not only open to but invited aggression.

In Dr. Bell's terms, "the estimate of the most probable enemy will tend to determine the recognition of the most valuable friend". This contention was partly borne out in Australian relations to Britain and the United States. As the emphasis shifted from Russia to China as the strongest potential enemy America replaced Britain as the most valuable friend (although this may have been inevitable given Australia's geographic position and changing export markets).

The action of sending troops to Malaya to support British forces there, embodies two conflicting principles according to Dr. Bell. In one sense it could be seen as an effort to bolster up the Commonwealth by reaffirming agreement with British policy. However, it also implied that a new attitude had been taken towards the sphere of action of Australian troops in any future major war. A tacit recognition that China was the most probable enemy. With this recognition went the corollary that, in future, the orientation of

Australian foreign policy should be towards America and away from Britain. This involved the admission that the Commonwealth as a third force for world peace and security was unlikely. An attitude strengthened by the internal problems of the Commonwealth, notably over diverging perspectives among its members, in particular those typified by Australian and Indian relations, of India's neutralism and Australia's alignment. T. B. Millar takes the view that sending troops to Malaya meant that Australia intended to pin its defence system on control through Malaya. The recognition that China or a lesser South East Asian power was the potential aggressor would force the conclusion that the United States would be the greatest potential friend.

Indonesia had been disregarded until the arguments over possession of West Irian broke out and Australia supported the Dutch, further alienating Indonesia but holding a positive status quo policy where domination by a European power seemed preferable to that of an Asian one in the strategic area of New Guinea. This again was a tacit admission that the likely threat would come from South East Asia or China and that alliance with America was consequently preferable.

Menzies' attitude was completely opposed to that taken by Nehru who condemned the arms race and all

power rivalry which, he claimed, would "lead to final catastrophe".¹ He saw the very existence of pacts as contributing to the final catastrophe, a kind of catharsis in which the solution to a potential situation was the cause of the actual situation against which the treaties had been formulated. Consequently he resented SEATO on theoretic grounds. On practical grounds, India was put into an awkward situation because under the SEATO treaty Pakistan had been supplied with advanced United States weapons and constituted a threat to India. Nehru's attitude to SEATO and his general theoretic outlook were anathema to Menzies who saw him as obstructionist and the main disintegrating force in the British Commonwealth, up until the internal split over South Africa. From Menzies' point of view the SEATO alliance and Australia's ties to the United States, with concurrent protection in South East Asia, was weakened by India's neutrality. Also Australian hopes for a strong Commonwealth were limited by Nehru's positive neutralism. India was therefore a stumbling block to much of Australian interests (as seen by Menzies) and the tenor of Australian-Indian relations

1. E. Lefever, "Nehru, Nasser and Nkrumah" in L. W. Martin (ed.), Neutralism and Nonalignment, (Praeger, 1962), p.101.

reflected this. Menzies refused to see neutralism as a legitimate political attitude and insisted that there could only be two forces in the world, those of communism and those of democracy. All large scale conflict could have been finally reduced to these terms in his estimation.

Australia's security had, by the end of Menzies' term in office, shifted requirements. Australia had moved into the Pacific area within which South East Asia and China were the most immediately influential. The local balance of power in the Pacific area itself had become of much greater importance to Australia. Chinese strength had manifested itself since 1962, when China was successful in moving into the Indian frontier provinces and explicitly demonstrated that communism was not monolithic, that Russia was not in control and that the oversimplified bipolarity interpretation of the world situation was meaningless. It was the course of events to this time that consistently forced Menzies to recognise the necessity of close alliance with America and the importance to Australia of the South East Asia area.

The focus of Australian foreign policy, under Menzies, had shifted from a British to an American

orientation and Australia's vital interests had been redefined both economically and strategically. Economically Japan and China had grown in importance as export markets and strategically America and the sphere of influence in the Pacific had replaced Britain and the sphere of interest in the Middle East and Malaya. The direction of this shift had been determined largely by events, partly by predisposition and beliefs.

Australia in Foreign Affairs to the Suez Crisis

In the years preceding the Suez Crisis Menzies' personal influence over foreign policy seemed to have been less obvious than in the years following Suez. During those first years, from election in 1949 until the Suez Crisis in 1956, the two major defence alliances, ANZUS and SEATO were drafted and both had been accepted. Since the crisis no new defence alliances had been made although Menzies constantly emphasised the necessity for such alliances to preserve world peace. The aim of this chapter is to trace the events of the period from Menzies' election to the Prime Ministership until the Suez Crisis, in an effort to estimate the effect that he had on the foreign policy of Australia and the direction that that policy took under his leadership.

Menzies had come to power on a strong anti-communist platform which was directed more at communism internally than externally and which included a pledge to hold a referendum on the issue of banning the Communist Party in Australia. He stated explicitly in his policy speech that "in relation to foreign policy our view is enlightened self-interest" and stressed his world view of communism versus democracy and the inherent expansionist aims of communism contrasted to the peaceful and non-expansionist aims of the democratic

nations. In this context he stressed the similarity of the United States of America and the United Kingdom because of their "common basic faiths and traditions which a free and democratic world so much needs".¹ This anti-communism came at a time when Russia had exploded her first atomic bomb, demonstrating without a doubt Russian technology and potential. It was an event reported as "startling the peoples of the democratic world and --- rousing world fears".² In the October immediately preceding the election the Peoples Republic of China was formed, under Mao Tse Tung. Chiang-kai-shek and the Kuomintang Government were pushed off mainland China and onto the island of Taiwan where the alternative Chinese government was maintained under American sponsorship. This lent some force to Menzies' anti-communist arguments but little had been done on an international level to define communist aggression. Eggleston claims that "up to 1950, it cannot be said that the Western world had done anything to counter the rapidly advancing communist front, except the steps taken to prevent the success of

1. Joint Opposition Policy Speech 1949, p.4.

2. Sydney Morning Herald, September 25, 1949, Col. 1.

the blockade of Berlin in 1948".¹ This attitude neglects to take into account the formation of NATO and the strength given to the Western alliance in the Atlantic area. However the triumph of the communist government in China and the positive demonstration of advanced Russian technology tended to focus Western attention on the rise in capacity of communism for international action. At the same time the international stability of sterling and Australia's economic position were not particularly steady. In 1949 sterling was depreciated by thirty per cent and Australian currency, which was tied to it, followed the drop. Australia's devaluation aimed, as does all devaluation, to make exports relatively less expensive and imports, in money terms, relatively more expensive. The result of any devaluation should be an improvement in trade balances and a general reduction in deficits on the current account. The internal effects on business, through loss of confidence in currency stability, cannot be anticipated and it is quite possible that the devaluation may have the opposite effect from that desired. Nevertheless, Australia was economically tied to Britain through being a member of the sterling

1. F. W. Eggleston, Reflections on Australian Foreign Policy (F. W. Cheshire), pp.89-90.

area, through preferential trade agreements and because Britain took the greatest proportion of Australian exports. In this situation devaluation of British currency would result in a drop in export demand by Britain and an increase in demand for imports from Britain by Australia. A potential balance of payments problem that would have a strong effect on Australia's internal economic position. Menzies accepted the economic tie to Britain, never criticising British economic action and sought rather to manipulate the situation that existed, than attempt to change it.

This depreciation led to some loss of confidence within Australia and coupled to the strikes and production problems of Australia, severely strained the economy. Menzies' proposals to ban the Communist Party and to "put value back into the pound"¹ could then be seen as a meaningful policy within the country. Banning the Communist Party could be shown as a policy designed to eliminate illegal, communist inspired strike action that threatened productivity. At the same time the slogan "put value back into the pound", not only referred to currency depreciation but also to the elimination of communist strike activity that was

1. Joint Opposition Policy Speech 1949, p.8.

jeopardising the economy through a reduction in productivity. Both claims were mutually reinforcing and, coupled with the highly intensive campaign¹ mounted in 1949, Menzies was successful.

With this background of industrial unrest and strikes within Australia, with a currency problem that threatened to turn into an inflationary spiral, and with a growing acceptance of the communist threat Australia accepted the recommendations of the U.N. conference in New York and supplied a force for Korea. The force was made up of sixteen member countries under an American Commander in Chief.

Involvement in the Korean war by the U.N. was seen by Menzies as an act that expressed the determination of the Security Council members to resist international aggression and a demonstration "of their firm intention to make the U.N. an effective instrument against such aggression in the future".²

Australia's involvement rested on three main grounds. Firstly the support that the Charter of the

1. D. Whittington, The Rulers (Cheshire, 1965), p.51.

"The mammoth campaign the party conducted in 1949 was estimated to have cost £1,000,000."

2. C.P.D., Vol. 211, (8/12/1950), p.4079.

U.N. commanded from Australia. Secondly the support of the resolution of the Security Council that expressed the decision that North Korea had been guilty of unprovoked aggression and the implication that to ignore this decision would be to reduce the United Nations to futility. Thirdly, that the expression of determination on the part of the U.N. powers not to permit aggression would "do more to prevent a Third World War than almost anything else that could be imagined".¹ At a later date another objective was added to this list, an objective that Menzies claimed was "immensely important from an international standpoint"² and that was "the maintenance of a common front between the members of the U.N. and in particular --- the participating British Commonwealth countries and the United States of America".³

Menzies was at pains to stress the necessity of unity of action among the United Nations members who had lent support to the military action. To Menzies then the Korean war was an expression of the determination of the Western Powers to prevent aggression and reduce

1. C.P.D., Vol. 208, (6/7/1950), p.4838. Menzies here stated the grounds on which Australia officially became involved in the Korean War.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.75.

3. ibid.

the "effectiveness of Communist expansionary aims". It was also an expression of the unity of purpose between the Commonwealth and the U.S.A., a unity that had been expressed in World War II and should be maintained in the face of increased communist pressure. This attitude was expressed later when summarising the events leading to the Korean War and in explanation of the war. Menzies stated that the period of peace that had been expected at the end of World War II was made problematical by the desires of the communist world. He stated that "we have immense free democracies with no aggressive designs --- but there will be no peace in the world until either all the nations of the world have shown that they desire it or the nations which desire it are, in practical terms, able to show that aggression by other nations is doomed to defeat".¹ In these terms close co-operation between the democracies was essential as a prerequisite in any attempt to gain a lasting world peace.²

In November 1950 China entered the Korean War, aligned with North Korea and this participation was seen by Menzies as providing "political implications

1. C.P.D., Vol. 3, (9/4/1954), p.258.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 208, (6/7/1950), p.4838 "preparation is all".

which are of great magnitude and delicacy"¹ and Menzies stressed that the United Nations had "no desire to inflict injury upon Chinese lives or property"² and stated that "Chinese forces engage in the campaign at the will of the Chinese Communist Government and certainly not by the design of the democratic powers".³ A strong effort was thus made to restrict the sphere of operations to Korea and to avoid a general war with China. From this point of view the Korean war was more of a warning to potential aggressor nations that the United Nations did have the support of the Western powers and that clear cases of aggression would be resisted. The action on the part of the Western powers could also be seen as a demonstration of unity against a "communist" offensive and general agreement that communism was a potential threat to non-communist nations. Menzies' attitude towards communism would therefore have had greater similarity with other Western leaders at this time than at a later period when there was general recognition that communism could not be treated as monolithic.

Participation in the war in Korea was therefore,

1. C.P.D., Vol. 211, (8/12/1950), p.4079.
2. ibid.
3. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.75.

to Menzies, justified as an anti-communist measure and as an expression of Western solidarity behind U.N. decisions over action against aggression. It was also strategic in that the links of Australia to the United States were more firmly fixed and a working defence relationship was begun. A relationship that carried on the co-operative action between the United States of America and Australia that had existed during the Second World War. This strengthened Australia's defence position in the Pacific, an area in the American sphere of influence.

Eggleston, in line with Liberal interpretation, saw the Korean War as a Russian plot, although "Russia has not dared to show herself as a participant: she acted under cover of, and from, China and North Korea, and sacrificed their men and not her own".¹ Menzies also fitted the Korean War into the context of communist aggression. He stated that "the happenings of Korea, Malaya, Indo-China and Persia added to the early events in Czechoslovakia and Middle Europe, made up a pattern of planned aggression".²

1. F. W. Eggleston, Reflections on Australian Foreign Policy (Cheshire), p.91.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 213, (6/7/1951), p.1112.

At the time of Australia's entry into the Korean War, Menzies negotiated a dollar loan with the United States. One hundred million dollars was borrowed from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to finance investment. The resultant accelerator effect of an increase in investment leading to a greater increase in income was expected. This would have assisted in providing the stability that Menzies' slogan "put value back into the pound" required, in order to be accepted. A vigorous migration policy was also being pursued to provide the required work force, increase internal demand through increased disposable income and stimulate the general economic growth of the economy. (In 1950, one hundred and eighty thousand immigrants entered Australia.) By the end of the year Australia was showing a net gain from the balance of payments that made the economy a dollar earner. In spite of this relatively secure financial situation, Australia still maintained the close economic link with Britain and remained in the sterling area (a possible alternative being to move towards dollar convertibility). The only positive action taken at this time was to press for a larger share of the sterling area's dollar pool. This was a

consistent strand in Australian policy. To change Australia's relative position within a given framework rather than to question the parameters of the system itself. Implicitly Australia's ability to manoeuvre politically was limited by the confines of the structure to which the country was committed. This approach would also be consistent with Menzies' attitude towards the Commonwealth and his hope for a united Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth was to be effective then it was necessary to have close economic as well as political links. Membership of the sterling area was, to Menzies, tangible evidence of the economic link between Australia and Britain and was reinforced by preferential trading agreements. However the demand for an increased share of dollars reflected the changing world trade pattern that demonstrated the supremacy of the United States.

The economic repercussions of the Korean War resulted in inflation within Australia. The seemingly solid economic foundation laid during 1950 was negated by a thirty-five percent increase in the national income, in money terms, from January 1950 to the end of 1951. The result of this rise was an increase in demand for goods, yet production lagged behind the



rapid rise in income. Consequently prices rose and heightened the inflationary trend.

The normal inflationary trend of two and a half percent per annum in Australia, increased suddenly in 1951. The government imposed heavy restrictions on spending, both within the country and on imports. Direct taxation was increased, higher indirect taxes levied, and import restrictions were imposed. The result of these measures was a budget surplus which was used to finance autonomous investment with a long gestation period.¹ This was effective and within twelve months the ten percent levy on all incomes was removed and sales taxes were cut.

During the year 1951, in which there was an internal economic problem and an external war, Menzies called for a double dissolution of the Houses of

1. The point in doing this was to restrict the operation of the accelerator effect, capital stocks were only added to in the long run, the short term problem of a further increase in income was avoided. This was a strict Kenesyan economic method and indicated that Menzies was willing to follow economic rationality.

Parliament. The Communist Party Dissolution Act had been ruled unconstitutional by the High Court. The case against the act had been fought and overwhelmingly won by Evatt who had accepted the brief on behalf of the unions. Four days after this court decision, on March 13, the Bank Bill (an attempt to change the Chifley banking acts) was reintroduced to the Senate and relegated by the Senate to a select committee. Menzies claimed that this was obstructionism pure and simple, by a hostile Labour majority in the Senate. He called for a double dissolution which was granted by McKell who agreed that the reference of the Bill to a select committee constituted a failure to pass. The Labour Party was castigated for its attempts to "obstruct, delay or reject every measure introduced by the Menzies' government".¹ This criticism related also to Evatt's success in having the Communist Party Dissolution Act rejected by the High Court. The way was open for Menzies to brand Evatt and the Labour Party as communists and to fight the election, once again, on the issue of communism, an issue that retained its force in Australian politics. The election method was also consistent with the previous elections,

1. S.M.H., April 5, 1951, p.5, Cols. 1, 2, 3.

placing heavy stress on communism as the opposing force of democracy. The Korean War lent weight to the anti-communist propaganda of the Liberal Party. The fact of military action against an avowed communist power, China, made the threats of communist aggression more immediate. In this context Menzies stated "it is my belief that the state of the world is such that we cannot and must not give ourselves more than three years in which to get ready to defend ourselves. Indeed three years is a liberal estimate".¹ The threat of communism was once more the rallying cry of the Liberals in which the internal political situation was reinterpreted in terms of national alignments, doctrines and ideologies.

He had already tabled his belief that "the Australian Communist Party is an integral part of the world Communist revolutionary movement, which in the King's dominions and elsewhere, engages in espionage and sabotage and in activities or operations of a treasonable and subversive nature".² The implicit identification of the leader of the Opposition with this treasonable force was facilitated by Evatt's

1. C.P.D., Vol. 312, (7/3/1951), p.78.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 207, (27/5/1950), p.2003.

acceptance of the brief from the unions and his defence of the legality of the Communist Party. The Liberal Country Party was re-elected gaining majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

During the whole election campaign very little was said of Australia's interests and position in Asia and the Pacific. This was a strange omission as the whole campaign could be regarded as having the international relationship of communism and democracy as its basis. Nevertheless very little space was given to Asia and the Pacific. More so as Menzies considered that unrest was fermenting in the East and South East Asia as part of a general international strategy. Menzies stated that "from the point of view of the communist planners, cold war activities in Asia, as long as they are conducted by satellite troops, greatly strengthen the hand of the communists in other places --- there is the closest collaboration between China and Russia in the point of military planning."¹ "It seems to me to be perfectly clear the strengthening of communist power in Europe and the diversion of democratic forces in Asia have a relation which is neither accidental or remote."² From this view point

1. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.80.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.80.

the identification of the military interest of Russia and China as part of an overall plan could be used to justify an approach that did not separate the two but that treated the plan as a whole.

Almost immediately after the re-election of the Liberal Country Party to office was the introduction of the ANZUS pact, on the First of September, 1951. Starke claims that this gave the de facto alliance between the United States, New Zealand and Australia, a political reality, that the informal relationships between the three countries were formalized and given substance. Starke gives credit for the formation and success of ANZUS to Spender, for whom "the shaping of a Pacific Pact became a political obsession --- what is more he carried his Prime Minister with him, for Menzies was throughout to play an important role by giving full backing to Spender's initiative".¹ For his part Menzies was not active in detailed drafting of the negotiated treaty, seeming to pay little attention to the formation of the pact at the time of its inception. Later he stated that "we are not contracting ourselves out of the old world, we just cannot do that. We are, to put it much more accurately, about to contract

1. J. G. Starke, The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, (M.U.P., 1964), p.27 and pp.40-41.

ourselves into a regional defensive arrangement which will give strength not only here but also in Europe itself".¹ Emotionally Menzies still wanted to retain the British link but the implications of his own power politics interpretation of events meant a closer link with the United States and a more decisive move into the Pacific area. There was thus a conflict between the emotional ties to Britain and the practical ones to America.

The conflict of these motives for Menzies may have allowed Spender to take the initiative in a project that he ardently wished to pursue. A further restricting factor to Menzies' action was the exclusion of Britain from the alliance, and given Menzies' attitudes towards Britain and the Commonwealth tie, the ANZUS alliance must have been regarded as a move away from a closely integrated Commonwealth, at least, a move away from the traditionally strong defence links with Britain. This conflict of attitude on Menzies' part would probably have had a strong influence in permitting Spender's initiative. Defence links in the

1. C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.68 - from a speech about ANZUS and the proposed entry into SEATO - stressing that membership completed a "pattern of world defence".

Pacific were a necessity and close association with the United States a valuable asset for defence purposes but Menzies' enthusiasm was not fired and his participation was consequently limited. Dulles, acting on behalf of the President with "the support of the President, of the Secretary of State and of Congress, which he consulted at every turn",¹ would not have suggested the inclusion of Britain if for no other reason than his authority from the President, which confined his power to negotiate with the aim of "developing security arrangements with Pacific Island Nations". The only other possible member of what would then have become a quadrilateral treaty, was the Philippines "for the inclusion of which Australia would not be anxious".² At the same time, Dulles had ascertained that Britain would not approve of "a security pact which covered the Philippines, but did not extend to Malaya and Hong Kong".³ The inclusion of Britain was therefore

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1. J. G. Starke, The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, p.36.
(At this stage Dulles was not Secretary of State.)
 2. J. G. Starke, The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, pp.43-44.
 3. op. cit., p.42. A further restriction on Britain's entry from the point of view of the U.S.A. was the added complication of Britain's colonial relationships.

probably not discussed and despite his desire for even stronger associations with Britain it is probable Menzies recognised that the nature of the proposed agreement would not allow for Britain's inclusion.

At the same time that ANZUS was being drafted the question of the Japanese Peace Treaty and Australia's reaction to it had arisen. No promise not to oppose Japanese rearmament had been given at Canberra as indicated by Spender when he stated explicitly that the Australian government would continue to press for specific provisions in the peace treaty that would prevent any recurrence of Japanese aggression.¹ The clauses which stated Japanese renunciation of territorial claims over Antarctica and compensation to former Japanese held prisoners of war, were inserted on the representation of Australia. As Starke pointed out it was reasonable to assume that the Japanese Peace Treaty would have been accepted by Australia, in the amended form, even if there had been no ANZUS Pact in the offing. The usual claim that the Japanese Treaty was the price to Australia of the ANZUS Pact, loses much of its strength. Menzies' explanation of the

1. op. cit., pp.50-51. See also pp.67-68.

necessity for accepting a peace treaty with Japan is not in terms of the price for ANZUS but a statement that acceptance of the treaty was necessary. He stated that "our relations with Japan should be stabilized upon the basis of an early settlement".¹ However he points out a secondary consideration that of rearmament of Japan, and stresses that if Japan was to be re-armed a treaty should be formalized for Australia's protection in the Pacific. Menzies stated that "in the face of any Japanese rearmament there should be created such particular Pacific arrangements as will give to Australia some guarantee of friendly aid and protection in the event of a recurrence of threatened attack upon us".² To this extent the proposals for Japanese rearmament may have effected Australia's bargaining power and assisted in the final treaty negotiations.

The overwhelming positive attraction of ANZUS

1. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), pp.75-6.
2. C.P.D., Vol. 212, (7/3/1951), p.76. In this speech Menzies warmly commends Spender for pressing for this treaty if Japan was to be re-armed. He also commends Spender for consistently stating Australia's opposition to rearmament.

was the formal linking that the treaty provided with the United States. To gain this tie Menzies was forced to accept the condition that Britain was to be excluded, whether he liked it or not, and the initiative and effort by Spender with the limited involvement of Menzies, gave some indication that he did not like it. This was the attitude that could have been expected from Menzies at this point in time, where the decline of the Commonwealth did not seem so inevitable as it did in the 1960's. It seems that throughout the period of his Prime Ministership, Menzies was forced to reduce his expectations of the Commonwealth. His hope for a successful and strong Commonwealth remained constant, but his expectation of the role of the Commonwealth was continually revised downwards. The cost to Australia of securing the ANZUS Pact could be seen not so much in the resultant decline of the Commonwealth, a decline that may have been hastened by ANZUS, but that would certainly not have been prevented by refusing to participate in the pact. Similarly the cost was not essentially that of recognising the Japanese peace treaty, another almost inevitable event. The cost could be seen in the nature of the alliance itself. Critics said the country was pledged to the assistance of the United States if any American island

ship or possession in the Pacific was threatened or attacked. The likelihood of becoming involved through America was therefore relatively high. Attack on Australia was, on the other hand, unlikely and would probably only eventuate in a full scale war to which America would be committed in any case. The price to Australia of American commitment in the Pacific area that would guarantee Australia's security, was a widening of the area of potential Australian involvement and an increase in the likelihood of that involvement being required. Spender was anxious for and Menzies not opposed to this condition that would commit one of our great and powerful friends in Australia's Pacific area. Spender saw the result as a triumph, a move towards a network of alliances¹ that would defend Australia. Menzies accepted the treaty, claiming that "NATO and ANZUS express the operation of Anglo-American accord".² Menzies' attitude was really an emotional

1. This corresponds to the "areas of strength" concept proclaimed by Acheson in February, 1950 as being America's proposed policy.

2. J. G. Starke, The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, p.28 noted that the alliance was similar to that proposed by Evatt and Chifley at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in 1946.

one, a major defence alliance had been created that included Australia and did not include Britain. However the satisfaction of having formally linked Australia with the United States must have outweighed the emotional reaction. The treaty would, accepting a power politics assessment of world affairs, guarantee Australia's security to a large extent and a closer association with the strongest military (in nuclear terms) power in the world would have its compensations.

Spender had also put forward a two stage proposal for recognition of Communist China. His suggestion was that, as a first step towards recognition, consular relations with Formosa be cut off. This would have paved the way for a later recognition of China. Starke sees the attitude taken by Menzies as falling into a different category from the acceptance of the Japanese treaty.¹ In his view the non-recognition of China was Australia's overt attempt to show sympathy to the American attitude and indicate agreement with it. Albinski considers that Australia had followed an independent policy, different from America's in

1. Harper and Greenwood, Australia in World Affairs, 1950-1955, p.82.

many points and one which "was based largely on independent judgments shared by many other Western Governments".¹

The final draft of the treaty was signed on the First of September, 1951, in San Francisco. Spender had been appointed Ambassador to the United States on the Twenty-Sixth of April, 1951, and participated in the final stages of the negotiations of the pact. Spender had been virtually in control throughout. The Right Honourable R. G. Casey was appointed Minister for External Affairs to succeed Spender. Starke makes no mention of why Spender was appointed to Washington, but seems to accept that the move was a promotion for excellent service. Whittington claims that Spender was always a stormy petrel and that he was Menzies' "only real threat to leadership after 1949",² he was also one of the main participants in the attempt to oust Menzies in 1940-41. This gives the implication that the appointment was calculated on Menzies' part to move Spender away from the political arena and so to

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1. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China.
 2. D. Whittington, The Rulers, (Nation Paperback, 1965), p.27.

reduce his own opposition. Regardless of the motives behind Spender's appointment to an ambassadorial post, the effect was to reduce the Cabinet by one experienced man and to strengthen Menzies' relative position within the structure of the government. From Whittington's viewpoint, ANZUS would have caused grave misgivings on Menzies' part over its possible disruptive effect on the Commonwealth. However, at the same time, it would have provided a means for reinforcing his own position within the government.¹

The double dissolution that had caused elections to be held in 1951, also shortened the time span between elections. The next was scheduled for 1953, a Senate election to be followed in 1954 with a further House of Representatives election. The Senate election was largely fought on domestic issues with Menzies drawing attention to the improving economic conditions within Australia. These had been initiated by the Liberal Government's economic policy, he claimed, and declared that the improvement "would soon be widely recognised".²

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1. This interpretation may be an overstatement of the situation - Menzies had led the party to victory and even if there was a rival the External Affairs post would not generally be expected to provide one.
 2. R. G. Menzies, Opening Speech, (Compress Ltd. 1953), p.3.

There was very little publicity of any sort during the 1953 campaign, but this changed abruptly in 1954. Elections were held on the Twenty-Ninth of May, 1954 and once again the Liberal Party stressed their strong anti-communist line. This had been sparked by the Petrov affair that culminated, in the incident at Darwin airport between Commonwealth police and the Soviet couriers who had been instructed to return Mrs. Petrov to Russia. Petrov, himself a minor Soviet official was depicted as a spy of importance and Menzies announced that a Royal Commission would be held into the matter.¹ He did not make any other official pronouncement, but once again, the communist threat was raised and the election was fought with this as a background.

The previous Senate election had shown a swing against the Liberal-Country Party Government which had just held its majority in the Senate. In the 1954 election, Menzies had concentrated on economic issues, as he had in the Senate election. But the background and feeling was again charged with the threat of communism. The Menzies' government was returned to office with a reduced majority in the House.

1. C.P.D., Vol. 3, (13/4/1954), p.326.

In June, just after the elections, a conference was held in Washington on South East Asian Defence. The participants in this conference were America, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand. The conference made explicit the growing awareness of the Western Powers that South East Asia was a potential weak link in anti-communist defence organizations. Casey (who had succeeded Spender as Minister for External Affairs), was involved directly in the formulation of the final proposals. He was acutely aware of the importance of South East Asia to Australian security and stated that the gap in South East Asia that had been left despite the formation of ANZUS, was to be filled. He had constantly emphasised the necessity of strengthening Australian defence through alliances to prevent the pressure of communism being channelled through South East Asia.¹ He also made frequent trips to the area and despite the apparent lack of interest by a large section of the government, pressed strongly for the creation of a Mutual Defence Pact which would have a wider scope than that of ANZUS. In his estimation of the need for a treaty, Casey was in agreement with Dulles who, in 1953, had said that "there is need for the development, within the Pacific area, of a greater

1. Current Notes, vol. 122, (1951), pp.514-515.

measure of international goodwill and a greater unity of purpose". He saw the proposed treaty as adding to "a more comprehensive system of regional security".¹

A conference had also been held in Geneva, on Indo-China and Korea. Casey made a personal visit to Saigon, the result of which was the conviction that intervention from the air at Dien Bien Phu, would be wrong. He advocated that Australia should seek a negotiated settlement to avoid coming into conflict with China and the possible repudiation of the Geneva conference. A short term result of this conference was peace in Indo-China. It later transpired that the final proposal reached on the Twenty-First of July was unsuccessful due to South Vietnamese opposition, an opposition that was reinforced by that of the United States. The United States had, by this time, obtained Sir Winston Churchill's approval to British participation in discussions at Washington, from which a communique was issued that stated the two governments wished to "hasten the planning of Asian defence against communism".² The Australian elections had occurred about midway through these negotiations and nothing had

1. G. Modelski (ed.), Six Studies on SEATO, p.57.

2. G. Modelski (ed.), Six Studies on SEATO, p.57.

been mentioned in the campaign that related to Australian defence through alliances in South East Asia.

Nevertheless this pact seemed more to the liking of Menzies, who permitted Casey to try to force the pace towards a negotiated treaty, by announcing that military obligations in support of the proposed pact would be accepted. This prior announcement of intentions broke a long tradition of Australian policy and indicated the importance that the Australian government, under Menzies, placed on providing what was thought to be a bulwark against communism. Menzies took the view that coexistence with communism was virtually impossible because of the expansionary aims inherent in the communist form of government. Casey, on the other hand, tended to view communism less as a monolith and more as an alternative form of government. However he did stress the necessity of Australian defence through an alliance tied to the South East Asian area. Menzies stated that "a clash of conventional forces and arms in South East Asia is not to be dismissed as impossible"¹ in pursuance of his conception of war as either global or confined. In this context SEATO was, to Menzies, part of a pattern of Australia's defence

1. C.P.D., Vol. 16, (19/9/1957), p.798. See also C.P.D., Vol. 4, (5/8/1954), p.67 and C.P.D., vol. 214, (16/10/1951), p.673.

against such a clash. He considered that "so far as Australia and the other powers grouped in SEATO are concerned, there must be an effective force to deal with attacks by conventional arms ... we must concentrate our attention to the limit of our capacity upon what are called conventional forces".¹ SEATO therefore represented to Menzies the military answer to the communist threat in South East Asia, an alliance of which he approved although he did not actively participate in its drafting.

The Manila conference began on the Sixth of September. It seemed that the major differences in attitude between the smaller powers, like Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, compared to the United States were what would have been expected. The smaller powers wanted a binding treaty that would guarantee for themselves the protection of United States and the European participants, (but mainly the United States), wanted a treaty that would act as a warning to China. However Formosa was again the focal point for American action in containing China. The Asian members of SEATO also wanted the treaty to include economic commitments from the Western Powers over aid

1. C.P.D., vol. 16, (19/9/1957), p.795.

to Asia, but in this they were unsuccessful, both Australia and the United States claimed that the Colombo Plan adequately took care of the economic side of East-West relations. One point that was raised by Australia did seem to have some validity and that was, in order to attract more Asian countries, the treaty should not stress purely communist aggression as being the only aggression against which America would be committed. Communism was not necessarily considered by Asians as the chief potential threat and a wider treaty would probably have appealed to a greater number of Asian countries. If the terms had been broadened Australia would also have benefited. Menzies was thinking in terms of Japan and Indonesia as possible aggressors. The United States would not agree and the treaty was finally signed with specifically limited United States commitment to cases of communist aggression.¹ (This protected America from possible commitment to Pakistan in the event of an Indian-Pakistan conflict.) The final signatories and member countries of SEATO were Pakistan, Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Britain, France, Australia and the United States. Australia had now bolstered the

1. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965, p.153-4.

ANZUS commitment (which was not superseded by SEATO) and strengthened the system of alliances in the Pacific. This treaty did, for Menzies, formalise and give concrete expression to the accord that existed between the United States and Britain. He stated that "we would be strangely blind if we did not see that on the world scene, the rise of the United States to supremacy in industrial power, her vast population, her intellectual and moral influence are all such that she has become, in the most literal sense, vital to the existence of the free world"¹ and considered that "our natural friendship and intuitive understanding coincide with our legitimate self-interest".²

In a further effort to strengthen the relationships in the Pacific, Australia attempted to set up a headquarters staff to co-ordinate the SEATO Forces. Watt claims that this broke down before the American comment that "Congressional sentiment has hardened against further commitments of the NATO type".³

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.47-48.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.47-48.

3. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, pp.124-126. Watt attempts to show that ANZUS is not weak relative to NATO but that the NATO links are themselves weaker than people claim.

Once again India, the largest Asian power in the area, refused to be drawn into a military alliance and Nehru maintained the neutralist line that was the main thread of Indian international diplomacy. A protocol was added to the Manila Treaty which brought Cambodia, Laos and the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam, under the protection that the signatories of the SEATO agreement gave to one another.

Eisenhower stated in January 1955, that the United States would fight to preserve "the vital stake of a free world in a free Formosa". He proclaimed American readiness to bomb Chinese forces on the mainland if they were "obviously preparing to attack Formosa". He declared a similar readiness to bomb China if Quemoy or the Matsus were threatened by a military attack aimed at Formosa. Eisenhower also included the Pescadores in his blanket demand that he be given the power to make war at any time to protect these positions from attack or threat of attack. This was approved by both the House of Representatives (vote four hundred and nine to three) and by the Senate (vote eighty-five to three). In February, at the first SEATO meeting Dulles was also explicit in stating America's position. He claimed that the United States was ready to go to war for South East Asia against the "expansionist aims

and ambitions of China". He stated "that China faced a triple threat, if war came, from South Korea, Japan, the Formosa area and South East Asia".¹ In effect Dulles had stated virtually exactly what Nehru had in mind when he claimed that SEATO was nothing more than a Western alliance aimed at gaining Western ends by the manipulation of an Asian alliance. Dulles' Far Eastern tour was marked by his threats of violence culminating in the claim that strategic bombing with atomic bombs might be necessary to reduce the economic potential of mainland China - in the case of the latter mounting an attack on Formosa.²

Menzies arrived in Washington on the Thirteenth of March, to put Australia's position more clearly. He let it be known that Australia wanted the defence of Quemoy and Matsus to be confined and the likelihood of a war to be diminished as far as possible. Canada also refused to be a party to the American concept of defence and Japan would not permit American bases there to be used to mount attacks on Communist China despite Dulles' claim that Japan was a prime target for China.

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1. D. F. Fleming, The Cold War and its Origins, Vol. 2, p.713 and following.
 2. D. F. Fleming, The Cold War and its Origins, p.714. Fleming quotes The New York Times, March 7, 8, 9, 1955.

By the Thirty-First of March, the United States had retreated from the previous extremist position that had been taken.

On the Twenty-Fourth of April, in an effort to reduce the tension in Asia, a conference was called at Bandung on the invitation of the Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Twenty-four other countries participated in the conference, the aim of which was to provide a closer base for unity of action and to provide the beginnings of economic political and cultural co-operation. Not one white power was invited to this conference of people who had, or were emerging from colonialism. At this meeting Communist China presented a face virtually the opposite of that shown by the United States through Dulles' extremism. The impression that the Chinese representatives attempted to convey was one of conciliation and an attitude of self-criticism and rectification of mistakes. The final communique stressed the necessity of unity throughout Asia and Africa in virtually all fields to provide a basis for integration and an abolition of colonialism.¹ The aim

1. R. A. Goldwin, Readings in World Politics, (O.U.P., 1962), p.535 and following. (Full text of the Communique.)

was laudable but effectiveness was lacking, the area already being split into opposing groups on both treaty and nationalist lines.

These actions, commencing with ANZUS affiliations and ending with the SEATO arrangement changed the formal allegiance of Australia markedly. The informal allegiances had also undergone considerable change, particularly in relation to Japan where an increasing proportion of Australia's trade was being accepted. Australia was moving rapidly towards a close economic connection with Japan. In justification of this trend (following an attack by the Labour Party) Menzies stated that "we are learning, and learning in good company all around the world, in peace, that no nation can economically live to itself, if it wishes its living standards to rise",¹ and added that "peace and defence in the Pacific will be assisted by a Japan which peacefully trades with the nations of the free world and is not within the orbit of the Soviet Union".² The trade agreement was the result of a cumulation of pressures towards closer Australian-Japanese

1. C.P.D., (5/9/1957), p.400.

2. C.P.D., (5/9/1957), p.401. See from p.399-406 for the complete statement of the need for full co-operation and rapprochement with Japan.

collaboration.

Australia's international orientation had undergone marked changes since Menzies took office in 1949. There had been a steady shift away from reliance on Britain and a growing number of alliances and international commitments that tended to be a function of Australia's geographical position. This applied both to military alliances, SEATO and ANZUS and trade agreements like that with Japan. The old Commonwealth link was reduced as more and more cross pressures were brought to bear. Britain's role east of Suez was diminishing and America's involvement increasing and China was rapidly replacing Russia as the focal point of the communist menace and forcing Australian interest more towards America and South East Asia. While Menzies may have regretted the passing of the old Commonwealth in face of the world situation it was almost inevitable that the organization would become progressively weaker as cross pressures on members, through alternative affiliations, increased in scope and number. It was this reality that Menzies had to face and attempt to meet with consistent, rational policy and logically the stronger tie to America and American strength followed from the "power

politics" definition of international relations assumed by Menzies. A major crisis that expressed almost a reversal of this drift was the Suez Crisis, in which Australian action may have expressed the emotional attitudes of the Prime Minister towards the "old" allegiances and ties but which also indicated the necessity to the Australian economy of trade that passed through Suez. Although Japan was becoming relatively more important to Australia from an economic point of view, the strongest partner in Australian defence alliances, the United States, was also Australia's greatest competitor in many export fields.

The Suez Crisis

Britain had decided to leave Suez on the Seventeenth of July, 1954. Evacuation of troops began in that year, but was not completed until the Thirteenth of June, 1956. Menzies saw the Middle East area as vital and had consistently advocated the establishment of effective defence organizations that would guarantee control over this area. He had stated in 1951 that a requirement was "a treaty which while meeting legitimate Egyptian feelings, would still make it possible to maintain in Egypt a military base vital for the defence of the free world, including Egypt itself".¹ He also considered that "we believe that in the unhappy event of another world war the freedom of Australia will in all probability have to be defended in places outside of Australia itself".² The Middle East, and particularly the Suez Canal area were seen by Menzies as the lifeline of Australia and vital to the economic existence of Australia as a free nation. At the time of the Suez Crisis Menzies restated this position claiming that "we in Australia realise that the great bulk of our overseas trade which is vital to our economic existence passes through Suez in one

1. C.P.D., vol. 214, (16/10/1951), p.674.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 214, (16/10/1951), p.674.

direction or the other".¹

At the time of the Suez Crisis Menzies' appreciation of the world situation was substantially the same as that of 1939. He considered that Australia was emotionally and economically linked to the British Empire, an empire the genius of which would always be dominant despite numerical strength and saw Australia as possessing a racial integrity and responsibility expressed through the Empire. He also considered that Australia required the assistance of the United States in the Pacific to provide security and peace. "If I may allow my fancy to wander a little, I like to think of that peace axis as having studded on to it, if you like, London, Washington and Canberra".² In 1956 he still thought that the Middle East and Europe comprised the vital sphere in which Australia's economic security rested. Britain, the British Commonwealth and Australian self-interest were co-terminous in Menzies' eyes. Russia was regarded as the threat to Australian economic security, to the security of the whole free world and as the instigator of the Suez Crisis. The crisis inevitably assumed great proportions for Menzies as it represented to him an attack on Australia's vital

1. C.P.D., Vol. 13, (8/11/1956), p.2115.

2. C.P.D., (11/5/1939), pp.233-235.

interests, on the economic security of Britain, on the basis of international law and on the physical link between Australia and the British Commonwealth. His active response was the expression of his concern. In both his major publications, his explanation of the Suez Crisis is placed in a unique position. It is the only expression of foreign policy in action that is fully discussed, the only single incident given a chapter (or a whole section in Speech is of Time).¹

This disproportionate emphasis may have been due to Menzies' recognition of his failure in the Suez situation and a feeling of obligation to justify his action and salvage his reputation as a world statesman. Nevertheless, at the time of the Suez Crisis he was more obviously occupied with foreign affairs than at any other time in his term as Prime Minister.² It seems justifiable therefore, to assume that to Menzies the Suez Crisis was of paramount importance.

The crisis occurred on the Twenty-Sixth of July, 1956, when President Nasser announced that the Suez Canal was national property, to be run for the profit

1. R. G. Menzies, Speech is of Time, pp.81-171 and

R. G. Menzies, Afternoon Light, pp.149-186.

2. This excludes World War II and his previous term in office, 1939-41.

of Egypt by the government and that the revenue obtained from its operation would be used to finance the building of the Aswan Dam. Previously the United States and the United Kingdom and Egypt had been discussing methods of financing the Aswan Dam project, a project that would have provided immediate economic returns to the country in the form of wages that would have been paid to the workers. If negotiations had been successful the national disposable income of Egypt would have risen and consequently the standard of living would also have risen. Nasser's regime would have been assured of at least short run support by a population that would almost immediately have felt a direct economic advantage. The arrangements to finance the dam broke down on the Nineteenth of July, 1956. The potential economic stimulus and political triumph disappeared. A week later the announcement was made that the Suez Canal had become the national property of Egypt to be run for the profit of the Egyptian people.

At the time of Nasser's announcement, Menzies was returning to Australia via Canada and the United States from a political meeting in London. The decision was made that Menzies should return to London to represent Australia at a conference called to discuss the situation. Why Casey, in his capacity as Minister for

External Affairs could not be expected to handle the situation was not made clear.¹ Menzies took complete charge of all Australian action over Suez and was the most active negotiator on behalf of the Suez Canal Company, finally accepting the chairmanship of the Committee set up by the Suez conference. On the Thirteenth of August Menzies went on television in London to state his opinion of the act of nationalization.² He stated explicitly that he saw the action as creating a crisis almost equal to that which began World War II, a crisis that threatened Britain's prestige, power and moral influence and one which undermined the theory of international law. Menzies saw international law as a binding principle that required fulfillment of international obligations, later quoting Professor A. L. Goodhart "every country may now regard itself to be free to repudiate its solemn covenants on the ground of national sovereignty. The validity of every concession will in future depend solely on the will of the promisor ..."³ His justification for action was on legal grounds while the motive for action lay in his

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1. Although Menzies presumably realised that Casey may not have carried out the Menzies policy.
 2. Menzies, Speech is of Time, pp.81-86.
 3. Menzies, Afternoon Light, p.153.

concept of power politics and a power conflict that could assist the U.S.S.R. in furthering its expansionist colonialist policies.¹

The twenty-two nation conference of Canal owners was held in London on the Sixteenth of August, 1956, at Lancaster House, The United States, Britain and France drafted a proposal which was accepted by eighteen of the nations present. The proposal, largely emanating from John Foster Dulles, set out in three paragraphs the aims of the Canal Owners' association. Basically the proposals would return the canal under "a definite system designed to guarantee at all times, and for all Powers, the free use of the Suez Maritime Canal".² A committee, made up of the representatives of Australia, Ethiopia, Iran, Sweden and the United States was chosen unanimously. Menzies was to be chairman and in his memoirs was at great pains to point out that he had not sought the world limelight, rather it had been thrust upon him with pressures from both Sir Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles (neither of whom went to Cairo at all). Eden was not involved directly in the Cairo talks as Britain was not on the committee but the United States was. Dulles declined

1. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), p.2117.

2. Menzies, Afternoon Light, pp.154-155.

to participate himself, sending Loy Henderson, a career diplomat in his place. The other members of the committee were Dr. Ardalan the foreign minister of Iran, Ato Aklilou Hapte-Wolde the foreign minister of Ethiopia and Osten Unden the foreign minister of Sweden. Menzies was therefore the only Prime Minister to participate in the conference. This meant that while it may have been possible for the governments of the United States, Ethiopia, Iran and Sweden to change their attitudes, being represented only by a minister, for Australia to renounce Menzies' statements was more difficult. Australian commitment was total while that of the other participants was not.

The conference began on Monday, the Third of September. The following day Menzies informally warned Nasser that force should not be excluded from his appreciation of the situation. Menzies stated that "I believe that it would be a mistake to eliminate the possibility of force altogether from your mind".¹ This had been aimed at counteracting the attitude, held by the Arab newspapers at least, that Franco-British mobilization moves were all bluff. Menzies' statement was ill-timed, for the following day President Eisenhower stated unequivocally that a peaceful

1. Menzies, Afternoon Light, p.164.

settlement of the dispute and nothing else was the aim of the committee and the only approach to which America would be committed. Menzies' warnings had become meaningless and Nasser refused to make the required concessions and submit his nationalization of the Canal to be repudiated. To Menzies this left Britain and France "with a grim choice between surrender or force". Dulles had stated that the Canal was not of primary interest to the United States and the mission returned, a failure. The second London conference that constituted the Canal Users Association came to nothing and Nasser was left in command of the situation.

The whole Suez problem was altered when Israel mobilized and invaded Egypt. The following day the armed forces of Israel had penetrated Egypt, almost as far as the Suez canal. In reply to this the United Kingdom and France issued an ultimatum to both sides. The terms of this ultimatum were that both sides were to cease fighting and to withdraw their forces to a distance of ten miles from the Canal. The Egyptian government was also asked to agree that Anglo-French forces should move temporarily into key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez. In effect this was to invoke Article Four of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of

October, 1954. The Treaty gave Britain the right to re-occupy the Canal bases if Israel launched a full scale attack on Egypt. Eisenhower, in his address to the nation on the Thirty-First of October said, "in all the recent troubles in the Middle East there have, indeed been injustices suffered by all nations involved. But I do not believe that another instrument of injustice - war - is a remedy for these wrongs".¹ Menzies deplored the unfortunate split between the United Kingdom and the United States, but supported the United Kingdom, claiming that "the circumstances were those of great emergency ... There was literally no time to be lost if any action was to be taken to keep the combatants out of the Canal area, and afford it proper protection".² Egypt had refused the demands of the Anglo-French ultimatum; that all warlike action be stopped, that all Egyptian forces be withdrawn to a distance of ten miles from the Canal and that Anglo-French forces be accepted. Troops were sent to the Canal Zone by both Britain and France. It was now that the split between the United States and United Kingdom became explicit.

1. R. A. Goldwin (ed.), Readings in World Politics, (O.U.P., 1962), p.397.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 13, (3/10/1956), p.2059.

On the Second of November, the General Assembly of the United Nations ordered Britain and France to withdraw, the vote within the United Nations being almost unanimous. The judgment was that the French and British troops should be replaced by a United Nations force. Menzies justified the Anglo-French action on two main grounds. The first was the breach of international law that had occurred by the nationalization of an internationally owned and operated concern. Menzies specifically denied that the Suez Canal was the property of the Egyptians. He claimed that, as it had been built with outside capital, had an international character and was recognised by an international convention, "it could not therefore be regarded as a merely domestic enterprise under the sole control of the Egyptian Government".¹ Menzies considered that international law had therefore been broken when Egypt repudiated the contractual concession twelve years before it expired, without consultation or agreement. Menzies stated that "if such a repudiation is not a breach of international law, then there is no international law".² This international illegality that Nasser had caused was, to Menzies, a part

1. C.P.D., Vol. 12, (25/9/1956), p.817.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 12, (25/9/1956), p.817.

justification for British action. Or, at least, a justification for action that was prompted by power relationships.¹

The second and major justification that Menzies gave to explain the action of Britain and France, was that "it is just because they took strong action that

1. The nature of this Crisis may also have been interpreted as an economic one rather than one related purely to defence. If this was so a justification for action may have been found in economic terms and based on a power politics assessment of the situation. Economically Australia was strongly tied to Britain while the military defence of Australia was becoming progressively less reliant on British power and more reliant on American strength. Economically, however, Australian trade relations with the United States were unfavourable and trade with Britain was still essential to Australia's economic stability. In these terms Australia's actions would seem more rational than an interpretation based purely in emotional and even purely in power terms (the action could have alienated America), and would indicate the necessity for a reassessment of Menzies' actions.

the United Nations itself has been galvanised into action".¹ He stated that Britain and France "have been immeasurably wise and courageous in taking steps which would not only anticipate but would, in some measure, compel the attention of the United Nations. I have no doubt that they will welcome relief from their task".² He justified the precipitate action of Britain and the failure to notify or discuss the situation with the Commonwealth by stating that "there was literally no time to be lost". His attitude was one of consistent justification of British and French action seen in the light of self-preservation and protection of vital interests in the Middle East. Also if Nasser's move was successful it would have meant that the lifeline from Australia to Britain would be, or could be, cut at will. Given his attitude this possibility was unthinkable. That Australia's economic and traditional lifeline should depend on the disposition of a foreign power was, to Menzies, an impossible situation.

Nevertheless, the General Assembly of the United Nations had voted for Britain and France to leave the Canal area and this decision was endorsed by the United

1. Menzies, Afternoon Light, p.177.
2. C.P.D., Vol. 13, (8/11/1956), p.2118.

States. Britain and France accepted the United Nations ruling that an emergency force of United Nations troops be moved into the area and that the occupying forces be evacuated. The acceptance by Britain and France was largely due to American pressure and Eisenhower in his Address to the Nation on the Twentieth of February, 1957, said "I want to pay tribute to the wisdom of this action of our friends and allies. They made an immense contribution to world order. Also they put the other nations of the world under a heavy obligation to see to it that these two nations do not suffer by reason of their compliance with the United Nations' resolutions".¹ A United Nations force (UNEF) was sent but it was made clear by the Secretary General that the force was present on Egyptian soil solely by Egyptian consent and could operate only within the limits permitted by Egypt. This was a requirement of the United Nations charter, as no Security Council resolution had been passed, the force stationed in Egypt was at the direction of the General Assembly

1. R. A. Goldwin (ed.), Readings in World Politics, p.397, for full text of the address.

which could not give the force any coercive authority.¹

The Canal was reopened for shipping on the Twenty-Ninth of March and operated under a declaration the final text of which was submitted on the Twenty-Fourth of April. Australia was again the most outspoken critic, being represented by Dr. Walker who objected to almost every aspect of the document.² At the same time the Cabinet had issued a statement that "Ministers and Government supporters continued to justify the Anglo-French action of the previous November and the part which Mr. Menzies had played in those events, and to seek comfort from the theory that this intervention had prevented Russian domination of the area".³

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1. In the television interview conducted with Menzies, December, 1967, he completely disregarded this situation. He was therefore in the position of defending British action on legalistic grounds and repudiating the United Nations action in leaving Suez by disregarding the legality of the later position.
 2. A.J.P.H., Vol. III, no. 1, November, 1957, pp.2-3, for terms of the declaration and for G. Sawyer's comments.
 3. A.J.P.H., Vol. III, no. 1, November, 1957, p.2-3.

Menzies' attitude to the Suez Crisis was that it posed a direct threat to Australia's security. This is distinct from the theoretical threat posed by potential aggression that prompted ANZUS and SEATO, and it was a threat that required direct intervention and active participation in a non-treaty area. The direct action that he took failed, and failures generally need more justification than successes. It was also a participation that was prompted by both economic and emotional considerations in respect of Britain. Menzies' justifications for his precipitate action, on legal and national grounds, are consequently unconvincing.

Over Suez Menzies usurped Casey's position and dominated Australia's international relations, his extreme attitudes being expressed consistently in Australian action. On the international level Menzies attempted what had worked so successfully at home, a definition of the value of the rule of law followed by a justification of action in terms of prevention of aggression. Internationally however the communist menace did not have such ready currency as it did within Australia. Menzies' claim that the action of Egypt was unequivocally illegal was questioned by the United States and not accepted by most of Afro-Asia

nor by either Russia or China. Menzies' method, while effective within Australia where the population and approach was fairly homogenous, was virtually useless on the international level where the heterogeneity of attitudes and consequent pressures made a case in such abstract terms unacceptable.

Within Australia there had also been dissent over the direction of Australian self-interest. Within the government Casey had strongly deprecated the use of force by Britain and France; he was convinced that military action could split the Commonwealth (India and Pakistan had condemned the use of force) and align Australia against the United States as well as isolating Australia within the United Nations.¹

Menzies continually attempted to put the Suez Crisis into his simple dichotomy and show that once again the conflict was between communism and democracy. He claimed that Russia was endeavouring to control the area and he asked the rhetorical question "would Egypt so proud of having marched from 'colonialism' seriously seek to defend its new freedom by submitting itself to the help and therefore in due course the tyranny of the

1. G. Greenwood & N. Harper, Australia in World Affairs, 1950-1955, Chapter VIII, Section, Australia and Suez.

worst colonialism in modern times".¹ Over this point Menzies held two conflicting views, one that Russia wished to seize the Canal and control the Middle East as a colonial outpost of communism. The second that the incident would be used for propaganda purposes alone. He saw the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as having used the Suez position to provide propaganda for castigating Britain for the colonialism that was being attempted by Britain in using force to regain some measure of control over the Canal. He stated that "there must be scores of people today, particularly in Asian countries who have been persuaded to believe that the allegation 'over Britain's complicity with Israel' is true".² The statements about the propaganda value of Suez formed a bridge between his two views of Suez. He claimed that "honourable members will not have failed to notice that some of our Asian friends have protested strongly against the Anglo-French action in Egypt but have had little or nothing to say about the murderous activities of the Soviet Union in Hungary".³ He also implied that Russia was using the Canal crisis, made into a major issue through propaganda, to attract

1. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), pp.2117-2118.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), p.2119.

3. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), p.2117.

attention away from Russia's own international manoeuvring. From this point of view the Middle Eastern crisis could be seen as a diversionary tactic of the Russians (much like Menzies' attitude that the whole of the South East Asian trouble was a diversionary tactic to draw attention away from the Middle East). He saw the purpose of this tactic as being the alignment of Asian and non-European nations against the Europeans in an inevitable conflict of interest. If this could have been achieved he saw communism as gaining dominance and of coming to power on the principle of divide and rule. He neglected that he himself had aligned the world by definition and had expressly denied his own hope that "we should all swiftly bring ourselves to an understanding that the world is one, and that ordinary human beings all around the world have similar interests and the same dignified human ambitions".¹

Menzies' chance to be the international statesman passed, Australia had virtually isolated itself in the United Nations and British and French action over Suez had been roundly condemned by the rest of the world. India and the Afro-Asian bloc had further cause to

1. C.P.D., Vol. 113, (8/11/1956), p.2117.

identify Australia with colonial and imperial interests and the aim of the exercise, international control of the Suez Canal, was missed. Casey's view had been ignored and all action seems to have been initiated by Menzies¹ who had dismissed the alternative course of action proposed by Casey. Spender had represented Australia at the New York conference and Casey's policy of peaceful negotiation and allegiance to the United States rather than Britain had been overruled. Menzies remained in control within Australia, even if his attempts at statesmanship on the international level had failed.

1. Perhaps a further reason for his continued justification of Suez.

The Suez Crisis provided a demonstration of Menzies' strong convictions about foreign policy and defence while at the same time indicating that "if there were a conflict of opinion, his views prevailed".¹ Opposition to Menzies' views within Cabinet was overridden and complete support was given to Anthony Eden in a policy which "isolated Australia not only from Afro-Asian nations, but also from the United States".² Australian action seemed to be the reverse of the trend towards stronger allegiance to America.

Following the Suez Crisis Eden resigned from the Prime Ministership and was succeeded by Harold MacMillan and in 1958 General De Gaulle assumed power in France. The treaties of Rome set up the European Economic Community and Euratom, which posed a further problem for Australian-British relations in the event that Britain decided to apply for membership.³ The value of the Commonwealth would almost inevitably diminish further until it became, as Menzies feared it would, a "little United Nations" that passed judgment

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1. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965, p.303.
 2. *ibid.*
 3. The first British application was made in 1961.

on its own members, took votes and handed down decisions. Despite the apparent anomaly of the Suez Crisis the drift in Australian policy away from dependence on Britain towards a closer alliance with the United States continued, a further link with the Pacific area being forged by the growth of Australian trade with Japan. In September, 1957, trade agreements were made and Menzies stated explicitly that Australia's economic prosperity depended, in part at least, on economic links with Japan. Strategically he saw that "peace and defence in the Pacific will be assisted by a Japan which peacefully trades with the nations of the free world and is not within the orbit of the Soviet Union".¹ Menzies' attitude was that the Pacific would be strengthened, Australian security enhanced and Australia's economic prosperity guaranteed by the trade treaty with Japan, a treaty that would be "a sound step in Australia's march to a great future".²

Australian relations with Japan were therefore in an unusual position. Both economic and military security advantages acted in the same direction. The pressure against close co-operation came from two

1. C.P.D., (5/9/1957), p.401.

2. C.P.D., (5/9/1957), p.406.

sources and was voiced through the Labour Party as a spokesman for the unions, which were against cheap Japanese goods flooding the market, and the Returned Servicemen's League which continually pressured against allegiance with Japan on ideological grounds, based in attitudes formed twelve years earlier in the Second World War. Nevertheless the treaty was signed. Japan had been taking a growing share of Australian wool and primary products and had continually been running a deficit on the current account on the balance of trade and Australia's surplus of exports over imports to Japan had steadily increased. The treaty formalized trade arrangements and put them on a more equitable basis. In this case Australian military security and economic advantage lay in the same direction.

The treaty with Japan was a recognition that an economically sound Japan would be a potential ally in any anti-communist engagement.¹ Although Menzies still emphasised that the Soviet Union was the greatest potential threat, the area of possible conflict had moved. The redefinition of the area would ultimately

1. It would also provide a more integrated economic relationship within the Pacific area by providing an alternative outlet for Australian exports.

lead to the redefinition of the greatest threat, from Russia to China. As this definition changed the importance of alliances within the Pacific would grow and it was here that the greatest problem lay. Australia's economic security was coming to depend more and more on the sale of exports to Asia and the two largest markets in the Asian area were Japan and China (despite non-recognition). At the same time Australia's greatest competitor in the area was the United States. The result was a distinction between economic and military security and Australian foreign policy was forced to operate continuously with this dilemma. China was taking an increasing proportion of Australian trade and it was therefore necessary to maintain stable economic relations.¹ This economic tie to China could have potentially been the cause of political tension with the United States, Australia's great and powerful friend that held the promise of political security. Australian political and economic realities were therefore in constant tension --- a tension demonstrated by the reported differences within the Cabinet between McEwen and Casey, the latter basing his attitude for

1. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.258. A rise of 1.4% as a proportion of total exports in the decade, 1950-60.

restraint in increasing Chinese trade on the assumption of American disfavour.¹ In this context trade with Japan was a useful safety valve that helped Australia's balance of payments problems caused by America.² At the same time it strengthened the political security in the area that was rapidly becoming Australia's main sphere of interest.

In 1958 China suspended trade with Japan and this was used by J. Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, as an example of China's misbehaviour. He criticised trade with China and emphasised that China used trade for political reasons and not commercial. Australian trade with China therefore was a highly contentious issue. Within the government the Country Party was in favour of trade (a proposal also pushed by the A.L.P.),³ and

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1. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.268.
 2. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, (Princeton University Press, 1965), p.251. In 1960 John McEwen, Minister for Trade stated "no great trading nation had obstructed Australia's battle for overseas trade ... more than America".
 3. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.262.

the Liberal Party divided on moral versus economic grounds. In 1958 the United States had put quotas on lead and zinc import, the final spur to Australia's search for markets in China. Albinski considered that the government was aiming "to open further avenues wherever they can".¹

Menzies' position in this trade with China was never made explicit although Albinski does indicate that it was McEwen, not Menzies or any External Affairs Minister, that supported and gave voice to his enthusiastic support of trade with China. Menzies, on the other hand, remained fairly non-committal although he did come out explicitly against Evatt's attitude which favoured a growth in the quantity of exports to China but an embargo on Chinese imports. Albinski also points out that in the 1958, 1961, and 1963 Federal elections, the Liberal Party insisted that Communist China was the greatest threat to Australia. Albinski also shows that the division between the Country Party Leader and the Minister for External Affairs did exist (although he stresses that the division was not

1. Ibid, p.262.

so open and decisive as the Press had claimed).¹ Menzies remained silent over trade with China, seeming to prefer that McEwen and Casey fight between themselves while he maintained his own generalized condemnation of communism without relating it to awkward particulars that could possibly split his supporters. Effective trade with China could be seen as the result of McEwen's efforts and the slump of 1961, as having been reduced by China's imports of Australian goods. Menzies may have owed his re-election in 1961, to the mitigating effect that Chinese trade had on the balance of payments problems but it was certainly not due to his own efforts.²

The 1961 election left the Liberal-Country Party with a House of Representatives majority of only one after the election of a Speaker. This was the closest to defeat that Menzies had come in his whole term in office. This result could be seen as the outcome of the economic situation of the time; the credit squeeze

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1. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.268.
 2. H. S. Albinski, Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China, p.250 - effect of Chinese trade 1960-61.

of 1960 and the balance of payments problems that Australia was encountering. The import bill had risen from 728 million pounds in 1958-9, to 928 million pounds in 1959-60 and then to 1,075 million pounds in 1960-1. In the same period exports rose from 812 million pounds through 942 million pounds and back to 928 million in 1960-1, leaving an adverse trade balance of 157 million pounds. Other overseas payments due totalled approximately two hundred million pounds. The result was a serious depletion of overseas funds.

The policy adopted by the government was one of restrictions on spending, higher taxation and tighter credit controls. No restrictions were put on imports, controls having only just been abandoned. The result of this attempt to handle the situation was depression, business activity slumped and unemployment rose from eighty-nine thousand in October, 1960, to one hundred and sixteen thousand in October, 1961 and one hundred and thirty-one thousand in January, 1962, the ad hoc restrictions having proved to be economically disastrous. This economic situation, coupled with the tension between the Liberal Party and the Country Party eventuated in a near loss for the coalition.

The election had been fought without Mr. Casey who had been awarded a life peerage, the first outside

Britain to receive the title under the newly created peerage rule. This meant that the portfolio of External Affairs was vacant and "there was a good deal of surprise when Mr. Menzies decided to keep the portfolio in his own hands".¹ The two strongest contenders, Spender and Casey had now been removed and Menzies was virtually alone in his control of the Liberal Party and the Government of Australia. Internationally he gave more attention to the problem of Apartheid and its threat to the Commonwealth, than he gave to the economic problems of international trade, particularly the problems and conflicts that arose from trade with China. He made no definitive public statements on Australia-Chinese trade and contented himself with condemning communism in general, not specific terms.

On the Twenty-First of March, 1960, at Sharpville and Langa shots were fired by the police into crowds of African demonstrators, killing seventy and wounding one hundred and eighty-six. This led to the whole notion of the Commonwealth being reappraised at the Prime Ministers' Conference in London, May, 1960. At this conference, Menzies took refuge in the attitude

1. R. G. Boyd, A.J.P.H., Vol. VI, No. 2, p.140.

that it was not within the jurisdiction of a Prime Ministers' Conference to discuss the domestic policies of the member countries and he stated the hope that "adjustment of all disputes and differences will be achieved by orderly and lawful processes for the common benefit of the people of South Africa".¹ He also emphasised that if the criticism of what was essentially a domestic issue of South Africa was accepted as legally justifiable then "somebody might be willing to assert that we are 'also subject to international condemnation and international jurisdiction'".² The stand that he took was that one government should not interfere in matters falling within the domestic sphere of another (although what matters are or are not essentially domestic varies through time and would depend largely on international definition through the United Nations, a point not mentioned by Menzies). In this stand Menzies followed Article Two (Seven) of the United Nations Charter, which states that "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any

1. C.P.D., (31/3/1960), p.789.

2. C.P.D., (31/3/1960), p.789.

state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII¹.

However, in its Advisory Opinion of 1950, the International Court of Justice had previously declared that South Africa remained bound by the terms of the obligations of the mandate on South West Africa. Also articles Fifty-five and Fifty-six of the United Nations Charter, stating that "universal respect for and observation of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion will be given" militate against Apartheid being defined as a purely domestic matter that should be of no concern outside South Africa.¹

In taking his stand Menzies aligned Australia against almost the rest of the world. The attitude was reinforced by the assumption that if the interference was justified then Australia may have found itself in a similar situation over the administration of Papua-New Guinea and over the Australian immigration policy. Within the Australian Parliament, debate was restricted

1. Rosalyn Higgins, "International Action and Domestic Jurisdiction" in R. Segal (ed.), Sanctions Against South Africa. (Penguin, 1964), pp.92-99.

and ceased altogether when Menzies stated that he "doubted whether further debate would have any beneficial effect".¹ A strong motivation for Menzies' attitude was the desire to keep the Commonwealth (particularly the "old Commonwealth") together, but if this was at the expense of discussion and criticism of genuine issues then the value of the organization must be questioned.² His attitude was that the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth would severely weaken the organization. He stated that "the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another country is at the very root of Commonwealth relations" and emphasised that "South Africa is out of the Commonwealth. It is not the Verwoerd Government that is out. It is the Union of South Africa; the nations evolved by the great liberal statesmanship of 1909".³

To Menzies this was the beginning of a final phase in the Commonwealth's existence. The acceptance

1. A.J.P.H., Vol. VI, No. 2, quoted in R. G. Boyd.
2. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, p.230-1. A similar failure occurred over Kashmir where the London Conference of 1951 and the informal talks between the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India were unsuccessful.
3. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.654.

of India into the Commonwealth in 1949 had begun the decline by admission of member countries that did not owe allegiance to the Crown. In 1960 the expulsion of a member because of its internal policies marked the beginning of the second stage in the disintegration of the Commonwealth association. Sadly Menzies affirmed that "I make no apology for having maintained and expressed it (his attitude towards domestic sovereignty) at the certain risk of misrepresentation. And let me say quite plainly that in defending this truth I felt that I was defending my own country, its sovereign rights and its future".¹ This was the beginning of the end of the Commonwealth for Menzies. It had lost the old high sentiments and sense of purpose, it was divided over every issue and gained nothing from the division. On top of that he was faced with internal dissention within his own government and a near defeat at the elections in 1961.

Compounding the effect of South Africa's expulsion from the Commonwealth, was the possibility that Britain, the Mother Country, would reduce active involvement with the Commonwealth in favour of an economic alliance

1. C.P.D., (11/4/1961), p.654.

with Europe. The Common Market had become a fact and Britain was petitioning for entry. Alan Watt illustrates Menzies' general attitude that British wisdom supported by American power should be supreme, that the institutions fostered by Britain and enforced by the United States should be a model to the world, "Robert Gordon Menzies lived in the world of Anglo-Saxon governance, largely untouched by non-European cultural traditions".¹ Watt points to the rigidity of Australian foreign policy from 1956 to 1966, a time when no new treaties were made (like SEATO or ANZUS), where the immigration policy continued to be a slight to South East Asian countries and where regardless of the consequences in terms of goodwill from the Afro-Asian bloc, Menzies pursued the policy of Anglo-Saxon infallibility and strength.²

That this attitude was acceptable to the Australian electorate seemed to be confirmed by the 1963 election. An election that occurred at a time which many

1. A. Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, p.309.

2. Ibid, p.307. See Menzies' actions over the resolution of Ghana, India, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia and Indonesia, October, 1960 - The United Nations.

politicians thought inopportune, McEwen publicly stating that he did not consider that the time was right for an election, but co-operated in the action which had been precipitated solely by Menzies. It was the shortest election that the government had ever fought. From Opening Speech to Polling Day was eighteen days. It was also the first election that made heavy use of television as the medium of communication and in the background was the uncertainty caused by the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas. An uncertainty over the stability of politics and a possible trend to conservatism as a reaction. Menzies' success at the election was overwhelming, the government gained ten seats and transformed its majority of two into a majority of twenty-two. As Whittington points out¹ "there was so little to choose between the 'welfare-state' offers of the contending parties that the only real differences were those of foreign and defence policy" and that the Labour Party had emerged badly from controversy over the erection of an American naval radio-base in Western Australia and over the newly formed Malaysia and the stationing of troops there. Menzies' personality and appearance were also

1. D. Whittington, The Rulers, p.70.

influential factors, particularly in the kind of campaign that television made possible. Television fostered an immediacy and a certain intimacy with the candidate that invited reactions on the personal rather than political level. The period leading up to this election had been marked also by economic recovery and the economic pressures of the credit squeeze had disappeared.

In December, 1961, Menzies had resigned the portfolio of Minister for External Affairs in favour of Sir Garfield Barwick, a well known barrister, but untried politician. Barwick was apparently being groomed by Menzies to take over the Prime Ministership and the first hint of Menzies' retirement from politics could be seen in this action. It was still Menzies, however, who maintained effective control, a control that seemed to have been growing ever since Suez, despite the slight setback of 1961. Menzies' benevolent despotism reached its pinnacle in 1963 with the overwhelming electoral success that could only be ascribed to his personal ability.

A problem that faced Australia between the 1961 and 1963 elections was relations with Indonesia, initially over West New Guinea and later over confrontation with Malaysia. Over West New Guinea

Australia had in 1961, supported the Dutch in their resolution to the United Nations that gave the people of West New Guinea the right to opt either for independence or political integration with Indonesia. The Netherlands, however, withdrew the resolution and this "shook Australia's position".¹ The acceptance of the Netherland's resolution had involved rejection of an Indian resolution that called for bi-lateral negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Barwick, as Minister for External Affairs had implied that Australia would become directly involved if war eventuated, but in early January 1962, diplomatic support was withdrawn from the Dutch. Menzies stated that the purpose of accepting the Indonesian claim was to cement relations with Asia. He neglected to mention that the rejection of the Indian proposal had already caused the opposite effect and that withdrawal of support from the Dutch looked much more like yielding to pressure than pursuing an active policy, particularly after Barwick's strong encouragement to the Netherlands. Menzies must have also accepted the attitude taken by

1. C. Grimshaw, A.J.P.H., Vol. VIII, No. 1, May, 1962, p.5 and following. See also C.P.D., (27/4/1961), pp.1247-1253.

the United States and virtually overrode Barwick in his statement of the First of March 1962, where Menzies claimed that the government's intention was to accept the Indonesian situation, saying that "this great journal 'The Sydney Morning Herald', aided by my friend opposite 'Caldwell', had devoted a great deal of time last year to telling me I was too anxious to be friends with Great Britain and the United States, and that I ought to be cultivating the Asian nations ... Now, of course, they attack me because I do not want to go to war with Asia".¹ In effect the same charge, that Menzies was anxious to be friends with Great Britain and the United States would still apply as the action certainly did not cultivate the Asian nations, it was too long overdue for that. What it did prevent was the possibility of forcing the United States into a choice between Indonesian and Australian interests, a choice the outcome of which was by no means guaranteed.

This provided a further illustration of Menzies' assessment of international relations in power terms and was possibly the result of estimating the relative values of either pursuing a policy that was almost bound to fail, and in the process alienate America, or

1. C.P.D., (1/3/1962), p.411.

alternatively of accepting the situation and endeavouring to reduce rather than exacerbate the tensions between Australia and America.

In August 1962, an agreement was made that left the Dutch with an undertaking from Indonesia that Papuan interests "would be properly taken care of". This was a clear victory for Indonesia which had landed troops in New Guinea to force a decision. President Sukarno, in his Independence Day Address on Seventeenth of August, 1963, described the previous year as the "Year of Triumph".¹

On the Twenty-Fifth of September, 1963, Menzies promised support for Malaysia in maintaining the territorial integrity of the area. Sukarno had explicitly stated his intention to "crush Malaysia" and Australia was forced into the position of offering support. As early as 1955 Menzies had guaranteed support to Malaya which was the traditional outpost of Britain in the South East Asian area. He stated that

1. J. M. Pluvier, A Study in Indonesian Politics - Confrontation, (O.U.P., 1965), p.63 and following for the implication in terms of Australian military security, particularly the notion of Malaysia as a "safety valve" that would, if it failed, be replaced by Australia.

"the people of Malaya ... will welcome such military arrangements as will help to preserve their present and future freedom".¹ The small force that was sent to Malaya at that time was designed to deal with the communist bandits that were preventing Malaya from gaining independence. Menzies had always appeared willing to commit Australia to Malayan defence because he considered that "United Kingdom" and New Zealand and Australian troops in Malaya will represent not only a true defence in depth for Australia itself, but also a source of strength to our Asian friends".² However, Millar sees Menzies' reassurance to Malaya as being given "with a degree of emotion, following Indonesia's rejection of the findings of the U.N. Mission and her renewed attack on a small neighbour which was a Commonwealth country",³ but Millar also points out that Menzies' assurance was later interpreted as offering much less complete commitment than it had appeared to do at the time. Australia's intervention was circumspect

1. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.49-50.

2. C.P.D., Vol. 6, (20/4/1955), pp.49-50. He also included Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Philippines and Indonesia.

3. T. B. Millar, Australia's Defence, p.75.

and there was initial reluctance to send ground troops to Borneo in an effort to maintain relations with Indonesia. The emotional content of Menzies' attitude could be attributed to his concept of Malaya as an integral part of Australian defence in depth against an oncoming communism. In 1955 it had also meant a move to Malaya as the pivot of Australian defence. This attitude was consistent, expressed again in 1957 when he stated his view that commitment to Malaya and defence beyond Australia's coast was a necessity in view of the cold war and the increasing possibilities of confined wars that nuclear potential implied.¹

Australia, New Zealand and the Malayan area were members of a loosely defined and informal organization structure called ANZAM which committed the countries to defence of the area. Little information is available about this informal arrangement but T. B. Millar indicates that the origins of the organization were in an agreement to "consult and co-ordinate military planning and activities ... at first limited to the defence of sea and air communication in the region,

1. C.P.D., Vol. 14, (4/4/1957), pp.572-573.

while co-ordination was concluded at service level and did not involve firm commitments by the government concerned. Subsequently ... planning responsibility under ANZAM was extended to cover the defence of Malaya".¹ This began with the stationing of aircraft of the RAAF and ships of the RAN in and around Malaya from 1950. The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve was stationed in the area as a deterrent to any external attack and was used in 1964 against communist guerillas and Indonesian guerillas in Thailand and Malaysia. When Malaysia was officially created, in September 1963, Australia was already strongly committed both through the formal SEATO arrangements and the informal ANZAM pact that made recognition of the new Malaysia almost a formality.

Menzies was once again in the main stream of British foreign policy and Australian action was prompt against a background of international unrest in areas close to Australia and a growing external communist reality that could be regarded as a potential threat to Australia. With a policy that was virtually identical to that of Labour on the internal measures and a stable economy Menzies went to the country and was

1. T. B. Millar, Australia's Defence, (M.U.P., 1965), pp.70-74.

re-elected overwhelmingly in December, 1963.

Menzies' support of Malaysia seemed to be based on his idea of the importance of Malaysia to British foreign policy rather than to a recognition of the importance of other South East Asian powers to Australian defence. Menzies was quite willing to antagonise India and South East Asia over his policies towards Indonesia as in the New Guinea issue, but when Malaysia was threatened by a similar Indonesian manoeuvre support was given almost immediately. Both actions were taken in the name of protection of Australian interests 'in depth'. However, the resulting situation was one in which Australia was acting defensively against 'communism' in Malaysia but not in New Guinea.¹ This situation may once again have been due to the assessment of international affairs from a "power politics" stand point. Australia could do little once America had withdrawn support from the Dutch and maintenance of a defence tie in the Pacific with Britain could have been regarded as maintaining a defence

1. F. Alexander, A.J.P.H., Vol. XI, No. 1, p.1.

Also mentions this "confusing" situation.

relationship with the area.¹ If Menzies had hoped to consolidate British, Malaysian and Australian interests within the Commonwealth he failed. As Alan Watt points out "the attitude of Malaysia towards the Commonwealth has in some respects been distinctly offhanded. Singapore was ejected from the Malaysian Federation without any prior notification to the United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand, whose military aid - especially that of the United Kingdom - was vital to the survival of Malaysia in face of Indonesian confrontation".² If this hope for the Commonwealth was, in part, Menzies' motivation for Australian action in Malaya and his "nostalgia for the past" was the basis of the approach to foreign policy, then the later action of Malaysia must have finally dispelled all hope for the Commonwealth. However, the separation of Singapore from Malaysia still gained full support

1. T. B. Millar, Australia's Defence, p.76. Implies that this action may also have created tension between Australia's relationship to Britain and to America ... "One hopes that the United States was consulted, since there were repercussions on both ANZUS and SEATO".
2. A. Watt, Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965, p.322.

from the Australian government.

In 1964 Sir Garfield Barwick accepted appointment as Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, leaving the portfolio of Minister of External Affairs vacant after only a little over two years of occupancy. In that time his effect was negligible and the actions of the Australian government seem to have been dominated by Menzies. Mr. Paul Hasluck was appointed Minister for External Affairs in place of Barwick but there was an interim period while the new Minister familiarised himself with the workings of the department and re-established contacts overseas.

In this time the situation in Vietnam was worsening. Australia had sent thirty military instructors to South Vietnam as early as 1962 and this had later been increased to one hundred, together with six Caribou aircraft and approximately one million pounds per annum in aid. Menzies stated that "I felt there was a growing realization of the importance of South East Asia (in America). This was a matter of some satisfaction to us because although we knew all too well the vital significance of the relationships across the Atlantic, we also felt the problems of South East Asia very near home and that our immediate security

in Australia was much involved in them".¹ Menzies went on to explain that involvement in Vietnam came under the SEATO agreement, Vietnam being included as a protocol state. National service was introduced in 1964 to augment the regular army and Menzies stated that "it seems clear, on our military advice and our own carefully formed judgment, that we cannot expect by voluntary means to achieve a build up in the army's strength of the order we require and to the timing which is necessary".² The point of the build up was to prepare against communist aggression in Laos and South Vietnam and to guarantee the effectiveness of SEATO, "because the further communist powers are kept away from us the more secure we will feel".³ This announcement was made five days after Menzies had stated (in Hobart) that National Service was "not the most effective way of creating the army we need to meet the situation we face". T. B. Millar points out that the reversal may have been due to American pressure or have been related to Australia's overt conflict in Malaya where Australian troops had fought

1. C.P.D., (13/8/1964), p.185.

2. C.P.D., (10/11/1964), p.2717.

3. C.P.D., (10/11/1964), p.2716.

Indonesian troops only a few days before.¹

This introduction of compulsory National Service provided the extra men to form a basis for committing forces into Borneo and Vietnam in April 1965. Australian involvement in Vietnam was the final move in a policy of reinforcement of American action, a decision that had been taken in principle some time before it became an act and an expression of Australian-American solidarity. Menzies saw in the situation in Vietnam that "the takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South East Asia. It must be seen as part of a threat by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans".²

Menzies retired from office early in 1966, at the age of seventy-one, leaving Australia involved in war in Vietnam, commitments in Malaysia and Borneo, a security relationship in South East Asia with America that transcended British ties and a reproof to the Commonwealth expressed through his government's decision not to send a representative to the Lagos Commonwealth

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1. T. B. Millar, Australia's Defence Policies 1945-1965. Department of International Relations A.N.U. 1967, Working Paper No. 7, p.67.
 2. C.P.D., Vol. 45, (29/4/1965), p.1060.

Conference on Rhodesia. Australia had aimed at security and security in 1965 meant strong ties and alliances with the United States and included the requirement that Australia become identified, to a high degree, with American foreign policy and political decisions. Millar claims "it has made Australia amenable to American influence and responsive to American interests. This is the penalty for a privileged position".¹ At the conclusion of Menzies' term in office Australia was militarily committed in South East Asia, politically aligned with the United States, economically linked to Japan and Communist China (both of which were growing in importance while the Commonwealth link reduced) and placed firmly in the Pacific as a power of strategic importance to Asia.

1. T. B. Millar, Australia's Defence Policies 1945-1965. Department of International Relations, A.N.U. 1967, Working Paper No. 7, p.74.

Conclusion

During his term in office Menzies' endeavoured to stay the pressures that were forcing Australia away from traditional allegiance to Britain and at the same time attempted to maintain close contact and co-operation with the United States of America. By the end of his Prime Ministership the Commonwealth as a unified entity had crumbled and the network of alliances between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries had proliferated to such an extent that he accorded the Commonwealth tie only secondary importance. Despite Menzies' efforts to justify and maintain a strong Commonwealth organization, the link between members became more theoretic and more tenuous as time passed. His suggestion for an inner Commonwealth was ignored.

At the same time Australia's relations with America became more and more important as the Commonwealth tie diminished (although there was no necessary casual link). Australia's geographic position and Britain's diminishing involvement in the area "east of Suez" fostered Australian efforts to seek both economic and military commitments in the Pacific area. America was a logical ally in this area and ANZUS and SEATO formalized Australia's defence relationships in the

Pacific and in South East Asia. Menzies' interpretation of international politics in power terms implied the necessity of such defence arrangements even though he regretted the non-inclusion of Britain in ANZUS, for American support could be seen as guaranteeing Australian security against the threat of communist attack. The formation of a Western dominated power bloc in the area must have appeared to Menzies as something of a strategic military triumph.

Australia's economic security also rested in part on America, for investment both private and public provided a part of the stimulus for Australian economic growth by giving employment and concurrent income and also by adding to the capital stock of the country. Economic relations with America however had a negative side, in terms of the costs incurred by Australia in servicing loans from America (both public and private), by the import restrictions which the American government placed on many categories of production that provided an important part of Australia's export earnings (notably lead and zinc), and by the strong competition for markets by Australian and American products. The effort to find new markets to replace the relatively decreasing demand for Australian goods by Britain led

to a growth in Australian trade with China and Japan and a further strengthening of Australian ties in the Asian and Pacific area where Australia's comparative disadvantage in terms of geographic location was diminished.

During Menzies' term the economic and political associations and requirements of Australia had changed radically. From a nation tied both economically, politically and strategically to Britain and the British Commonwealth, Australia emerged into the relative insecurity of international independence (in the sense that economic and military decisions could no longer be made within a frame of reference set by one source, previously Britain).

The changed orientation meant that military security now implied strong economic pressures that were partly resolved through trade treaties with China, the political enemy. An important aspect of Australian security was therefore provided by a country that was not diplomatically recognised by Australia, a country that was generally regarded as the most likely enemy. A further complicating factor was that China had taken Australian primary produce, mainly wheat, and this was in the interests of the Country Party as it

maintained the prosperity of the farmers. Consequently, even if minerals and alternative exports could have been found to balance the deficit there would still have been strong pressures to sell primary produce to China. The economic relief that China gave therefore had internal political overtones as well.

With Britain hastening the trend away from a workable Commonwealth by continually affirming the desire to join the European Economic Community and the weakening of the older Commonwealth caused by the expulsion of South Africa, Menzies' ambitions for the Commonwealth were forced into abeyance.

Against this trend Menzies consistently attempted to reinforce the Commonwealth, maintain the close Australian-British tie that had previously existed and preserve what he considered to be the correct balance in the world. In his world view Australia would maintain primary links with Britain and the Commonwealth, links that would be reinforced by defence alliances with the United States. He saw the United States as having substantially the same value orientations and devotion to democracy that had inspired all British institutions. This, coupled to the economic and military power of the United States would, to Menzies, guarantee at once the security and preservation of the established

institutional framework.

Events forced Menzies to watch the transformation of Australia's position in world affairs and, despite his personal convictions and aims, prevented him from changing the direction of the current. His actions over Suez were a little like those of King Canute and were equally unsuccessful.

A further important aspect of Australia's foreign policy under Menzies was the alternatives foregone. His accent on the Commonwealth tie and on military alliances coupled with the virtual repudiation of the United Nations as a mediatory force meant that Dr. Evatt's hopes for the United Nations and for the future of effective international organizations were denied. Although reference of all international problems to the United Nations was not a real alternative to foreign policy this reference rather than reliance on the Commonwealth, with the consequent efforts to maintain the Commonwealth ties could be seen as an alternative policy. Similarly a more definite policy towards India and South East Asia, could be seen as an alternative direction in which Australian foreign policy may have

moved had it not been for Menzies.¹ In this sense Menzies may be said to have given some direction to policy and to Australia's place in the world, but for the most part, his own international ambitions remained unsatisfied, Australia's situation largely being determined by outside forces that autonomously affected Australia and were largely uninfluenced by Australian interests.

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1. Despite Casey's orientation and active interest towards this area the main strands of Australian foreign policy, under Menzies, were primarily focussed elsewhere, in maintaining links with Britain and the U.S.A., that frequently opposed the interests of South East Asia.

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