

The ANZUS Treaty Revisited

Joseph M. Siracusa

Conceived in close connection with the conclusion of a 'soft' Japanese peace treaty, the ANZUS Treaty was negotiated only after much tough bargaining. The main source of contention was paradoxically the bipartisan determination of Australian leaders on both sides of the floor to establish a binding security relationship between their country and the United States and the equally firm resolve of American policymakers not to embark on anything of the kind. Put simply, Canberra wanted strategic assurances that the United States would come to her aid in the next time of troubles; Washington wanted cooperation, an opportunity to take advantage of the island continent's unique geographical position in the Western Pacific, as well as the overall political positioning Southeast Asia. Neither got exactly what it wanted. Nonetheless, for more than fifty years, the ANZUS Alliance has been at the heart of Australia's foreign and defence policy. And whatever the next crisis - China, North Korea or Iran - America will doubtless become more, not less important to Canberra in the years ahead.

The Cold War saw Australia, naturally and even automatically, on the side of America. In this sense the traditional image of Australia as a safe ally of the United States is substantially correct. However, it implies a tendency to subservience on the side of the junior partner that generally has been conspicuously lacking. The two Pacific nations customarily have been as one on major ideological and strategic issues. Their relationship in other areas justly could be called turbulent, particularly during the tense and frustrating years of developing East-West confrontation immediately after the defeat of the Axis. The recurring collisions between Canberra and Washington in the early Cold War period did not reflect any real ideological difference between the Australian Labor government and the Truman administration. The main source of contention was paradoxically the bipartisan determination of Australian leaders to establish a binding security relationship between their country and the United States and the equally firm and bipartisan resolve of American policymakers not to embark upon anything of the kind in the existing circumstances. Australia wanted an alliance; the United States wanted cooperation; and neither got exactly what it wanted.

Strains in the relationship had been apparent even before the defeat of their common enemies. Australian Prime Minister John Curtin and Minister for External Affairs Herbert V. Evatt were appalled to discover early in 1942 that the Americans had originated the 'Atlantic First' strategy, which assigned top priority to the defeat of Germany rather than to Japan.¹ This revelation

¹ G St J Barclay, 'Australia Looks to America: The Wartime Relationship, 1939-1942', *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 46, May 1977, pp. 251-71.

engendered suspicions of American intentions in the Pacific that at times approximated paranoia.

Allied successes in the Pacific through 1943 gradually allayed Australian anxieties over the possibility of Japanese victory. From then on Australian fears were concentrated on the implications of American victory. These appeared to derive some substance from statements by US Navy Secretary Frank Knox and Robert B. McCormick, editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, that after the war US security might require the control of bases in the island groups of the British Commonwealth as well as in former Japanese mandates in the Pacific.² Australian concern was not allayed in the least by the assurance of Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles that the United States had no intention of interfering with the sovereignty of the island peoples of the region.³ Evatt next engineered with New Zealand a joint agreement affirming that there should be no change of sovereignty affecting any of the former colonial territories south of the equator without the sanction of Canberra and Wellington. Reactions in Washington were predictably unfavourable. Secretary of State Cordell Hull ridiculed the so-called ANZAC Pact as proposing 'a Monroe Doctrine for the South Pacific', and told New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser that it 'seemed to be on all four, so far as the tone and method are concerned, with the Russian action toward Great Britain'.⁴ The New Zealander agreed, thus strengthening Hull's disposition to cast Evatt as the villain of the piece. Former US Ambassador to Japan Joseph C. Grew also referred to Evatt's 'assertive leadership', and thought US policy toward territorial problems in the South Pacific should be 'chiefly to prevent the somewhat expansionist tendencies which have their roots mainly in Australia rather than in New Zealand from unduly complicating the relations of the United States with the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands'.⁵ Consequently, each government suspected the other's ambitions.

Part of the problem undoubtedly lay in Evatt's personality. No altruistic and unequivocally Western-aligned diplomat ever succeeded in making himself more detested by the people he was most anxious to placate. Sir Alexander Cadogan, the admittedly acerbic British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, described him as 'the most frightful man in the world', and he noted gleefully that 'everyone by now hates Evatt so much that his stock has gone

² External Affairs II, Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) A989 441735/260/4, *US Use of Postwar Installations*, Australian Archives; and high commissioner for Australia in New Zealand to Evatt, 20 Dec. 1943, External Affairs II, CRS A989, 44/735/321/8, *PWR Far East and the Pacific. Post War Security Bases*, Australian Archives.

³ CRS A989,44/735/260/4, *US Use of Postwar Installations*.

⁴ For full documentation, see US, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1944: The British Commonwealth and Europe*, 3, Washington, D.C., 1965, pp. 16-209. Hereafter cited as *FRUS*. G St J Barclay and J M Siracusa, (eds), *Australian-American Relations Since 1945: A Documentary History*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Sydney, 1976.

⁵ Grew to Henry L. Stimson, 22 June 1945, *FRUS* 1945, 6: pp. 574-76.

down a bit and he matters less'.⁶ State Department Legal Specialist Henry Reiff warned that Evatt's presence at the United Nations 'bodes trouble' and that his arguments were only a facade to mask Australian ambitions in the region.⁷ Even Hull was impressed by Evatt's bad manners. The US representative in Canberra, Nelson T. Johnson, found the Australian minister's 'increasing megalomania' more deserving of comment.⁸ It was not an auspicious beginning for a close and harmonious relationship.

It was also quite misleading. Evatt was anything but anti-American in either his public policy or his private statements. He was sincere when he told Secretary of State James F. Byrnes that 'leadership by your country is the basis of the Pacific settlement'. The basic difficulty was that the Truman Administration was not prepared to assume the particular leadership role that Evatt had in mind. There were two main reasons for this. First, Evatt clearly believed that Australian-American relations should be conceived in terms of a partnership of equals with full and effective consultations on all matters of common interest. The United States was not prepared to recognize Australia as an equal partner. American policy-makers were not prepared to accept the right of Australia to be consulted on issues in which no real Australian interest could be discerned. Second, and perhaps an even more serious concern was Evatt's conviction that the United States should underwrite a formal military alliance in the Pacific, which the Americans considered to be both politically unacceptable and strategically counterproductive. Empire by invitation seldom ran smoothly.⁹ Australian-American confrontation, therefore, was effectively guaranteed. Evatt was prepared to allow the US Navy to establish a base on the island of Manus in the Australian-mandated Admiralty Group, on the condition that reciprocal facilities were made available to the Royal Australian Navy in American ports. The Americans preferred to abandon the Manus project.¹⁰ Evatt then demanded that the United States include in its peace treaty with Thailand a clause denying Thailand the right to enter into any international commodity arrangements unless Australia also were given the opportunity to join, and he told John R. Minter, US chargé in Canberra, that he regarded American interference in Thai affairs as an unfriendly act. Minter replied that Evatt's insistence on including the clause could be regarded as equally unfriendly.¹¹

⁶ D Dilks, (ed), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-45*, Cassell, London, 1971, p. 745.

⁷ Memorandum for President, 30 October 1945, 'Australia and the ICJ', United Nations File, 1944-46, Papers of Henry Reiff, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

⁸ Johnson to Hull, 1 Feb. 1944, 747.474/26. Decimal Files, Department of State, National Archives, Washington (hereafter cited by file number, followed by DF, DSNA).

⁹ Memorandum of conversation, 27 Oct. 1945, 711.47/10-2745, DF, DS NA. See also P G Edwards, 'Evatt and the Americans', *Historical Studies*, vol. 18, Oct. 1979, pp. 546-60.

¹⁰ R J Bell, 'Australian-American Discord: Negotiations for Postwar Bases and Security Arrangements in the Pacific, 1944-46', *Australian Outlook*, vol. 27, Apr. 1973, pp. 12-33.

¹¹ Minter to Acheson, 12 Apr. 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, 8: pp. 963-4.

The peace settlement went through as planned. Undersecretary of State Dean G. Acheson warned President Truman that Evatt's concept of a 'US-Australia-New Zealand joint defense scheme analogous to the US-Canada joint defense scheme' should be resolutely opposed as being 'premature, inadvisable and likely to encourage the USSR to advocate similar over-all arrangements elsewhere not to the advantage of the United Nations or the US'.¹² To make sure that Evatt's opportunities to push this particular barrow himself in Washington would be limited, Acting Chief of Protocol Stanley Woodward advised that requests by the Australian Minister for External Affairs for an audience with Truman should not be overly encouraged. 'If an appointment is made', he wrote stiffly, 'the Department hopes very much that it will be at the convenience of the President rather than at Mr Evatt's'.¹³

On 8 July 1946, Acheson agreed that the two countries should establish full ambassadorial relations as 'the natural consequence of the increasingly close and cordial relations between Australia and the United States'.¹⁴ However, the choice of appointees to the new positions served to illuminate the highly asymmetrical nature of the relationship. Richard G. Casey had been the first Australian Minister in Washington in 1941. One of the most experienced of Australian diplomats, Sir Frederic Eggleston, had held the post since 1945. The new ambassador, Norman J. Makin, was a former minister, a speaker of the House of Representatives, and the first President of the Security Council. By contrast, the first US ambassador to Australia, Robert Butler, was a businessman who had held his only previous official post thirty years before. He had then been deputy governor of Mindanao. Drew Pearson categorized him as 'one of the most well-meaning but left-handed of American Ambassadors'.¹⁵ He certainly seemed incredibly unaware of what was expected of him on ceremonial occasions, opening an exhibition of paintings including works by the Duchess of Gloucester with the brief speech: 'I like art; this is it'.¹⁶

Butler nevertheless appears to have been popular in Australia. Not even the most adept ambassador could have done much to compensate for Evatt's unflinching skill in enraging his American colleagues. Another bitter wrangle soon developed over the decision of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) to authorize a Japanese whaling expedition to the Antarctic during the 1946-47 season. Evatt claimed that the decision had been taken unilaterally by SCAP, with no prior consultation with interested Allied governments such as Australia. George Acheson, Jr., US political adviser in Japan, claimed that in fact there had been at least prior notification of the SCAP decision and that Evatt's statement was therefore dishonest in its

¹² Acheson to Truman, 8 May 1946, PSF, Foreign Affairs-Australia, Truman Library.

¹³ Woodward to Matthew Connally, 4 June 1946, OF, 48-D, Australia, Truman Library.

¹⁴ Press release, 8 July 1946, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Butler to Connally, 26 Dec. 1947, PPF, file 1054, Truman Library.

¹⁶ Butler to Truman, 11 June 1947, *ibid.*

implications. In any case Acheson told Secretary of State George C. Marshall that,

Australian distorted pronouncements and unwarranted criticisms have been so violent and so widely publicized in the Far East that, US decisions having been made and announced, question has resolved itself into one of upholding prestige of US in Japan and throughout Far East.... It is the opinion here of those closely familiar with Australian political scene that Australian protesters flow from policy of endeavouring by loud assertion to bring Australia to place of effective predominance in the Far East...any appeasement of the Australians will without question seriously undermine American prestige in this part of the world.¹⁷

Australia and the United States once again appeared to be not so much partners in peace as rivals bitterly contending for the domination of the Pacific Basin. The contest obviously could not be a serious one. However, what was intensely serious in American eyes was the extent to which Australian intransigence was jeopardizing the effective implementation of Cold War grand strategy. On 8 May 1947, in a speech heralding the Marshall Plan, Acheson had linked Japan with Germany as 'two of the greatest workshops of Europe and Asia, upon whose production Europe and Asia were to an important degree dependent before the war', but which 'have hardly been able even to begin the process of reconstruction because of the lack of a peace settlement'.¹⁸

The main impediment to the conclusion of a peace settlement with Japan was Evatt's commitment to a tough policy toward that country, ultimately involving the destruction of Japan's capacity to wage war, which logically would entail the substantial restriction and supervision of Japan's industrial recovery. The memory of the Japanese threat to the very existence of Australia was fresh. Evatt refused to accept an American invitation to attend a conference on 19 August 1947 to discuss the formulation of a draft peace settlement with Japan. He instead set up his own conference in Canberra for 26 August. An open breach appeared to have been deliberately programmed, but Evatt was consistent in his unpredictability. He visited General MacArthur in Tokyo in July and apparently was converted to the American position with respect to Japan, assuring the sceptical Acheson on his departure that 'his desire was that the British Commonwealth cooperate with the United States to the fullest in conjunction with Japan'.¹⁹ In the meantime back in Canberra, he told the bewildered Australian journalists that he and SCAP 'found ourselves in agreement on the steps to be undertaken in negotiating the Japanese Peace Treaty, on the main principles which should be contained in it, and also on the possible lines of

¹⁷ Acheson to Marshall, 5 July 1947, *FRUS* 1947, 7: pp. 248-51.

¹⁸ D G Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, Norton, New York, 1969, p. 345.

¹⁹ Acheson to Marshall, 1 Aug. 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, 6: pp. 268-69.

the supervisory machinery which should be established under the Treaty'.²⁰ The Australian media could cope with this apparent reversal of attitude on Evatt's part only by suggesting that the Minister had discovered that General MacArthur all along had been following Australian policies.

There certainly could be no doubt, as State Department official Robert A. Lovett told Truman, that a serious gap between the two countries seemed to have been closed as a result of Evatt's visit to Tokyo, and that 'he and General Macarthur got along famously'.²¹ Nor was there any possible doubt that Evatt had every desire to get along famously with President Truman. He assured the President that he was a devoted friend and admirer, lauded him for his 'own innate strength which is stronger because of your humanity and your consideration at all times for the toilers and the underprivileged', claimed that 'no sane man can doubt your complete devotion to the cause of peace and the betterment of all mankind', and concluded with the rather surprising news that Ambassador Butler 'had won the confidence and friendship of all sections of this community'.²² Truman could have done no less under the circumstances than reply that he believed that it was 'essential that Australia and the United States be on the friendliest terms', and that he hoped that Evatt would make it a point always to come and see him when he was in the United States,²³ a hope that his advisers obviously were determined should be fulfilled as seldom as possible. This almost conventional response to the President's evoked an even more effusive 'personal message of good will and, if I may say, affectionate admiration' from Evatt presumably to inspire Truman in his impending contest with Governor Thomas E. Dewey.²⁴

Evatt was sincere in his good wishes for Truman's victory at the polls. In one of his last ministerial speeches he stressed the need for 'the maintenance of our special relationship with the United States of America', with which he considered Australia to be on terms of 'close and cordial comradeship'.²⁵ By contrast, the Americans could see nothing but trouble ahead so long as Evatt remained Minister for External Affairs. Lovett had warned Truman earlier about Evatt's 'aggressive, egocentric manner and blunt address in debate and personal relations', and he felt that 'it is not always clear whether he is motivated by true patriotism or simply by egotism'.²⁶ A State Department policy paper noted grimly that 'the Australian attitude towards the Indonesian decolonization conflict is not helpful to our efforts to obtain a

²⁰ Australian Department of External Affairs, *Current Notes on International Affairs*, vol. 18 (Aug. 1947), pp. 469-74 (hereafter cited as *CNIA*).

²¹ Lovett to Truman, 7 Oct. 1947, PSF, Foreign Affairs-Australia, Truman Library.

²² Evatt to Truman, 12 Feb. 1948, *ibid.*

²³ Truman to Evatt, 8 Mar. 1948, *ibid.*

²⁴ Makin to Truman, 10 Sept. 1948, PPF, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library (hereafter cited as Truman Papers).

²⁵ *CNIA* 20 (Feb. 1949).

²⁶ Lovett to Truman, 7 Oct. 1947, PSF, Foreign Affairs-Australia, Truman Library.

satisfactory conclusion.... To the extent that this attitude on the part of Australia serves to weaken the democratic front, it has and will prove embarrassing to us'.²⁷ Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal recorded in similar terms that 'Evatt, who is President of the General Assembly, is an active source of both irritation and uncertainty. The result of his activities...has been greatly to undermine the American position among the neutral nations'.²⁸

Even the CIA found the Australian Labor government to be soft on communism and noted for future reference that Evatt's brother had been the President of a Communist front organization in New South Wales.²⁹ The US chargé in Canberra, Andrew B. Foster, believed that Evatt's 'highly academic approach to international problems' would continue to lead to 'an almost automatic opposition to United States proposals and policies in connection with the future of Japan' and that the Labor government as a whole was 'extremely jealous of the independent position of Australia, suspicious of what it regards as American economic imperialism, and determined not to be pushed around', while at the same time continuing to share with the Australian people 'the complacent assumption that when the next war comes, if it does, the United States will bail them out just as it did last time'.³⁰ It appeared that Australia expected to enjoy all the advantages of being an ally without undertaking any of the responsibilities.

Relations scarcely were improved by still another inauspicious US ambassadorial appointment. Myron M. Cowen, lawyer and businessman, had devoted his stint in Canberra between July 1948 and March 1949 mainly to resolving problems of double taxation between Australia and the United States. This in itself would not have aroused much hostility on either side of the Atlantic, but Evatt's sensibilities were outraged when Cowen was transferred on his own request to the Philippines before completing his normal tour of duty in Australia. Evatt's attempts to block his transfer appear to have inspired Cowen to foster Philippine interests at the expense of Australia. Australian Immigration Minister Arthur A. Calwell was amazed to find himself being accused by Cowen in Manila of pursuing 'a private feud with the Philippines'.³¹ Evatt might have been even more amazed as well as enraged to discover that Cowen had been, on his account, 'entirely responsible' for moves to have him replaced as President of the General Assembly by Filipino Carlos P. Romulo.³² He presumably would have been

²⁷ Policy Statement on Australia, 18 Aug. 1948, 711.47/8-1848. DF, DSNA.

²⁸ W Millis, (ed), *The Forrestal Diaries: The Inner History of the Cold War*, Cassell, London, 1952, p. 496.

²⁹ CIA, ORE 9-49, 'Communist Influence in Australia', 15 Apr. 1949, PSF, Foreign Affairs-Australia, Truman Library.

³⁰ Foster to Acheson, 13 May 1949, *FRUS*, 1949. 7: pp. 744-46.

³¹ Calwell to Cowen, 18 July 1949, Miscellaneous Correspondence-Australia, Papers of Myron M. Cowen, Truman Library.

³² Cowen to Foster, 4 Aug. 1949, *ibid.*

more upset had he known that Truman had decided to give the post in Canberra to defeated Alabama Congressman Pete Jarman who had applied for it simply because he needed the money. 'Since I really need to go on the payroll', Jarman appealed, 'I will very much appreciate your expediting my appointment in any way possible'.³³ Some of Truman's supporters did not think that Jarman merited such a handout, although they agreed that Canberra was a suitable place of exile for him. 'I see you have nominated former Rep. Pete Jarman, of Alabama, as Ambassador to Australia', the international trustee of the International Woodworkers of America wrote to Truman. 'That I am sorry to hear. We worked hard here to defeat him, as he was no friend to your program or Labor's, but again it may be wise if you were able to nominate several of the Rep's from the South to posts in some faraway places'.³⁴ Indeed, it might have seemed that Washington was not placing high priority on the improvement of its relations with the Australian Labor government.

The Truman Administration, however, actually was counting on the early departure of the Labor government, taking Evatt with it. Conciliation or even cooperation effectively had been abandoned, and Australian diplomats were confronted with the alarming spectacle of Acheson at his conciliatory worst. Ambassador Makin approached the Secretary in September 1949, apologetically presenting a typically 'urgent' message from Evatt, expressing the Minister's disturbance at learning that discussions had taken place in Washington regarding Far Eastern matters without the participation of an Australian representative. Acheson was furious. The message was 'most surprising...it would be quite impossible for the United States to undertake that it would discuss no matter affecting the Far East except in the presence of a representative from Australia'. Evatt was 'to be under no illusion about the matter but to understand that we would continue to proceed as we had'.³⁵ Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Walton Butterworth urged in similar terms that the United States 'should not accede to any request from Australia at this time to provide a security guarantee', if Evatt were to renew his appeal for a Pacific pact as the price for Australian concurrence in American proposals for a peace settlement with Japan.³⁶ Dominion Affairs Officer J. Harold Shullaw suggested on the eve of the Australian federal elections that 'a Conservative Government would be less inclined to be demagogic and would tend to be more reasonable and less unsympathetic to the United States point of view'.³⁷ On Election Day Ambassador Jarman even wrote to Richard G. Casey, federal President of the Liberal party, congratulating him in advance on his party's defeat of

³³ Jarman to Donald Dawson, 25 May 1949, PPF, Truman Papers.

³⁴ John L. Hawkins to Truman, *ibid.*

³⁵ Memorandum of conversation, 21 Sept. 1949, Papers of Dean G. Acheson, Truman Library.

³⁶ Butterworth to Acheson, 18 Nov. 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 7: pp. 901-2.

³⁷ Shullaw to Acheson, 9 December 1949, 747.U7M.51A, DF, DSNA.

Labor. It was an interesting return for all of Evatt's expressions of goodwill for the Democrats.

Evatt's absence only could make the course of Australian-American relations more harmonious. Washington, however, had not taken full account of what it might be confronted with in his stead. James Plimsoll, a member of the Australian delegation on the Far Eastern Commission, visited his old friend, John M. Allison, director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, to warn him that while the new Australian government 'would wish to go as far as possible in cooperating with the United States on Japanese matters', he was 'certain that such cooperation could be made easier if some sort of definite defense arrangements could be concluded regarding the Pacific between the United States and Australia'.³⁸ Evatt might have passed into the shadows of the Opposition, but his policies were still in the foreground.

In fact, they had acquired a new protagonist who was in many ways far more formidable than Evatt himself. Nobody ever suggested that the new Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Percy C. Spender, possessed Evatt's philosophical breadth and intellectual vision but no one denied that he possessed other qualities more appropriate to the diplomatic arena. Originally, he planned a career as a professional athlete, but he decided instead to practice law where his treatment of hostile witnesses earned him the admiring, if unaffectionate, sobriquet of 'the butcher bird'. His skills were exhibited in his first weeks as minister when he railroaded a series of proposals on economic cooperation through a Commonwealth foreign ministers' conference in Colombo, in January 1950. Opposition was put to flight by simply leaking to the Sydney press a story denouncing the 'disposition in powerful quarters to let things go for the time being...a continuation of the wartime thinking of putting Europe first and letting Asia wait'.³⁹

One particular lesson that Spender learned at Colombo was that the Commonwealth in itself was not an appropriate basis on which to erect a structure of collective security. The question of a Pacific defence pact was, he claimed, 'in this manner, deliberately raised, in order to be dismissed'.⁴⁰ Accordingly, on 9 March 1950, he tuned his song to American ears in a speech that insisted on the need for urgent short-term measures to confront the 'consolidation of Communism in China and the evident threat of its emergence as a growing force throughout South and South East Asia'. Efforts to 'stabilize governments and to create conditions of economic life and living standards under which the false ideological attractions which Communism excites will lose its [sic] force' would be 'essentially long term

³⁸ Memorandum of conversation, 27 Dec. 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, 7: pp. 933-34.

³⁹ Charles E. Buttrose to Spender, 11 Oct. 1957, Box 1, Papers of Percy C. Spender, National Library of Australia (hereafter cited as Spender Papers).

⁴⁰ "Minutes of Colombo Conference," Jan. 1950, Box 8, Spender Papers.

measures'. In the meantime it would be necessary that 'all governments who are directly interested in the preservation of peace throughout South and South East Asia, and in the advancement of human welfare under the democratic system should consider immediately whether some form of regional pact for common defense is a practical possibility'.⁴¹

Circumstances played much more favourably into Spender's hands than into those of Evatt's. On 24 June the US ambassador in Seoul, John Muccio, reported 'a heavy attack, different from patrol forays that had occurred in the past', amounting in his opinion to 'an all-out offensive against the Republic of Korea'.⁴² Keith C. Shann, the Australian representative in the United Nations acting on Spender's instructions, asked immediately what we could do in the way of meeting force with force. He thought perhaps the Australians were in a position to help if the United Nations decided to take strong action.⁴³ Squadron 77 of the Royal Australian Air Force was already on stand-by in Japan, being under the operational control of the 5th US Air Force. On 29 June these aircraft, along with the destroyer *Bataan* and the frigate *Shoalhaven* were formally offered to Acheson. On the morning of 2 July, Mustangs of Squadron 77 were in action, strafing North Korean T-34s and occasionally South Korean forces heading in the same direction. The Australians were not exactly the first to make a positive offer of assistance, but they were the first actually to get into the fight.

Spender had another alternative. On 30 June, Truman decided to send US ground troops into action in Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that 'Australia is capable of furnishing three infantry battalions...and that such a contribution from Australia is highly desirable'.⁴⁴ Australian Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies decided to visit London to consult with the British government before determining Australian policy. He was told that the British were in accord with his own decision not to commit troops. With Menzies halfway across the Atlantic, the British then decided to send their own force. Spender was apprised of British intentions by Australian diplomat Sir Alan Watt. The Minister immediately proceeded to bully Acting Prime Minister Sir Arthur Fadden into issuing, on his authority and without consulting either Menzies or other ministers, a statement written by Spender, to the effect that the Australian government had decided to provide ground troops for use in Korea in response to the appeal of the United Nations. Spender's timing was perfect. His highly unorthodox announcement actually was made simultaneously with that of the British government. Australia had finally made it to the head of the Commonwealth queue.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *CNIA* 21 (Mar. 1950), pp. 153-72.

⁴² Transcript, John Muccio Oral History Interview with Robert A. McKenzie, 20, Truman Library.

⁴³ Memorandum of conversation by Charles P. Noyes, Adviser on National Security Council Affairs, 25 June 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 7: pp. 144-17.

⁴⁴ 'Proposed Military Assistance in Korea from Certain UN Nations', JSPC to JCS, 10 Aug. 1950, DSNA.

⁴⁵ P C Spender, *Politics and a Man*, Collins, Sydney, 1972, pp. 280-85.

Spender was now looking for a quid pro quo. Menzies, under British influence, was opposed totally to the idea of a Pacific pact, from which most other Commonwealth countries would be necessarily excluded. He told Fadden to warn Spender that the project was 'not on the map' and referred to it himself as 'a superstructure on a foundation of jelly'.⁴⁶ This had no effect whatsoever on the butcher bird. Spender told the annual conference of the New South Wales Division of the Liberal party on 4 August that 'consultation between Members of the British Commonwealth is not always satisfactory or effective'. Accordingly, the Australian government maintained that

since it came into office in December last [it had] placed special emphasis upon its desire for the closest relation with the United States.... What has taken place in Korea is indicative of the close association which we have endeavoured to create. It would be the purpose of the Australian Government to make those ties closer still, so that, on both sides of the Pacific, there will be two nations understanding each other, who will be able to work with the other democracies in the area for the purpose of bringing stability to this part of the world.⁴⁷

He was even more specific in an address to the nation on the eve of his departure for London and Washington. He proclaimed that 'Australia must seek to revive the close working association with our American friends which existed during the war. This relationship should, in due course, be given formal expression within the framework of a Pacific Pact'.⁴⁸

Spender still had to persuade the Americans, and he cleverly decided to try the candid approach when he met with President Truman. He explained that a Pacific pact would be meaningless unless the United States were a party to it, but that he had failed completely to make any headway at all in his discussions on this issue with other Commonwealth governments. Truman agreed to discuss it with Secretary Acheson, who did not immediately warm to Spender. The Secretary briefly told Spender that he could not conceive of Australia's being subject to hostile attack or US failure to provide aid. Apart from that, Acheson merely delivered 'generalities directed to the difficulties of any regional security arrangement...and the great differences which existed between the North Atlantic groups of nations and those of the western Pacific and Asia. This was becoming a familiar refrain'.⁴⁹ Special Representative John Foster Dulles was even more uncompromising when Spender met with him at Flushing Meadows to discuss the Japanese peace treaty. Dulles began by confronting Spender, without any preliminaries, with the most extreme and uncompromising version of the American position, presenting him with a document that omitted any reference at all to

⁴⁶ P C Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1969, pp. 578-82.

⁴⁷ *CNIA*, 21 (Aug. 1950), pp. 578-82.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

⁴⁹ Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*, pp. 43-44.

limitations on Japanese freedom to rearm. Spender was having none of it. He told Dulles that Australia never would accept such a treaty, and he did not regard Dulles's proposal that the United States should retain troops in Japan as providing the slightest security for Australia; the only solution was a Pacific pact. Dulles stated that Spender's fears of Japan were exaggerated, to which Spender replied that Dulles's objections were illusory. Dulles nonetheless agreed that a compromise solution would have to be found.

The compromise agreed on in further discussions on 30 October among Spender, Dulles, and Dean Rusk amounted virtually to the acceptance in principle of the Australian proposal. Referring to a draft approved by Rusk, Spender told the federal parliament in Canberra that

he had found in the United States that a most genuine friendship exists towards Australia and Australians...there is no doubt, at this moment, that this warm-hearted nation would immediately and effectively come to our aid in the event of an act of aggression against Australia. But it is not a one-way traffic in obligations with which Australia is concerned.... What we desire is a permanent regional basis of collective security, constructed in accordance with the United Nations Charter, which has as its pivotal point some obligation comparable to that set forth in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty – namely, that an armed attack upon one shall be deemed an armed attack upon all. We desire to see formal machinery set up to which, amongst others, the United States of America and ourselves are parties, which will enable us effectively to plan the use of our resources and military power.⁵⁰

Spender's desires might have remained unrealized except that the United States was in urgent need of a reliable ally, as Chinese forces had entered the Korean War on 25 October. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin flatly stated that he could not endorse the US suggestion that the Chinese intervention might necessitate the violation of the Manchurian border by UN forces.⁵¹ By contrast, Spender urged that it should be made clear within the Security Council that it would be unreasonable and militarily disadvantageous for UN forces to continue indefinitely to observe restraint.⁵² He warned Australians that the Soviets were using China to do their work for them in pursuit of a long-term plan to dominate the world. He stressed that under such circumstances 'we must permit nothing to prevent the free peoples, in particular the British people, standing steadfast with the United States of America in the difficulties that confront us'.⁵³ These protestations of support helped the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reach the decision that the State Department should explore at the earliest opportunity the possibilities of a Pacific pact with Australia. The Joint Chiefs, however, were not prepared to

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75.

⁵¹ Bevin to Sir Oliver Franks, 16 Nov. 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, 7: p. 1172.

⁵² Jarman to Acheson, 17 Nov. 1950, *ibid.*, 7: p. 1171-72.

⁵³ *CNIA* 21 (Dec. 1950), pp. 881-86.

contemplate the prospect of having an Australian military mission arrive in Washington to discuss specifics with them. They strongly believed that,

from the military point of view, any possible advantages to be gained as a result of inviting the Australian Government to send a high level military mission to Washington would be transitory and, in all probability, negligible; on the other hand, they perceive serious and far-reaching military disadvantages in having such a group in Washington, particularly in light of the present and projected status of the United States planning for a global war.⁵⁴

However, it was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore Australian approaches. Spender was in full flight again. A US resolution in the Security Council on 20 January 1951, which denounced the Chinese for being engaged themselves in aggression in Korea, was drafted substantially by Shann on Spender's instructions despite the fact that Menzies himself was counselling caution on directions from London.⁵⁵ The *Melbourne Age*, noting Shann's frequent shifts of position depending on whether Menzies or Spender had gotten to him last, asked: 'Is our new policy to be one of saying 'yes' to whatever emanates from Washington?'⁵⁶ As far as Spender was concerned, it was to be the policy until at least a Pacific pact had been signed; victory was in his hands. His influence had succeeded in producing, according to Sir Alan Watt, a degree of cordiality in Australian-American relations that had not been known since the days of the Pacific War.⁵⁷ Spender's efforts in this direction undoubtedly were made easier by the lack of effective parliamentary opposition, except indeed from his own Prime Minister. Bipartisanship in the true sense scarcely was to be looked for in the Australian political climate, but the Labor party was providing at least indirect support by denouncing, with perfect justice, the decidedly limited nature of Australian military support in Korea. Labor leader Joseph B. Chifley asserted that 'it was not a matter of what sort of government operated in North or South Korea. The thing that mattered was that a country had been ruthlessly and wantonly attacked contrary to the principles of the Charter'.

However, there was still a long road to travel. Menzies remained loath to alienate the British. Dulles arrived in Canberra on 14 February for talks with the Australians and New Zealanders and was ready to pretend that the issue of a Pacific pact had never been raised in connection with that of a Japanese peace treaty. Spender informed him promptly that the Australian government never would accept a treaty such as Dulles was proposing without accompanying arrangements to ensure Australian security. Menzies himself urged Spender not to press too hard for a tripartite defence pact for

⁵⁴ Marshall to Acheson, 16 Jan. 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, 6: pp.141.

⁵⁵ Shann to Spender, 25 Oct. 1957, Box 1, Spender Papers.

⁵⁶ *Melbourne Age*, 30 Jan. 1951.

⁵⁷ R N Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan, 1945-1951*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1962, p. 184.

fear of jeopardizing the chances of at least a Presidential guarantee of Australia and New Zealand. But the butcher bird knew with whom he was dealing. Dulles finally admitted that he had intended to discuss a Pacific pact all along. After three more days of vehement wrangling the three delegations agreed on a draft security treaty, which represented with marginal changes the text of the final ANZUS Pact.

Australian attitudes toward the United States had not changed fundamentally with the change of government in Canberra. Evatt had sought an alliance with the United States as earnestly as Percy Spender. The difference was simply that Evatt's attempts had failed and Spender's had succeeded. Also, circumstances had favoured Spender and not Evatt. Spender was unquestionably a more adept operator, but all the tactical skill in the world would have been unavailing against the ironbound intransigence of Acheson and Dulles had not the Chinese intervention in Korea made it urgently desirable for the United States to conclude a peace settlement with Japan without positively estranging its vociferous supporter in the South Pacific. In this sense, Mao Zedong was the real godfather of ANZUS; nevertheless, the bipartisan element in Australian policy can not be overstressed. Spender deliberately aligned himself with the United States wherever possible, while Evatt appeared, at least in Washington, to be doing exactly the opposite. However, Spender's chase had an end in view. The ANZUS Pact finally was pried out of Washington despite the misgivings of the State Department and the firm resolve of the Joint Chiefs to keep contacts with the Australians and New Zealanders on defence matters as superficial as possible.

In summary, ANZUS was signed at San Francisco on 1 September 1951, ratified by President Truman on 15 April 1952, and entered into force two weeks later on 29 April. Conceived in close connection with the conclusion of a 'soft' Japanese peace treaty, and contrary to historical charges of subservience on the side of the junior partner, the ANZUS alliance was negotiated only after much tough bargaining. The main source of contention was, paradoxically, the bipartisan determination of Australian leaders to establish a binding security relationship between their country and the United States and the equally firm and bipartisan resolve of American policymakers not to embark upon anything of the kind. Put simply, Canberra wanted strategic reassurance that America would come to Australia's aid in her next time of troubles; Washington wanted cooperation, an opportunity to take advantage of Australia's unique geographical position in the Western Pacific, as well as the overall political position in Southeast Asia. Neither got exactly what it wanted, Australia's future leaders, reserving the right to see the alliance a little differently from the way the United States saw it. In any case, 'for the decision-makers in Canberra', recalled Coral Bell who was in the Department of External Affairs at the time, 'the original interpretation...was that the rationale of the treaty should be seen as 90 per cent security blanket against revival of Japanese ambitions in the Pacific,

and 10 per cent insurance policy against possible future Chinese expansionism'. Asia would always be a dangerous place for Australia without America's strategic engagement.⁵⁸

For Washington, then, Australia has for more than fifty years remained the 'southern anchor' of America's Asia-Pacific security arrangements (with Japan ironically the 'northern anchor') astride both the Indian and Pacific oceans, intermediate between California and South-East Asia. As for Australia, a middle power at the southern end of the world, any defence treaty with the United States could always find its own justification. In this sense Australia has always been a member of the 'Coalition of the Willing', prepared to stand together, in Robert Menzies's felicitous expression in 1953, 'till the crack of doom'.⁵⁹ That Australia invoked the ANZUS Treaty in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 9/11 should come as no real surprise. For, as with the case of the ink-blot designs in the Rorschach test, Australian policymakers were quick to see what they wanted to see and to adapt the ANZUS Treaty accordingly. In this sense, the ANZUS Treaty will continue to be shaped and moulded to serve the Australian national interest for years to come.

For all the criticism of ANZUS, including what has been called a sceptical section of mainstream strategic thought in Canberra, which tended to fear that undue concentration on ANZUS would distract policymakers from the vital local task of devising a strategy and securing the necessary armaments for a self-reliant, continental or immediate-neighbourhood defence, the American connection has consistently obtained approximately seventy per cent approval ratings, even during periods of controversy. Not even the considerable criticism aimed at George W. Bush's handling of the Iraq War has failed to make a dent. The Australian public, while in no way hankering to be the 51st state of the Union, has clearly enjoyed the status and benefits of an American ally without much questioning the cost. In fact, the overwhelming majority of Australians seem, in the language of today's political correctness, relatively 'comfortable' with the arrangement. In a real sense, little has changed since Harold Holt's assertion in July 1966 that, 'I do not know where people would choose to look for the security of this country were it not for the friendship and strength of the United States'.⁶⁰ Whatever

⁵⁸ C Bell, *Australia's Alliance Options*, Canberra, 1991, pp. 38-9. Also see J G Starke, *The ANZUS Treaty Alliance*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965; H C Gelber, *The Australian American Alliance: Costs and Benefits*, Penguin Books, Hammondsworth, 1968; T R Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968*, Royal Institute of International Affairs/Oxford University Press, London and New York, 1969; C Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 40-62; H S Albinski, *ANZUS, the United States and Pacific Security*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1987; and A Burnett, (ed), *The ANZUS Documents*, Dept. of IR/RSPS/ANU, Canberra, 1991.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Barclay and Siracusa, *Australian-American Relations since 1945*, p. 38.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 80.

the next crisis - China, North Korea or Iran - America will doubtless become more, not less important to Canberra in the years ahead.

*Joseph M. Siracusa is a specialist in diplomacy and security issues in the School of International and Community Studies, RMIT University, Melbourne. A native of Chicago and long-time resident of Australia, he studied at the University of Denver and the University of Vienna and received his PhD from the University of Colorado (Boulder). He has worked at Merrill Lynch, in Boston, the University of Queensland, in Brisbane, and for three years served as visiting fellow in the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, Griffith University, where he researched the ethical and strategic responses to the risks of terrorism. His most recent books include *Depression to Cold War* (Praeger, 2002); and *Presidential Profiles: The Kennedy Years* (Facts on File, 2004). Dr Siracusa is currently completing a book, with David G. Coleman (University of Virginia) on the international history of nuclear doctrine (Praeger). joseph.siracusa@rmit.edu.au*