

**GOUGH WHITLAM'S FOREIGN POLICY :
A STUDY OF AUSTRALIA'S REGIONAL
PERSPECTIVE**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of*
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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INDIA
1992**



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CERTIFICATE


Certified that the Dissertation entitled "GOUGH WHITLAM'S FOREIGN POLICY : A STUDY OF AUSTRALIA'S REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE" submitted by SANJAY TRIPATHI in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is a bonafide work.

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Acknowledgement

For the successful completion of my dissertation I am thankful to my advisor Professor Parimal Kumar Das. I am deeply indebted to my co-advisor Dr. Man Mohini Kaul for providing me fundamental guidance and frank support in formulation and development of my dissertation.

Here I must not fail to express my gratitude to Dr. B.D Arora, Dr. G.N. Jha, Rev. P. Mahaviru and Dr. C.D. Paliwal for their timely help and co-operation.

I also owe to my friends Vinod, Neeraj, Shelley, Joss, Praveen, Subrat, Sanjay, Pradeep, Srinivas, Pradyumna for their comprehensive co-operation at all levels and especially thankful to Geetanjali, Suparna and Aruna for keeping my spirits shored up throughout this enormous task. I must also thank the Library Staff of the JNU Library, ICWA Library, IDSA Library and Teen Murti Library for their co-operation.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Australian High Commission (New Delhi) and its First Secretary, Public Affairs Mr. John Zubrycki for providing me ready access to their Library materials.

Sanjay Tripathi
20/7/92
Sanjay Tripathi

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Preface

After the Australian Labour Party comfortably won the elections on 2 Dec. 1972., Mr Whitlam came to power with new alternative model of foreign policy envisaged to lead Australia in pursuing its own policies and diplomacy and look to its defence free from ideological preferences and as an independent entity. Australia enjoyed comfortable external relations based on 'natural alignments' especially with Britain and the United States - with little or no threat to its economy, defence and society.

This research work is a study of the Australian Foreign Policy under the Labour Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (Dec 1972 to Nov 1975) Whitlam's short stay in power generated unprecedented changes in Australia's foreign policy perceptions. How did he manage and implement the Australian defence and foreign policy? What was the response of the region over his policy initiatives? Was there any continuity in Whitlam's policies? What was Whitlam's response to the question of the US Military communication bases' presence in Australia? What roles did the concepts of 'regionalism', 'new nationalism' 'multiracialism' 'anti discrimination' 'economic nationalis' 'resource diplomacy' play in Whitlam foreign policy. These are some of the questions to which the study would try to find answers. The

focus of this work is an analysis and study of the change in Australia's attitudes towards members of South East Asia and China. The study would also examine Whitlam's ideas on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and internationalism.

Following are the five chapters.

Chapter I - Back Ground - the chapter provides a history of the growth and continuity in the Australian foreign policy since 1900 till Nov. 1972.

Chapter II - Whitlam's Foreign Policy : a general perspective. The chapter will take into account the radical perspective of the Labor government of the international situation and adjustments made in the Australian foreign policy. There would be a discussion of the relations with regional as well as extra regional powers such as China Japan, the USA, Britain and the ASEAN.

Chapter III - A Regional Policy Response: This chapter is divided into two parts. One part deals with Whitlam's initiatives to effect regional harmony. It also covers Australia's independent stance vis-a-vis the Super Power rivalry and forward defence. The second part deals with the south west Pacific membe's response to Whitlam foreign policy initiatives. French Nuclear tests issue

relations with PNG, aid diplomacy and regional organisations.

Chapter IV - Management of Alliance Relationship :

This chapter explores the claim of independence from alliance and dependency in foreign policy during Whitlam's tenure.

Chapter V - It records concluding observations

CHAPTER - I

BACKGROUND

The Australian Foreign Policy is marked by a sense of insecurity which vindicates Australia's persistent plea for a protector against its potential enemies. Established as the penal colony of Britain in 1778, it gradually developed into six separate self autonomous colonies. Most of its population comprised of convicts and later; migrants, mostly from Britain and Europe. Defence concerns loomed large over the colonies and compelled them to unite into a federal movement giving birth to one federation 'Commonwealth of Australia' under British Parliament Act in 1900. The desire to wield influence over affairs in the Pacific region was overbearing since its birth. Fortunately the federal constitution of the 'Commonwealth of Australia', entrusted full control over foreign affairs of the Pacific islands. Situated at the fringe of Asia, isolated from the centre of its western heritage, Australia never separated its identity from Britain and its foreign relations remained a British concern until second World War.

In the early 20th century the regional focus of security doctrine broadened to encompass larger pacific, thanks to growing influence and bellicosity of Japan. The

Japanese victory over Russia (1904-5) and its emergence as the undisputed power in the Western Pacific further aggravated Australian fears of being situated in an extremely vulnerable position exposed to attack, even invasion from Asia (particularly from Japan). Though Japan didn't pose any immediate threat to the infant commonwealth; yet the main issues between Australia and Japan was Australian immigration policy which was 'intended to exclude not only Chinese but also Japanese and all other coloured people from entering into Australia.'¹

Alfred Deakin who succeeded Barton as the Prime Minister in 1903 successfully laid foundation for the Australian defence by Land and Sea, still he failed to solicit British pledge ensuring absolute security of Australia. Dissatisfied with the half hearted support of British, Deakin's attempts were successful in inviting Great White American Fleet to Australian Port in 1909 to dispel any emanating danger from German Navy. He proposed though unsuccessfully, a Pacific Pact to assure a commitment from the United States for Australian security. Australian ambition and struggle to play a regional role were guided by its regional threat perception resulting from the presence of alien powers in

1. Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy Melbourne 1923, Section IV.

its neighbourhood. Australia had put forward an 'Australian Monroe Doctrine' to exclude all foreign powers from South Pacific and called for annexation by Britain of all other existing islands in the Melanesian and Polynesian groups by Britain, (a measure similar to effect recent strategic denial theory) but British response was negative. As a consequence, the Australians had to endure the presence of the British alongside rather than excluding a French and German involvement. Alfred Deakin (Australian P.M.) had expressed Australian aspirations of becoming a regional player by emphasising inheritance to a wide range of Australian interests in the pacific.

"When we turn to the Pacific we find that even where we have no jurisdiction we have important interests and we are entitled to share in the mother country's sphere of influence."² Australian claim to regional influence was directed by its huge geographical size and perception of Japan as the Main threat.

In 1914 any concern with Asia was swept out of the Australian mind by the outbreak of the First World War. Australia's concern remained confined mainly to Europe and all political parties reposed complete faith in Britain. The

2. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 8 February 1910.
Labour Prime Minister Andrew Fisher (1910-1913) pledged

Australian support to Britain to "our last man and our last shilling"³

During and even after the First World War Australian leaders seemed to be overpowered by a rage of nostalgia for Europe and for their own past. Nearly a million men enlisted during the war for services in Europe, 60,000 died while 250,000 were injured. What made it conspicuous was that all these sacrifices were made for Britain and not for any immediate territorial or economic threat to Australia. The only underlying fear was confrontation with powerful Japan which might have coerced Australia to open its immigration gates for Asians and mostly Japanese.

As the First World War drew to a close 'Australian Monroe Doctrine' was resuscitated at the hands of W.M. Hughes (1915-1923) who forwarded a demand for regional control and urged annexation of Papua New Guinea to procreate a protective barrier for Australia. Though the high expectations of the Australians had to be content with only a 'C' class mandate over PNG, they were given complete control over immigration in this territory.

3. T.B. Miller; Australia in Peace and War, Canberra 1978, p. 12

Hughe's argued "If we are to continue to be a common wealth of free people, we must have guarantees against enemy aggression in the future, and this involves an Australian Monroe Doctrine in the South Pacific."⁴ Hughes contrived to forge a regional security system in which Australia occupied a superior place. "The position of Australia is such that it is essential to its territorial integrity that it should either control these islands itself or that they should be in the hands of friendly and civilized nations. To allow another nation to control them would be to allow it to control Australia."⁵

Australia was keen to maintain the South Pacific region as Anglo Saxon preserve because it would have guaranteed complete safety of Australia. Hughes warned "hands off the Australian Pacific is the doctrine to which by inexorable circumstances we are committed. And against all predatory nations we shall strive to give this doctrine effect to the last ounce of effort at our disposal. And in this we do not desire empire, but only security."⁶ Though Hughes denied any imperialistic aspirations of Australia in

4. Neville Meaney (ed); Australia and the world: A Documentary History from the 1870's to the 1970s. Melbourne, pp. 253-54.

5. ibid.

6. ibid.

the region, it stepped into approach of Australian Security in a moderate form through backdoor.

(W.M.) Hughes was succeeded by Robert Bruce in 1923 but Australian bonds remained tied to Britain, and in due course much more established. The only credible achievement for the Australian foreign policy under Robert Bruce was to elicit British permission to appoint its own diplomatic envoys and negotiate treaties with foreign power. Though his policies didn't put the Australian foreign policy on an independent course it revitalized the debilitated office of the Australian External Affairs Ministry which had been circumscribed by the British decisions.

The unquestionable command of the Australian foreign affairs in British hands forced Australia to maintain ties with Britain. Another reason was the benefit of regional security derived by Australia at the British cost and risk.

Australian leaders reposed an unprecedented degree of confidence in the British security structure yet the depression of the 1930's proved hard to resist and resulted in the national preoccupation of Britain and Australia drifting apart. Waves of suspicion thronged the Australian mind and they began to regard British security structure inadequate to contain the Japanese menace. Prime Minister

Joseph Lyons (1932-1939) proposed at 1937 Imperial Conference 'a regional understanding and a pact of non aggression in the Pacific (with primarily Japan in mind)."⁷

Lyons strategy was directed towards a non aggression Pact rather than a regional arrangement, to involve both Japan and United States. The underlying aim was to kill the Japanese threat and commit US towards the Australian security.

Robert G. Menzies who succeeded Lyons in 1939 corrected the focus of Australia's regional perception by implicit acknowledgement of Japanese threat and focussing defence and foreign policy on Australian neighbourhood rather than on Europe. Expressing his concern over Australia's security and to draw British attention Menzies said : "What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near North."⁸ But his loyalty to the empire was unquestioned. "Her peace is ours, if she is at war, we are at war."⁹ He was ready to accept British lead but only in matters related to Europe; in Pacific affairs he desired an

7. Document of Australian Foreign Policy: Vol. (37-38), p. 78.

8. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 27 April 1939.

9. Hasluck: Government and People (1939-41), , Canberra 1952, p. 119.

effective and decisive role "It is true that we are not a numerous people but we have vigour, intelligence and resource and I see no reason why we should play not only an adult but an effective part in the affairs of the Pacific."¹⁰

These were the years of reassessment of old Australian Policies and adjustment with new geo-political situation. Australian leaders were preoccupied with Japan's blatant violation of covenant of League of Nations. Hence John Curtin, (the opposition leader) took an isolationist stand when he remarked - "The wars of Europe are a quagmire in which we should not allow our resources, our strength, our vitality to be sunk..... our first duty is to Australia, our position is such that the total of our resources must be available for our own defence."¹¹

Curtin's aim was to place Australian interest first in priority. But once the War broke out Australian stand sprung back to old loyalties towards the Empire and Curtin followed Nazis without demur. There was no public opposition to policies of all-out participation in the European war.

10. Contemporary Parliamentary Debates, Vol 157, p. 429.

11. Booker Malcolm; The Last Domino, Collins, Sydney, 1976, p. 31

During the period 1923 - 41, the Australian foreign policy displayed total faith in British leadership. Hughes's confrontationist and abrasive tactics were rejected. Though Menzies and Lyons showed some caution in relying blindly on the British, they never opposed British tolerance openly towards Hitler; on the contrary they advocated accommodation of Hitler's tenacity. Alan Renouf dubs it as a dark spot in the Australian foreign relations. Before and during the Second World War fear of Japanese was ranking high and compelled Australia to ask Britain to step up the security of Singapore. Britain complied with the advice, but all myths of impregnable British Singapore base lay shattered when Japanese successfully ran over Pearl Harbour, Malaya, Singapore, Netherlands, East Indies and Burma. "Japanese onslaught southwards in the Pacific placed the survival Australia in jeopardy for the first time in her history."¹² Australia's awakening to Britain's weakness in the Pacific did much to launch Australia on the course of developing a regional policy in the Pacific.

In the last phase of 1941 John Curtin the Labour Prime Minister (1941-45) acknowledged the grim situation

12. Alan Watt; The evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-65, Cambridge, 1967. p. 24.

"without any inhibition of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We shall exert all our overages towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its key stone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy."¹³

Evatt the minister for External Affairs under Curtin heralded a new phase in Australian foreign policy. He placed full confidence in the United Nations and emphasised a well established relation with Asia and Third World. His efforts concentrated on erecting a security structure much on the lines of previous Australian Monroe Doctrine. Evatt's 'regional zone of defence' comprised of the arc of islands to Australia's North and East. The earlier efforts of Evatt had failed to enhance Australia's credit on International stage. Australia's Phobia of being ignored in the Post World War settlements, forced Evatt to coax New Zealand's support on regional issues. His plan followed from his frustration and anger over "Great power dominance and exclusiveness in the running of the second World War and by the desire of such Powers to determine the substance of the post war settlements."¹⁴

His efforts bore fruit when in an united manner Australia and New Zealand expressed their protest by signing

13. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 29 December 1941.

14. Watt, n.12, pp. 102-3

Australian New Zealand Agreement on 21 Jan 1944, Canberra.

(ANZAC). Both powers declared,

"Within the framework of a general system of world security, a regional zone of defence should be established comprising the S.W. Pacific and South Pacific areas and that this zone should be based on Australia and New Zealand, stretching through the arc of islands North and North East of Australia to W. Samoa and the Cook Islands."¹⁵

The underlying assumption was that Australia and New Zealand were destined to carry out in the Pacific area (after 1945), certain regional responsibilities for the Commonwealth of Nations as a whole or for those members of the Commonwealth of Nations with an interest in the Pacific. Evatt expressed in his B.B.C. broadcast on 10 May 1946,

"In some respects... we are reaching a stage in British Commonwealth relations at which there is a division of functions on a regional basis for certain purposes. It has become possible for dominions to act not only for itself but also for the United Kingdom and other Dominions as well."¹⁶

Though Evatt's dream of a 'regional zone of defence' did not take off it paved way for another regional organisation which involved the United States and the United Kingdom. Through ANZAC Australia and New Zealand asserted a role in any Post War decisions not only on the interim administration and ultimate disposal of Japanese territories in the Pacific but in any change in the sovereignty or

15. T.B. Miller; Australia in Peace and War Australia New Zealand Agreement (21 January 1944) Article 13, Canberra, 1978, p. 445.

16. Watt, n.12, p. 189

system of control of any of the islands of the Pacific. This necessitated both governments to call for a conference with British support in 1947 at Canberra, where it was resolved to set up South Pacific Commission with representatives of Australia, Netherlands, New Zealand, France the United Kingdom and the United States, (who practically controlled the Island, in the Oceania). The South Pacific Commission proved a small co-operative venture between administering powers which didn't concern itself with political developments, defence or security.

"It had machinery for joint endeavours and it prompted by slow degrees a sense of community among the territories and their people, a forum for meeting and discussion a regional outlook, as well as some co-operativeness in agriculture, fisheries education and communication."¹⁷ But "the Australian government interpreted a regional commission as a device in which it had the major role and which was composed of friendly powers responsible for all territory in the region, as an arrangement that would minimise the opportunity for outside interests to gain a foothold in the region and so threaten Australian security."¹⁸

17. Current Notes on International Affairs, Vol. 43 No. 2, February 1972, pp. 42-8.

18. Greg Fry (ed); Australia's Regional Security, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 4.

Evatt's belief that a small or middle power had better chance of influencing international developments through the United Nations was visible from his emphasis and support for the UN. His policy objectives were the preservation of the national security and international pursuit of justice. His hypothesis that alliance between East and West would last long in Post war era did not prove true, as Cold War ensued immediately after culmination of World War II.

Since the 40's Australia supported and assisted Britain to guard its possessions in Malaya, Singapore, Brunei and two British Borneo colonies. In 1949, Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand reached an important agreement known as ANZAM for co-ordinating their defence planning in the area covering Australia, New Zealand and British territories in Malaya and Borneo. Though it gave a shortlived solace to the frightened Australia, the rapidly expanding American presence in the Pacific and impressive display of power in Second World War compelled Australian government to reconsider its regional policies. Chiefly who succeeded Curtin in July, 1946, proposed a Pacific Pact in 1949 which would include the United States, the United Kingdom, Asian Commonwealth and New Zealand but it was turned down by the reluctant United States. US Secretary of

State Dean Scheson answered "that a Pacific defence Pact could not take shape until present internal conflicts in Asia were resolved."¹⁹

Britain returned quickly after the Second World War to recapture its colonies, so did the French. But the Japanese had done much harm to British industrial capital and empire which left Britain exhausted and incapable to recoup its lost strength and eminence.

Australia's early support for Indonesian independence struggle and active participation in founding the United Nation gave it some footing within the regional society of the states. A year later Australia became the main sponsor of the Colombo Plan, an exclusive Commonwealth organisation, which declined without fulfilment of its task.

In 1949 Robert G. Menzies (1949-66) returned to power defeating Labor when there was international concern over the aggressive political and military activities of communist forces in Central Europe, France, Italy, China and South East Asia.

The long cherished Australia's dream of getting United States committed to Australia's regional security

19. U.S. Department of state Bulletin, 29 May 1949, p. 696.

parameters came true due to diligent diplomatic efforts of Percy Spender (1949-51) who replaced Evatt as the Minister of External Affairs under Menzies. His point of strength was his judiciousness that prejudged the fading Super Power status of Britain in the Post Second World War politics. Several other factors also combined to create a radically different situation. "The final victory of Mao Zedong's forces in China in Oct 1949, and outbreak of hostilities in Korea in June 1950 were all perceived by United States as further deterioration in the system and realised the need for stemming the tide of communist expansion. Unable to construct in the Pacific a single strategic system comparable to NATO, the United States began to explore the possibility of similar and separate military organisation."²⁰

T.B. Miller points out that 'Spender wanted not only the protection which a treaty with the United States would provide but the opportunity it would offer to influence policies and events in Australia's own region.'²¹ Spender floated his Pacific Security Pact which would take not only a resurgent and militaristic Japan but also the communist threat emanating from China, Korea and South East

20. J.A. Camilleri; ANZUS, Colorado, 1987. p. 3.

21. Miller, n. 15, p. 206

Asia. His efforts to align Australia's regional Pact with American policy was facilitated by his constituent effort to support united states in Korea by providing help of ground forces at a short notice. Australia's positive and pre-empt response to the US call his Korea riveted close ties between the two governments. Spender's objective was to accord Australia a suitable voice in the determination of policy and the shaping of events likely to affect Australia's vital interest both in the Asia - Pacific region and beyond. The Australian contribution to Korean war and else where, reaped rich dividends when spender's proposal for regional security was formally embodied into draft treaty ANZUS, initialled at San francisco on 1 September 1951. It greatly enhanced the prestige of militarily feeble Australians which began to be confident due to the US presence in the region.

ANZUS had not wholly resolved the Australian worries because it excluded Britain. Moreover, absence of any Asian member left the vulnerable south East Asia unprotected. Due to its location South East was most vulnerable and most exposed to commission either through external attack or subversion. Fall of Dien Bien Phu further aggravated Australian fears of the advancing monster of communism. Then came the French withdrawal and conclusion of Geneva Agreement (1954). The American's didn't ratify the Geneva Agreement and felt the need for united action to

resist further communist expansion in the region. Australia was keen to gain an extension of commitments in the region. These found the basic causes for the hurried establishment of SEATO (1954). The treaty was very extensive. It comprised of general South East Asia, and South West Pacific but excluded Pacific areas north of 21° 30'N latitude and excluded HongKong and Taiwan. The Australian Government felt immensely pleased that for the first time in history America had explicitly committed herself to the security of her neighbours. It was this pretext that provided to 'forward defence' policy later and stationing of Australian forces in the region.

ANZAM had been mooted to fulfill Australia forward defence Plan. The 1949 ANZAM led to the conclusion of the British Malayan Agreement on external defence and initial assistance in Oct 1957 after Malaya got independence (31 Aug 1957). This new agreement granted Britain the right to maintain in the federation of Malaya, defence forces. but Australia's acceptance of security responsibilities for Malayasia resulted in strained relations with Indonesia in 1960's though Australia played a crucial role in independence of Indonesia. The main cause of discord were Sukarno's revolutionary ideology of a wailed revolution by new emerging forces, its affinity towards climax and

antipathy towards the imperialist forces in Malayasia and Indo-China. Australia yielded to the Indonesian claim over West Irian, keeping in view the inevitability of Papua New Guinea. Let it took firm steps in 'confrontation' days amidst Malaysia and Indonesia in 1963-65. The main reasons for Australian involvement were its desire to shoulder role of maintaining stability, a connotation of ANZUS Treaty, Commonwealth and military commitment towards Malaysia and lastly the threat of communism thriving at its door step. The hostilities came to an end with the overthrow of Sukarno in 1965. A very peculiar situation arose when economic difficulties led to the British retrenchment East of Suez British Labour Government declared to withdraw half the forces from Malaysia and Singapore by 1971 and rest by 1976. The British decision of total withdrawal grieved Australia. Immediate initiatives to change the British decision of complete withdrawal resulted in a Five Power Defence Agreement signed on 1 Nov. 1971 with members Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Singapore. These arrangements replaced the Anglo Malaysian Defence Agreement with which Australia and New Zealand were earlier associated. Under the new arrangement in event of any attack all five Powers were to conduct joint consultation before joint or separate action. The central command was stationed at Singapore under C - in C of ANZUK forces.

The biggest blunder of Australian foreign Policy was the decision of Australia's participation in Vietnam war which had farreaching repercussions for Australian foreign policy. Though Australian involvement began with 30 military instructors dispatch to Vietnam in 1962; when the war culminated five years later, there were 8000 Australian men from three services in South Vietnam. American pressure and inducement was clear but perhaps more fundamental was the fact that it was a response to Australian fear for her own security.

Casey (Minister for External Affairs, 1951-60) who replaced Spender, claimed "If the whole of Indo China fell to the communists, Thailand would be gravely exposed, if Thailand were to fall the road would be open to Malaya and Singapore. From the Malay Peninsula the communists could dominate the northern approaches to Australia and even cut our life times with Europe. These grave eventualities may seem long range but it is not possible that they could happen within a reasonably short period of time,"²²

Even Menzies saw it as the most useful additional contribution which we can make to the defence of the region

22. House of Representatives debates Vol. 5, 27 October 1954, p. 383.

at this time and declared "the take over of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South East Asia. It must be seen as part of a thrust by communist China between the India and Pacific Oceans."²³

Australia's contribution to Vietnam War, even conscription enjoyed support till 1969, but as the war dragged on and on Australian enthusiasm for US support declined. "With the British retrenchment East of Suez, the apparent stability of Malaysia and Singapore, the establishment of an anti communist government in Indonesia, the Vietnam War's connection with the defence of Australia became more and more obscure."²⁴ R. Nixon, the US President came to Power with a pledge to wind down the US military involvement while concurrently providing for the continued security of S.Vietnam and other Asian allies against external aggression which led to US withdrawal in 1971.

The only conspicuous benefit which Australia derived out of US alliance was defence at cheap expenses, for if US was committed to Australian security it could maintain a minimum of forces and can divert most of her

23. House of Representatives Debates Volume 45, 29 April 1965, p. 1061.

24. Miller, n.15, p. 264.

resources upon economic development the United States after its debate in Vietnam war realised the irrationality of military involvements in local conflicts. All these factors prompted Nixon to declare 'Guam Doctrine in 1969', which made it clear, that Australia's dependence on the United States as a sole guarantee of its security was no longer true. The Guam Doctrine had specified that the United States would remain a trusted ally but would intervene only in the face of a nuclear threat.

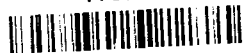
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The Guam Doctrine and the British withdrawal led to a serious debate in which liberals tried to cover up the warning of Guam Doctrine as not directed against the Australia. But Gough Whitlam was quick enough to judge that liberal government had fallen out of touch of realities and grabbed the opportunity to introduce an unprecedented change in the Australian foreign policy. He came to power when Australia represented an image of a white conservative country, a follower of the United States in counter insurgency the exponent of narrow legalism in the United Nations and a frequent voting partner of South Africa and Portugal. Whitlam's government emphasised self reliance in foreign and military policies, sympathised with anti Apartheid movement in South Africa, supported anti colonialism, ratified Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and reposed faith in the United Nations.

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CHAPTER II

Whitlam's Foreign Policy Approach: A General Perspective

One of the areas in international environment where a sea change had taken place in the post World War II situation was Sino-Soviet relations which had degenerated into border disputes and ideological rifts. China now attempted to woo United States on its side and made concerted efforts till 1964 to end its isolationism. On the other side, by the end of 1960's the impact of the Vietnam war and the cultural Revolution were fading out. The debacle of United States in Vietnam war made American political leaders to rebuild their strategic course and consequently Nixon's Guam Doctrine evolved which enunciated withdrawal from Asia. The conservative Liberal-country party which ad maintained its 23 years of undetereal rule by mere projection of security anxiety in Australia viewed Communism as the root of all turbulence in Asia. An established belief that Australia lacked capacity to counter any external threat singlehandedly; forced "Liberal Country Party Governments ... emphasis on the presence commitment in Asia and the Pacific of friendly major powers".¹ In Liberal-Country Party's conception presence of friendly

1. H.S. Albinski; Australian External Policy under Labor, St. Lucia, 1977, p. 4.

major power helped and strengthened the stability of the region. The United States was perceived as a saviour having the credit of victory in world War II and a powerful deterrent against any future powers. The 'dependency syndrome' (only in defense connotations) made presence of friendly countervailing power imperative and formed one of the primary causes for Australia's inclusion in military organisations. Australia signed ANZUS (1951) SEATO (1954) and five Power Defence Agreement (1971). Conservative tradition of external relations viewed Australia's contribution to defeat communism as natural complement to the security system and fostered a reserved and cautious approach vis-a-vis regional neighbors. "Forward Defence" continued to guide Australia's external relations and Australia's help both military and economically to South Vietnam was forwarded on this pretext. The predecessors of Whitlam displayed undefined support for American policies.

The prolonged Vietnam War fomented public resentment in Australia and conservative ideology became a thing of doubt and suspicion. Is China a real threat? This question became rife on the Australian political desk. This proved a blessing in disguise for Labor Party which had been denied a loyal position in national politics due to its soft pedalling over communist threat. Gough Whitlam who had succeeded Calwell as the leader of Australian Labor

Party sensed the crucial utility of China factor and exploited it successfully to dethrone the 23 years of undeterred hegemony of L.C. Party over political power.

Whitlam was politically agile and pragmatic on foreign and defence policies and therefore served as spokesman of Labour Party. He travelled widely and had rich world wide contacts. These attributes helped him interpret international events with great precision by the time he became the Prime Minister of Australia. Under his aegis Australian foreign policy displayed multi farious, qualities imbued with continuity and experience. National interest and geo-political conditions of the region formed the bedrock of Whitlam's foreign Policy.

Labor party's inordinately long period in opposition was principal in Whitlam's impatience to attack Australian foreign policy concerns head on, both to give an expression to what Labor believed to be the relatives of international life and more particularly to launch remedial policies, The urgency on part of Labor to set things right was due to liberal country party's preoccupation with Communist threat and the American Alliance.²

2. ibid., pp. 61-62.

Whitlam construed his victory to power as a clear mandate for change and highlighted those aspects of Labor Party's policies which stood in clear contrast to policies of preceding Governments. The pluralization among Communist nations, Britains progressive disengagement and entry into EEC (European Economic Community) and the retraction of a major American military presence from Asia ; all these had combined effect upon Whitlam's foreign policy. They welcomed the process of deterrence between Super powers and hailed disarmament treaties. Whitlam also welcomed the reduction of Super power influence and emergence of other centres of regional or world influence such as China, Japan and the European community. He downgraded the parochial connotations of International Relations as a contest between Communism and anti-Communism forces and drew attention to more contingent problems emerging on international political platform. His concept of 'new nationalism' was a movement to restore and invigorate Australia's authentic traditions especially egalitarianism, fair play and independence., It was a link between constructive and mature national pride and international politics.

Whitlam's resolute perception delivered Australia from constantly taking an anti communist side. But to deem him as a status quoist would be an error, he provided a dynamic lead to Australian foreign policy by projecting a

new identify over world platform., His efforts and policies refurbished Australia's conservative, racist, white country image. The conservative Liberal Country Party's foreign policy was discarded by Whitlam as archaic and out of tune due to its preoccupation with nations which regarded South East Asia as a protective shield and the United States as the patron and protector. Whitlam aspired to conceive Australia's foreign policy as less bilateral (more independent) and more functionally framed. Australia's claim as a middle power required established credentials and influence over regional and global issues. Independent stance became the lynchpin of Australia's overseas policies. Thus the principal aim of Labor government was to "establish a reputation for Australia as a nation with an independent distinctive foreign policy."³

Whitlam's concept of 'regionalism' rested on pillars of economic and geo-political potentials of Australia.

"We are far and away, the richer nation, in the neighborhood all have a gross national product equal to that of all the countries between the Bay of Bengal and the South China sea. These countries have twenty times our population. We are an island continent with one of the most formidable natural defences in the world. We have no serious conflict of interests with any of our neighbors and

3. Australian Foreign Affairs Record; Vol 44(2), February 1973, pp. 72-80.

there are no foreseeable conflicts likely to arise well beyond the decade."⁴ He added "We want to be regarded as a friendly, tolerant and co-operative neighbors."⁵

He outlined the scope and extent of his policies in this pre-election speech and again after his election as Prime Minister on 27 Jan'73. While addressing at Australian Institute of Political science summer school, camberra, he declared 'Labour will have four commitments commensurate to our power and resources.

- Firstly - Our own national security,
- Secondly - a secure, united and friendly Papua New Guinea
- Thirdly - achieve closer relations with our nearest and largest neighbour Indonesia, and
- Fourthly - Promote the peace and prosperity of our neighbourhood'.⁶

Just three days after he was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Australia, Whitlam set the new tone for the new Australian view of its peace and role in the world. "Our thinking is towards a more independent Australian stance in International Affairs and towards an Australia which will be less militarily oriented and not open to suggestions of racism, an Australia which will enjoy a growing standing as a distinctive, tolerant, co-operative

4. Australian Foreign Affairs Record; Vol. 44 (1), January 1973, pp. 32-38.

5. n.3, pp. 72-80.

6. ibid., p.32.

and well regarded nation not only in the Asia and Pacific region but in the world at large".⁷

The period of 1972-75 marked a watershed in Australian foreign policy when Australia's military oriented defence system acquired a non military and regionally co-operative trait. Though 'an independence stance formed principal aim of Whitlam it was inextricably linked to regionalism, anti colonialism, anti-apartheid, anti-nuclear proliferation, non militaristic attitude in foreign and defense policies, even handedness on international policies and a shrewd resource diplomacy. His policies were reminiscent of non-alignment values, aimed at exclusion of countervailing powers (protectors) and support for Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in (S.E. Asia) and an Indian Ocean Zone of peace.

Whitlam government created a flurry of activities when it took 82 decisions in foreign policy in only three months.⁸ Whitlam era overhauled the preexistent tenets in Australian foreign policy except the maintenance of alliance with the United States. The Labor government established

7. T.B. Miller, *The Foreign Policy of the Whitlam Government*, Pacific community April 1975, p. 393.

8. Bruce Grant; Crisis of Loyalty Sydney 1972, p. 107.

relations with the People's Republic of China, abolished conscription, upvalued the Australian dollar, proposed a new Asia - Pacific Organisation, decided to seek an injunction from the World court to stop French testing in the Pacific, provided assistances for the armed forces in Fiji, agreed to send an observer to the non aligned conference in Algiers in Sept. 1973, terminated all military aid to South Vietnam decided that Papua New Guinea will become independent by 1975, reversed previous decisions not to allow non European New Zealanders to come to Australia without passport, supported at the U.N. several resolutions on racism and colonialism, on which Australia had formally abstained, established diplomatic relations with the Vatican , signed a trade agreement with the Russians, ratified the Nuclear non-poliformation treaty, recognised East Germany, decided to take urgent action on Croatian terrorism in Australia ratified several international Labour organisation convention on freedom or association, collective bargaining and equal pay and rejoined the U.N. committee of 24".⁹

The principal theme in Australian foreign policy had been a dependency syndrome or security phobia since 1920's marked by the presence of the United Kingdom then the United States and Britain and later the United States alone.

9. ibid., pp. 108-109

Whitlam differed with his predecessor governments because during his tenure Australian-American relations lost former warmth Whitlam government's relations with the United states got off to an inauspicious beginning following strong criticism by his fellow cabinet members over Nixon's (U.S. President) order of bombing Hanoi and Haiphong (December 1972). From the beginning Nixon and Kissinger assumed that Whitlam -Obviously a 'leftist' and a well known critic of the Vietnam war would be hostile to their policies".¹⁰ Moreover, Whitlam antagonised the United States when he tried to steer Australia's foreign policy abandoning prior subservience in this matter. Whitlam rated national interest as prime concern, hence diverted focus of Australian foreign policy to considerations of more independence of thought and occasional action while preserving the alliance with the U.S. An Air force officer during the World War II Whitlam didn't want to shed altogether the American alliance and security that it provided. His endeavour was to cast aside the image of dependence and subservience. He acknowledged the prominence of ANZUS in providing strength to defence of Australia. "ANZUS is a legal embodiment of the common interest of the people of Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

10. Alan Renouf; Malcolm Fraser and Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1986, p. 28.

These interests remain constant beyond changes of administration in Washington, Wellington or Canberra".¹¹

To quell any doubts about his intentions towards US alliance he stated at Washington press Club. "This alliance is old enough and strong enough to stand a little frankness on both sides". "Where our interest do not coincide and we disagree with the US, we shall as a good friend should say so firmly and frankly usually and preferably in private."¹²

To consider ANZUS as the only factor dominating Australian foreign policy would be injustice towards this Pact, as it provided a narrow interpretation of the subject. Apart from ANZUS Australia's respect for its neighbours and a reoriented non militaristic foreign policy marked Whitlam's era. The desire to cast off an image of a 'satellite of any country' and play the role of a middle power inspired him to propound non-alignment values based on more freedom for Australia within the alliance and this formed most distinguished achievement of his external and defence policy. Whitlam suffered criticism on his leniency over continuance of US facilities. These facilities were

11. n.3, p. 31.

12. Australian foreign Affairs record Vol. 44(8) August 1973, p. 529.

viewed as violation of Australian sovereignty. Moreover since Labour won election on promise of rectifying Australian policies and removing these US bases from Australian Soil, its continued presence embarrassed Labor Government. But Whitlam dealt the issue with prudence and dexterity and avoided any haste in the matter.

Even though Australia - US relations were at a low ebb, it was Whitlam who came to the rescue of Australian- US alliance, under attack by his own party members. New efforts were on the anvil to renegotiate terms and conditions of operation of these facilities on Australian soil. The pragmatism of Whitlam helped resolve this dispute over US defence facilities. In Jan 1974. Mr. Lance Barnard (Australian defence Minister) and US defence secretary Mr. Schelesinger or concluded an agreement for joint operation of these stations. Though no progress could be made to achieve any control in Pine Gap (Satellite monitoring system) and Nurrungar (the associated data transmission link) partial success was scored with respect to less sensitive very low frequency Naval communication station at north West cape (35 Australians were added to staff of this base and renamed as 'joint facilities').

The 'independent posture' of Australian foreign policy became the central theme but a more appreciable

description would be alliance with self reliance which was Whitlam's aim. He made no bones to accept that "We are by definition aligned through ANZUS"¹³ The defence anxiety which ran like a thread throughout the history of Australian foreign policy meant to Whitlam a cordial and co-operative relation with the protector (US) While other Third World nations and neighbours required equal importance if Australia were to play its role of a middle power. In his enthusiasm to improve surrounding environment he saw 'no conflict of interest with any of its neighbours'.¹⁴

One of the most conspicuous changes where Whitlam's expertise lies was recognition of Peoples Republic of China. In 1969-1970 China ranked (sixth) among Australia's customers, 1970-71 experienced a fall in trade due to Chinese apathy towards trade with Australia, as a consequence bilateral trade diminished, Chinese ban on import of Australian wheat expressed disapproval of Canberra diplomacy towards China Preceding Whitlam the McMahon government's inept handling of Chinese issue left an impression of confusion and misadventure. Whitlam was

13. ibid.

14. Alan Fitzgerald; Labor's Whitlam Fashioning a New Posture for Australia, International perspectives, May-June 1973, p. 31.

quick to realize that the Liberal country party had fallen out of touch with realities¹⁵ and used this opportunity to launch his radical ideas which stood in contrast to preceding government. He led an Australian Labour Party delegation to China which was dubbed as 'instant coffee diplomacy' ; 'politically suicidal' for Whitlam by the then Prime Minister of Australia M Mahon. Mc Mahon regarded Labor Party's policies 'a recipe for isolationist friendless and ultimately defenceless Australia"¹⁶ and 'leave the region with a door open for any aggressor to walk in'.¹⁷ To the utter dismay of Mc Mahon Australian Prime Minister the ALP (Australian Labor Party) mission to China didnot prove a political catostrophe for Whitlam, instead it fetched political prestige and honours for him. The experienced and adroit decision of Whitlam was overwhelmingly welcomed in political and diplomatic circles. Whitlam's initiative became all the more relevant and respectable when US President revealed that H.A. Kissinger (U.S. Secretary of State) had visited China secretly only a few days after Whitlam's mission left China. This disclosure of news earned

15. Renonf; n.10, p. 27

16. Melbourne Age Caneberra, 31, October 1972.

17. Sydney Morning Herald; Sydney, 28 Novemebr 1872.

him a position in party and with people to reckon with in crucial international issues of War, China and Asia.¹⁸

Whitlam saw no immediate threat to Australia His non-militarist attribute was an element of confidence and positive tendency in his premise of multipolarity rising out of morbid bipolarity reminiscent of Cold War. He contended that Communist bogey had been inflated and Australia should maintain low profile towards East-West Struggle and pay more attention to develop good-neighbourly relations with the countries of her region.

Whitlam believed that Australia should co-operate more with the United Nations.¹⁹ Diplomacy rather than military response was Whitlams tactic and there was a distinct anti colonialist and anti racialist ingredient in his diplomatic pursuits.

Whitlam's principal of 'independence stance' was not restricted to the American linkage, it aimed to be bereft of royal symbols of Britain. He 'cancelled arrangements whereby honours to Australians for distinguishable service were part of the British honour system and awarded by the Queen of Britain. Whitlam's

18. McPhee Gribblel, (ed.) The Whitlam Phenomenon, Penguin, Victoria 1986, p. 104.

19. Renouf; n.10, p. 29.

office announced on 13 Feb, 73 that reference to the Queen of Britain would be deleted from Australia's Oath or Affirmation of allegiance.²⁰ On 26 Jan, 1973 Whitlam remarked "After 72 years of federation it is astonishing that we are among the very few nations in the world without an anthem."²¹ He organized a public competition to choose National Anthem for Australia, which was decided by a popular vote. Australian anthem was changed from 'god save the queen' to 'advance Australia Fair'.²² British MNC'S were under constant attack by Whitlam who deemed them as agents perpetuating British imperialism. Another move to cancel the law suits appeal to British Privy Council failed. T.B. Miller observes that Whitlam's actions were of psychological origin than political. Britain's decisions to accept membership of European Economic community sharpened Australia's criticism due to the fear of limited access to free European market for Australian exports. Britain's receding status as a military power in Post- World War II had not reduced Australian nostalgia for Britain, but successive pacts with the US ANZUS (1951), SEATO (1954) did relegate Britain to a lower position.

20. Keesings contemporary Archives, London, 1973, p. 25754.

21. ibid., p. 25723.

22. Miller, n.7, p. 394.

Whitlam secured good will of neighbours by overt commitment to non-militarist Australian foreign policy that is indisputable even though he advocated continuance of ANZUS. Immediately after his advent to power he withdrew all Australian military advisors from South Vietnam, ended all military and economic aid to Cambodia and expressed will to withdraw Australian contingent from ANZUK brigade stationed at Malaysia and Singapore. Whitlam never displayed any enthusiasm for continuance of SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organisation) as a military organisation. Establishment of diplomatic relations with China undermined Australian enthusiasm for SEATO, which had originated as a containment measure for China and its communism. Whitlam suggested a changed role for SEATO as "a vehicles for co-operation and technical and cultural exchange rather than continue as a military pact owing its existence to fear of China and the sound of falling dominoes."²³

Total isolation towards regional defence was never the aim of Whitlam, at the same time Australian involvement in any extra regional conflicts was to be avoided. Small helping projects to contribute to the development of the region received his support, but no fresh military regional

23. Fitzgerald; n. 14, p. 32.

pact was to be encouraged. He pointedly pledged not to garrison Australian troops abroad as part of military commitment to involve this country in Asian wars. Any use of military force for resolution of conflicts appeared to Whitlam as less relevant, less acceptable and less available. Papua New Guinea still enjoyed possibility of a mutual defence pact with Australia and total troops were not withdrawn from ANZUK brigade instead the defence expenditure under Labor rose steadily.

Impelled by regional geo-political and economic imperatives Whitlam proposed an Asia-Pacific grouping to promote a wide association of Asia and Pacific states. It was a brilliant exercise to forge a constructive link between South East Asia and South Pacific -region, but its progress was precluded due to the lack of a clear blue print, objective, structure and scope of the organisation. The organisation was aimed to 'meet the new realities', 'seek new forms of regional co-operation' and placed less emphasis on military pact. It was envisaged to free the region from great power rivalries that had bedevilled its (region's) progress.

The organisation was to have slow and delicate growth according to Whitlam and its desired members were Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines,

China, Japan and Burma. The response of these countries were not encouraging and Whitlam's proposal for Asia - Pacific council failed to take off. T.B. Miller a prominent scholar questions the rationale for proposition of a regional council by Whitlam. "The region already has some institutions for co-operation. What more did it meet or could it use ?" Another scholar, Peter Kings, answers, "It would serve to end Australia's obsession with S.E. ASia"²⁵.

H.S. Albinski observes that the functioning of Asia Pacific forum could become the spring board for declaring a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in the region."²⁶ Whitlam's endeavours were desired out of consistency towards Labour Party's aim to diffuse ideological conflicts through a wider regional community. China's inclusion in the forum proved unpragmatic due to lack of diplomatic links between many regional members and China. Even Japan's entry was unlikely due to fear of its economic giant status. As a consequence, Whitlam had to withdraw the proposal with a lesson that "Australia is at

24. John Knight, Australia and proposals for regional consultation and co-operation with Asia and the Pacific Area, Australian outlook Vol. 28(3), December 1974. p. 261.

25. Peter King, Whither Whittam? International Journal Vol. 29(3), Summer 1974, pp. 422-40.

26. Albinski; n.1, p. 93.

best an associate member of the Asian group of states capable of making countries but in capable of exercising leadership". 27

Another feature of Whitlam's foreign policy was selective treatment of regional and world organisation while he chose to downgrade SEATO as 'anachronistic' and ASPAC as 'moribund'. He regarded the United Nations as supreme seat of peace and justice. He warned that "SEATO conceived as an instrument for the containment of China in the World war must be modified if it is not to become completely moribund."²⁸

Whitlam's affinity to the United Nations Organisation was reminiscent of Evatt's policies. Australia's help in founding the United Nations and framing of its Charter Prompted Whitlam's unqualified support and commitment to the UN. Whitlam pledged loyalty to both the United Nations and its Charter. For him, fulfillment of the international objectives of the United Nations was coterminous with the fulfilment of Australia's won national objectives.

27. Miller; n.7, p. 398.

28. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 44(5), May 1973, p. 339.

29. The Australian, Canberra, 1 August 1973.

Whitlam explained the inevitability of interdependence as "no nation, no group of nation, no bloc, no alliance, can live alone, entirely to itself in this new world, and Australia is internationalist, by necessity and by choice"³⁰. Australia was ready to play a positive and real role in the United Nations peace operations; thus Whitlam's commitment was marked by sincere action. It was also a brilliant diplomatic protective measure to counter any anti-Australia move arising as a consequence of Whitlam's independence stance over foreign international issues. He was the first Australian Prime Minister to have address the United Nations Assembly in that capacity on 30 Sept 1974.³¹

Whitlam's regional perspective operated upon critical analysis of regional organisation and upholding United Nations objectives. His realism towards international relations underlines his enthusiasm towards ASEAN. Whitlam government's decision to end Australian Military involvement in South East Asia, its desire to show South East nations that Australia was permanently committed to the region and to develop closer economic and cultural

30. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 45(9) Septemebr 1974, pp. 576-82.

31. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 45(12) December 1974, p. 831.

links made ASEAN significant in the Australian external politics and diplomacy. 'Whitlam hailed ASEAN as unquestionably the most important, the most relevant, the most natural of all regional arrangements and associations in the area'.³²

Whitlam's proposition for an Asia-Pacific Forum was construed by some critics as a counter measure to strip down ASEAN from the position of Prime importance, in anguish of being denied membership of ASEAN. Whitlam denied the charge and remarked "Australia does not belong to the Association of South East Asian Nations, which brings together Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand nor do we seek membership of it. ASEAN has demonstrated its strength and viability as a sub-regional grouping and it is not in our interest nor it is our intention willingly or unwillingly to disturb, the unity, progress and harmony of that association."³³ Presence of Indonesia (Australia's nearest and largest neighbour) in ASEAN provided an important connection to Australia for improving diplomatic, economic and political relations.

32. ibid., p. 827.

33. n.28, p. 329.

In 1973 Australia attended for the first time the Ministerial Conference for Economic Development of South East Asia. In 1973 Australia was invited by the ASEAN Secretary General to hold discussions with them about economic co-operation between ASEAN and Australia. Australia was pleased to receive this invitation",³⁴ the first addressed to a non-member country to discuss co-operative projects.

The invitation was of particular significance to Whitlam because Australia's representation in 1974 ASEAN Conference as an associate member was a symbol of the wide acceptance by South-East Asian Governments of its newly expressed commitment and sympathy for the region. Whitlam took great pride in having achieved these closer links and pledged 5 millions for ASEAN project over and above existing bilateral aid programmes.

Britain's decision to enter European Economic Community blighted the prospects of Australian exports to Britain. Whitlam displayed a strong, unyielding approach and criticized Britain. He retorted that "the days when Australia wanted a special relationship are past and called for a more natural and contemporary relationship."³⁵ He used

34. n.31, p.831.

35. Canberra Times, Canberra, 19, December 1974.

tactics of threat. In a speech at Brussels on 8 Dec 1974, he indicated that Australia's willingness to provide the EEC with energy resources would be influenced by the extent of the EEC's reactiveness to purchase Australia's meat and other primary products.³⁶

Non-militarist attitude of Whitlam emanated from his preference for a nuclear free world. He welcomed signing of SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty 1971) between USA and USSR and suggested at the United Nations Assembly (30 Sep 1974 At N.York). 'We face the breakdown of the Nuclear non Proliferation Treaty and cooperative efforts by all leaders must find effective means of halting the arms race and preserving the proliferation of nuclear weapons. There is nothing more urgent problem facing any of us today,'³⁷ To prove his sincerity Whitlam promised the Australian Government that it will neither develop nor aquire nuclear weapons. He suggested three ways

- a) Our first aim must be to strengthen the Non proliferation treaty and work for its acceptance every where.
- b) We should make a comprehensive treaty to ban nuclear weapons testing an urgent priority

36. Melbourne Age 19, December 1974.

37. n.30, pp. 578-579.

- c) We need effective international arrangements to government³⁸ and control nuclear experiment for peaceful purposes.

Further, his anti nuclear sentiment was clear from his immediate ratification of Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty after Labor government came to power. An anti French nuclear test campaign was launched by Whitlam till French government acquiesced to the demands of South Pacific Nations to discontinue open air nuclear tests in the south Pacific.

A noble idea forwarded by Whitlam was to exploit the concept of peace zones as tools of disarmament. Whitlam took particular interest in the agreements and proposals embodying this concept as most of them affected Australia directly. The Indian Ocean zone of peace, the ASEAN Declaration, the Treaty of Tlatelolco all aimed at the same goal Whitlam's support for 'ASEAN' declaration on South East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality'³⁹ (proposed by Malaysia and ratified by other members 1971) was a step to testify his commitment towards regional stability.

On 7 Dec 1972 at the UN ,Australia decided to support another Asian initiative (Sri Lankan Proposal) for declaring Indian ocean a zone of peace and obtained a place

38. ibid.

39. n.28, p. 341.

for Australia on the relevant United Nations committee. In order to procure a respectable position for Australia in the region Whitlam made concerted effort. His concept of regionalism in a region filled with Asian and Pacific peoples fitted with another basic desire of the Whitlam government to express a greater sympathy for the causes exposed by the Afro - Asian world for their legitimate aspiration.⁴⁰

Whitlam's initiation to his post caused an unprecedented change in voting pattern of Australian representatives at the UN over a whole range of issues under debate in its various forums. Miller comments, "Australia's representatives at the United Nations suddenly found themselves later in 1972 advocating more radical policies over South Africa, Rhodesia, Portuguese colonies and dependent territories generally and doing so in polemical language neither to the prerogative of Afro-Asian nor communist delegates."⁴¹ Australia joined the committee of 24 (for decolonisation) at the UN, voted for the resolution condemning South Africa for its illegal presence in Namibia and the practice of apartheid. Australia further voted for a resolution condemning Smith government in Rhodesia .

40. Miller; n.7, p. 399.

41. ibid.

Thus Whitlam refurbished the white, racist, conservative and discriminatory image of Australia to a large extent. Whitlam tabled a list of voting pattern of Australia at UN in Australia Parliament to evidence a change in its perception of regional scenario. The list revealed that Australia voted enbloc prior to 2 Dec 1972 with Portugal, U.K., S.Africa and the United States but after Labor's take over, Australia voted frequently with Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.⁴²

On 30 Sept 1974 when Whitlam spoke at the UN "We must be unremitting in the efforts sanctioned by the Assembly to break this illegal regime in Rhodesia, to end South Africa unlawful control over Namibia and to end The apartheid. He acknowledged at the same time that Australia's own record is seriously flawed in determining to remove all forms of racial discrimination within our own shores notably now as notoriously in the past against our aborigines".⁴³ The Racial Discrimination Bill was finally enacted into a law during mid 1975. In 1975 all persons entering Australia (except NewZealanders) had to obtain visa, thus revising the long standing discriminatory

42. Common wealth Parliamentary debates, Senate, 22 August 1973, pp. 103-107.

43. n.30, p. 583.

practice under which European British citizens, Commonwealth citizens and Irish citizens but not non-Commonwealth citizens could enter Australia without visa facilities.⁴⁴ One subject over which Whitlam took tough stand was in sports. 'Racially selected sporting teams were excluded from Australia and their transit through Australia and other destinations was precluded.'⁴⁵

Whitlam's foreign policy was marked by idealism. Though his predecessors signed NPT. It was Whitlam who brought about us prompt ratification. His predecessors could effect only a mild protest against openair French Nuclear tests in the Pacific but Whitlam successfully sued the matter in the International court of justice. Beginning in 1966, French conducted atmospheric nuclear weapon test in French Polynesia after African states had called for an end to the French Atmospheric and Underground Tests in the Algerian Sahara. This led to the sponsorship of a draft resolution by a group of thirteen littoral states in the Pacific (Australia, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru the Philippines and Thailand). The draft called for a halt to the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific region

44. Albinski; n.1, p. 111.

45. n.4, pp. 30-35.

or any where in the world, and the supervision of all nuclear tests in the environment and the negotiations of treaty banning all such tests. On 9 May '73 after all attempts failed to defect French on nuclear tests, Australia instituted proceedings against France in International court of Justice. The move against France had a bearing upon Australia's relations with EEC (European Economic Community) but it was a bright spot in Australia - South Pacific relations. The South Pacific neighbours hailed Australia as a reliable friend capable of skillful representation of their concern over international platform.

Whitlam excelled in maintaining a coherence between internationalism and nationalism at home. His advocacy for independence of dependent territories was consistent with Australian decision to grant independence to Papua New Guinea. All obstacles in Papua New Guinea's way to independence were removed but the question of independence of Cocos Island remained unresolved. Whitlam expressed less optimism over the issue and considered it 'inappropriate'. The committee of 24 of UN which visited Cocos Island and expressed a similar view.

At the very onset of his premiership, Whitlam had declared two objectives of his foreign policy. Firstly his out of way preference for Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and

secondly prominence to China. Whitlam declared that "we plan to develop a substantial relationship with China based on friendship, cooperation and neutral trust But China will by no means be the central preoccupation of our foreign policy. Our relationship with China will not develop at the expense of our relations with other countries."⁴⁶

But at the same time he was not oblivious of inevitability of Australian US alliance. His foremost priority was to establish closer relations with the nearest and largest neighbour Indonesia, due to her size, population and strategic importance. 'We believe that the importance of Indonesia to Australia is indisputable and added we see our relations with Indonesia as complementary and not in any way competitive of our relationships with other ASEAN countries.'⁴⁷ Geographical compulsions determined Whitlam's policies towards Indonesia but Papua New Guinea was even more important determinant in Australia-Indonesia relations. A stable Indonesia contributed to the establishment of good relations, between Australia and South East Asia on one hand and Australia- South Pacific neighbours on the other. A continuity in Australian foreign policy is visible in Whitlam's continued support for good

46. n.28, p. 337.

47. n.4, p. 33.

relations with Indonesia. It was a sign of pragmatism to adjust the old policies of Australian foreign offices according to the new contingent situations and Whitlam did the same.

After his visit to Indonesia (Feb 1973) he indicated proximity as another factor underlying Indonesia's importance to Australia. The Indonesian archipelago connects Australia with South East Asia so that Indonesia straddles Australia's lines of communication and its trade routes to the north west. The strategic factors may appear less significant when there is no apparent military threat but exclusive care of Indonesia was envisaged with long term benefit.⁴⁸ Whitlam believed that the security of Australia can better be managed if it is surrounded by friendly countries and strongly criticised Australia's involvement in unwinnable wars of communist to versus anti-communist fores. Australia's aid to Indonesia war started from 1965, advent of Whitlam reaffirmed substrain enthusiasm. An aid of A\$ 59,000,000 was declared spread over a three year period. Trade with Indonesia became substantial. Tt rose from A\$ 20,700,000 to A\$ 97,400,000 by May 1974.⁴⁹

48. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 45(10), October 1974, p.649.

49. n.30, p. 562.

Since Indonesia occupied an important position in the eyes of Australia, Whitlam proposed the idea of regional Asia-Pacific Consultative forum on his Indonesia visit in Feb '73. Indonesia's response was some what perplexed and anxious. Reluctant to commit themselves to such a shadowy concept Suharto retorted "we appreciate the ideas to discuss the future of Asia and the Pacific.....but such ideas require more thorough examination ad consideration, ASEAN has become a reality and is growing in strength."⁵⁰ General Ali Marpoto (Suharto's advisor) replied "basically ASEAN is a first form of co-operation through which Indonesia will extend its net of co-operation."⁵¹ Adam Malik (Indonesian foreign Minister) was non committal not only in his reply but exploited this opportunity to propose two sub regional groupings, one of Asia Pacific Nations and other of Indian Ocean Nations (littoral state). According to him "current suggestions like Whitlam's for larger regional groupings to include China and Japan are too ambitious. The time is not ripe, some countries in the area have not yet really worked out-their economic relations with Japan and some have no political or economic relations with China".⁵² On the question of Portugese Timor Whitlam decided

50. Knight; n.24, p.262.

51. ibid., p. 264.

52. ibid., p.266.

to endorse Indonesia's anxiety and concerns. Indonesia's significance as a key nation in South East Asia and the nation which required special handling in the furtherance of such Australian projects as abroad Asia-Pacific Forum.⁵³

Though Whitlam conceded Indonesia's claim over Timor to indicate its non interventionisthe opposed any forcible take over. Joint military training programmes were mooted to avoid any military pact, yet to strengthen Australian-Indonesian ties. These programmes were characterised by training schemes, supply of equipments and joint exercises. Herein lies the diplomatic acumen of Whitlam who laid emphasis on discussion in open areas of co-operation in social and cultural forays and showed no enthusiasm for establishment of military pacts against obscure themes.

The Papua New Guinea was the most welcome ally of Australia in the South West pacific region. Whitlam worked upon his promise to foster good relations with PNG by revealing his readiness to grant independence to PNG in 1975. He assured that Australia shall increasingly consider its policies towards Papua New Guinea not in any nostalgic colonial sense, but as though it was dealing with

53. Peter Hastings. The timor problem I, Australian outlook, 29 April 1975, pp. 18-33.

a fully independent state. He also offered all help to PNG after and before independence. He disclosed Australian priorities and remarked "Papna New Guinea will have the first call to our foreign aid programme and we shall work closely with the cultural government of Papna New Guinea through a specific and guaranteed economic programme. We shall, however place no inhibitions what so ever on the Government of Papua New Guinea in seeking aid or investment from any country. She may choose to invite to take part in her development.⁵⁴

Rich natural resources of Papna New Guinea made it conspicuous in the South Pacific region. Relations between Australia and PNG operated on natural reciprocity. Concerned over border disputes between Indonesia and PNG, Whitlam tried to mediate. Chiefminister of PNG Micheal Somare acknowledged that Australia had been a benevolent administrator and further bestowed moral obligation towards PNG's defence on Australia PNG served as an important factor in Australian - Japanese relationship.

When Whitlam took over as Labor Prime Minister, one of the most important task ahead was negotiating favourable terms with Japan. Non Labor cabinets which had

54. n.28, p. 340.

preceded Whitlam did not place an embargo upon overseas borrowings nor thought of them as harmful to Australian economy. Occasional embargo was placed to restrain excessive liquidity in the monetary system. In Dec '72 the Labor government continued the practice and virtually closed off all foreign borrowings by introducing the 'viable deposit' system, a provision to deposit 33.5 per cent proceeds of borrowed loan in a non-interest bearing account of Reserve Bank of Australia. Japan and Australia had become the most significant international associate. Japan was Australia's most important market while Australia supplied 47 per cent of iron ore and 60 per cent of Bauxite which Japan required. In addition, Japan also imported large quantities of wool, wheat, meat and sugar. It was at this junxture when Whitlam evolved 'resource diplomacy' another noticeable feature of his foreign policy. He expressed with anguish "Australia's national resources, their exploration processing and export fell increasingly into hand of foreign concerns."⁵⁵ Acknowledging resource potentials of Australia, Whitlam claimed "We rank among the world's five main producers of bauxite, iron ore, tin, nickel, silver, lead, zinc, manganese and uranium"⁵⁶ and highlighted

55. ibid., p. 343.

56. ibid.

the need to develop policies of its own and save Australia from becoming an object of others' exploitative strategies. He called for the protection of scarce resources for Australia's exclusive use. All his statements were directed to seek greater Australian and government control and supervision over the use of Australia's natural resources.

The principal issues in Australian-Japanese relations during the Labor era (1972-75) were (a) "Resources diplomacy" (which manifested itself in the restrictions on foreign investment in the mining industry and in the repeated use of the threat of withholding export licences in order to increase the price of mineral exports) (b) the Japanese embargo on beef imports (c) the intensification after November 1974 of restriction on the entry into Australia of motor vehicles and some other items of importance to Japanese trade.⁵⁷

While much of his economic diplomacy was inspired by his personal initiatives, the objectives of Labor Party served as a guideline. Labor manifesto section I laid down "Overseas investment in Australia is to be encouraged only where it introduces new technology and expertise, includes

57. W.J. Hudson (ed) Australia in World Affairs (1971-75) Sydney, p. 239.

plants for Australian participation in the enterprise, and otherwise shows itself to be in Australia's national interest".⁵⁸ Whitlam's ban on foreign equity participation with development of Australian uranium, coal, oil and natural gas resources irked Japanese government.

Whitlam induced a shrewd measure to harness Japanese technology. He asked for setting of an uranium-enrichment plant with Japanese fund and technology but owned by Australia, visualizing greater need of enriched uranium in the 80's. Japanese response was negative and relations between the two was reviewed at Tanaka's (the Japanese Prime Minister) visit to Australia in Oct 1974. Both Whitlam and Tanaka issued a joint statement on 2 Nov 74 declaring that Australia would honour the coal and uranium needs of Japan, while Japan will try to provide help for Australian uranium enrichment plant but with the technology of a third nation. Though earlier Whitlam economic nationalism declaration had prohibited more than 50 per cent foreign ownership for all new mineral development projects. But later his attitude became more compromising and practical when he agreed to propose a foundation as a vehicle to promote and foster a continuing programme to build and wider

58. ibid., pp. 339-40.

mutual contacts at all level-business, academic, cultural, scientific trade unions.....⁵⁹

In January 1973, the Senate Standing Committee tendered report on Japan-Australia relationship stating their belief "that already framework could be devised which would confer equal and mutual benefits to both parties."⁶⁰ Shortly afterwards, after the annual meeting of the ministerial committees held in Tokyo Oct 1973, Whitlam while addressing National Pressclub said,

"We are Japan's greatest single supplier of raw materials. That we are so has been, of course, to Australia's considerable and immediate benefit. Clearly the prosperity of the two countries is closely linked. Such mutual benefits generate mutual responsibilities. After preliminary negotiation in July and September 1974, the first round of official treaty negotiations took place at Tokyo from 28 Nov to 4 Dec 1974. General agreement was reached on what eventually emerged as articles I to VI of the treaty when the treaty was signed in June 1976. The second round which began in Canberra on 28 Jan 1975 ended in a deadlock on 4 Feb 1975."⁶¹

At the third round of negotiations which began on 5 March was not only a failure to resolve the issue, but Japan picked up a general over interpretation of most favoured nation treatment to seek favour for their firms. It was angry reaction over Australian restriction imposed on the

59. Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 14 August 1975

60. ibid.

61. Ashai Shimbun. 5 February 1975.

imports of Japan's motor cars. The talks discontinued on 12 March and were not resumed during Whitlam's period. Thus Whitlam provided the framework over which NARA (Nippon, Australia Relations Agreement) was signed by Fraser government in 1976.

Thus Whitlam's multifarious foreign policy made a lasting impression upon Australian external policy and was accepted by later Liberal Country Party with suitable alterations, while most part remaining intact. His policy of independent stance and self reliance became hallmark of later Australian foreign policy. Under his leadership, Australia's policies acquired new ends of 'constructive commitment' with the South Pacific and 'comprehensive engagement' with South East Asia. Appreciating globalisation of Australian policies by Whitlam Gareth Evans (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade) remarked "The Whitlam Government.. forced a fundamental change of direction not only in Australian voting practices in the United Nations but also through the adoption of the basic international covenants on human rights and the elimination of racial discrimination "and all these" had a very positive effect on our (Australia's) acceptance

internationally and in our region."⁶²

Summarising Whitlam's achievements in foreign policy, Gareth Evan's wrote, 'the tone of Australia's new independent approach to foreign policy was set...right from the beginning. Before very long we had recognised China, N.Vietnam, East Germany and North Korea, had withdrawn our military from Vietnam and our aid from Cambodia, removed our infantry from Singapore stopped wheat sales to South Rhodesia, provided some indirect aid to S. African liberation movement, hastened independence for Papua New Guinea, pronounced the demise of the white Australia Policy, demonstrated systematic sympathy and support for the third World aspirations in the U.N and elsewhere, arraigned France in the World court for its Nuclear test in the South Pacific and began negotiations with Japan for a treaty of friendship and co-operation.'⁶³

Thus Whitlam's regional policies had stirring effect and Australia developed close ties with ASEAN and its members. Though his independence stance had annoyed the

62. Ministerial Statement of Senator Gareth Evans; Australian's Regional Security, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra. December 1989, p. 42 & p. 166.

63. Gribble; n.18, p.163.

United States, his skillful manouvering, saved the alliance from getting into tight spot. The comprehensive impact of his policies can be observed in regional policies, global forms and even in later Australian foreign policy. Under his lead Australian foreign policy depicted characteristics of anti-militarism, anti racialism, anti-colonialist, anti-nuclear proliferation, anti-discrimination, pro UN and receptive to produces of Third world. These qualities distinguished his tenure as the prime minister as to be the most dynamic, epoch making era of Australian history.

CHAPTER - III

THE REGIONAL POLICY RESPONSE

a) South East Asian Dimension

The Australian foreign policy's acquired aim under the Whitlam Government was establishing intimate relations with regional members to usher in a regional security in which Australia would be surrounded by friendly countries. Australia's geographical location made it binding upon Whitlam to declare a policy of regional preferences emphasising Australia's close identity with South East Asia on the one hand and South West Pacific island countries on the other. Whitlam's belief that a stable South East Asia was congenial to Australian interests formed basis of contriving close consultative and co-operative foreign policies in the region. The significant feature in Whitlam's regional perception was his conceptualization of the region's future and re-aligning of Australia with forces of political, social and economic change. Labor Government under Whitlam maintained that Communist victories in Indo-China posed no threat to any existent geo-political and economic change in the region. Whitlam Government's stand differed with preceding Liberal-Country Party Government's fears and prejudices regarding communist victories in Indo-China.

For Australia 1970's were years of strange and hostile environment. As a consequence, doctrine of 'forward defence' or 'fortress Australia' was designed by earlier Governments. The preceding government of Liberal-Country Party was ideologically anti China and considered South East Asia an area of dangerous instability. It was convinced that only US military's regional presence was capable of checking spread of Communism and maintaining stability in the region. In addition presence of the United States was a bonus on the ANZUS alliance and provided strength to efforts to contain Communist China. Any Western military and economic support to anti-Communist Governments in this region was taken to be contributory to the Australian security interests. Another merit over previous government was lack of any rigid ideological commitment by Labor Government.

The Whitlam Government recognised the Government of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and advocated reduction of the US forces in the South East Asian region. All Australian Governments invariably had observed South East Asia and Indonesia in particular as their fore most consideration. Whitlam reiterated Labor Government's preferences for this (Indonesia) nearest, largest most populous and strategically important country for Australia. Sharing of common border with Papua New

Guinea, (PNG) made Indonesia even more important in the eyes of Australia. 'The assumed central importance of Indonesia has been a characteristic of the Australian Foreign Policy since Australia supported Indonesia in its struggle for independence against Dutch between 1945-1949. There is no doubt that this support created a considerable store of Indonesian good will towards Australia.¹ 'Despite serious differences over matters of incorporation of West Irian into Indonesia and Indonesia's *confrontasi* with Malaysia, Australia retained much of this good will and relations between the two countries.'² Fall of Soekarno's regime in 1965, revitalised close ties between Indonesia and Australia more so, due to personal contacts between the Australian Prime Ministers and General Suharto. Gough Whitlam carried this personal diplomacy to greater lengths, with visits to Indonesia in 1973 and 1974 and a further return visit by General Suharto to Australia in 1975. The Australian-Indonesian relations, remained very cordial till issue of East Timor in 1975. Pressure from within the party forced

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1. J.A.C. Mackie, 'Australia and Indonesia', (1945-60) in Gordon Greenwood, Norman Harper (ed.) Australia in World Affairs (1956-60), Melbourne 1963. Quoted in W.J. Hudson (ed) Australia in world Affairs (1971-75), Sydney, 1980, P 284
 2. J.A.C. Mackie, On Confrontation, Kuala Lumpur, 1974. Quoted in W.J. Hudson (ed) Australia in world Affairs (1971-75) Sydney, 1980, P 185

Whitlam to raise the issue in his talks with President Suharto in 1974 and convey the Australian point of view on the issue.

Indonesia continued to be the largest single recipient of Australian development and defence aid only after PNG. The earlier annual aid plan was replaced by a three year forward commitment of A\$ 69 million from 1973 to 1976. The amount of aid to Indonesia accounted for A\$ 21.1 million out of total development aid of A\$ 36.9 million assigned for South East Asia.³ Australian - Indonesian ties were further strengthened when Australia and Indonesia signed an agreement defining the sea-bed boundary between North West Australia and Indonesian Timor (9 Oct 1972)⁴. It was followed by another boundary agreement signed by Australia and Indonesia on 12 Feb 1973.⁵ Whitlam Government encouraged natural growth of amicable diplomatic relations between Indonesia and PNG. But border problems and activities of Free Papua Movement formed issues over which a row could arise. Australian counterpart avoided any discord

3. W.J. Hudson (ed.), Australia in World Affairs (1971-1975), Sydney, 1980, p.282.

4. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 10 October 1972.

5. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol 46(4), April 1975, p. 215.

over New Guinea by recognising Indonesia's interests and influence in developments in Papua New Guinea. Australia-Indonesia relations received a jolt at the end of 1974 when Portuguese-Timor was taken over by Indonesia. Indonesian concern over East Timor was born out of self government demands raised by some political parties (Fretlin) since an independent East Timor would have been a source of instability in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago. The Timorese question formed an important item on the agenda of Jakarta meeting (Sept. 1974) between Whitlam and President Suharto. After the meeting Australian Governments view was that an independent East Timor would not be viable economically and would be a source of instability in the region.⁶ This was so close to the Indonesian view that its obvious inference revealed Australian support for Indonesian assimilation of the East Timor. The Timor issue thronged Australia-Indonesia relations throughout Whitlam years. Indonesia felt deceived on Australia's private support to Fretlin (Timorese political party advocating independence). While Australian political analysts criticised Australian attitude of acquiescence to every Indonesian step, the opposition demanded a kind of 'honest broker' role over the issue. But Whitlam's fore sight was strong enough to foresee

6. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 16 November 1974.

inevitability of Indonesian act. As a result, he recognised claim of Indonesia over East Timor. Whitlam's *locus standi* was vindicated by succeeding governments which continued to follow and support Whitlam's initiative in this direction.

Indo-China became focus of Australian foreign policy owing to Liberal Country Party's diplomatic strategies based on concept of 'forward defence'. The Western military involvement in Vietnam had made it incumbent upon Australian Liberal-Country Party Government to introduce conscription, Labor Party opposed it. Labor Party opposed both, the introduction of conscription and the involvement of Australian troops in Vietnam. Having used Vietnam War as a political weapon against Labor Party, the Liberal Country Party became captive of its own rhetoric with the announcement of Nixon's Guam Doctrine. Liberal-Country Party lacked alternative blue print for country's defence in view of changed international milieu. As a consequence, Whitlam came to power who promised a distinct non militarist and independent stance to Australian Foreign Policy. 'Forward defence' tactics was abandoned, to adopt 'continental defence', based on greater self reliance.

Whitlam's advent to power was marked by resumption of US bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong just before Christmas in 1972. Whitlam's cabinet members also criticised it, much to

the annoyance of the United States. But the situation reconciled with coming of Australia's support for full implementation of the Paris Agreement of January 1973 over Indo China.

Whitlam's commitment to stabilise region was evident from his practical decision to resist pressures to recognise PRG (Peoples Republic Government) in Vietnam. In a ministerial statement to the House of Representatives on 8th April, Mr. Whitlam proclaimed "who rules Saigon is not and never has been an ingredient in Australian security. Our strength our security rest on factors and relationships ultimately unchanged by these events"⁷. Above statement makes it clear that his government policy was to accord recognition to legitimate government whoever controlled country's capital. During his visit to China in November 1973, Whitlam met Prince Sinhanouk the head of GRUNK (The Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea) but his stand remained unchanged. At Peking addressing a Press Conference he replied to a question "No, as long as the Lon Nol Government is in possession of the capital of Cambodia and is in the United Nations the present Australian attitude

7. Ministerial statement on Indo-China by Whitlam, 8 April 1975, Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, p.1260.

towards it will continue."⁸ Whitlam Government followed its policy rigidly in Vietnam and Cambodia and "refused to withdraw recognition from Lon Nol and Thieu Governments and their successors until Phnom Penh and Saigon were captured by their opponents"⁹. 'In accordance with its stated policy, a few days after the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, the Whitlam government recognised the government of Prince Sinhanouk as the legitimate government of Cambodia.¹⁰ "In Vietnam, the PRG was like wise recognised as the Government of South Vietnam after it gained control of Saigon."¹¹ Whitlam was also credited with energetically lobbying with Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference at Jamaica in early May for support for his eventually successful effort to persuade the 'United Nations Commissioner for Refugees' to take control of Vietnamese Refugee problem. He promised that Australia would take in fair share of refugees in such an international effort.¹²

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8. Claire Clark; Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, (July - December 1973), Australian Journal of Politics and History, April 1974, p.7.
 9. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 18 December 1973.
 10. The Australian, Canberra, 18 April 1975.
 11. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 7 May 1975.
 12. The Australian, Canberra, 8 May 1975.

Commonwealth links with Malaysia and Singapore were well established even before World War II. Australian troops were continuously present in Malaya peninsula after second World War. In 1967 British government decided to withdraw British troops from Singapore and surrender its leases on bases as part of streamlining its defence expenditure east of Suez. Australia criticised the British decision, firstly because British presence ensured stability in the region and, secondly, because British withdrawal compelled Australia to fill in the vacuum created. Eventually Britain, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore jointly created "a Five Power Defence Arrangement which took effect in Nov. 1971, as the successor to the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement under which the partners were obliged to consult if there was an armed attack or threat against Malaysia or Singapore."¹³ Malaysia had been sensitive about Australia's commitment to the area since Prime Minister Gorton's celebrated speech during talks on the Five Power arrangement in Canberra in June 1969 when he persistently referred to Australia's commitment to defend Malaya.¹⁴

13. Article by J.L. Richardson, "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies" in Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harpar (eds.); Australia in World Affairs (1966-70), Melbourne 1974, pp. 233-69.

14. ibid.,

Five Power Defence Arrangement was a strong link between Australia and Singapore and Lee Kwan Kew (Prime Minister of Singapore) expressed strong desire for the retention of Australian troops in Singapore. He acknowledged "the defence arrangements of the commonwealth five have provided continuing stability in an area important to us, the people who live in it, and perhaps to you in Australia,"¹⁵ Prime Minister McMahon on his visit to Jakarta in June 1972 underscored the importance of ANZUK to escape Indonesia's antagonism. Malaysia felt exasperated and in a retaliatory done expressed that the Australian contingent in Five Power Defence Arrangement was disposable. It was this point on which Whitlam capitalised and had to face no obstacle while implementing his plan to withdraw the Australian artillery troops from Malaysia and Singapore. Still retention of Mirage squadron at Butterworth demonstrated Australia's existent interest in security of the area.

Whitlam's policy in South East Asia vis-a-vis Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore exhibited his preference for regional co-operation based on social and cultural links while downgrading military links. Whitlam emphasised that "a foreign policy aimed only at securing the defence perimeters

15. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 10 June 1972.

will in the long run, distort both foreign and defence policies.¹⁶ But in another statement he confessed that "in the distant past Australia tended to ignore South East Asia."¹⁷ Australian nostalgia towards Europe and loyalties towards British Empire explained Australia's indifference of the region. The Chinese revolution (cultural Revolution 1966) and war in Indo China both spawned such security phobia in Australia that its perception narrowed to regarding South East Asia as a new Australian frontier. As a result, the concept of forward defence was evolved, and this policy of 'forward defence' impelled Australia's entry into military alliances like SEATO and ANZUK. This security phobia receded with the **detente** in Super Power rivalry. The emerging world scenario manifested growing US aversion to shoulder regional commitments towards its friends and allies unless faced by a nuclear threat (Nixon's Guam Doctrine). The containment of China was struck out of SEATO objectives. United States appeal to its allies to rely on self defence measure in case of local conflicts and emergence of China as the sole manipulating power of events in Indo-China also had a bearing upon Whitlam's regional policies.

16. Whitlam's statement on International Affairs in House of Representatives, Canberra. 24 May 1973, quoted in B. Chakroborty; Australia's Military Alliances, New Delhi, p.124.

Whitlam who anticipated an important change in US-China equation decided to recognise China (PRC) immediately, though only after Canada: Recognition of Peoples Republic of China and opening up of relations with North Vietnam (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) implied that Whitlam viewed South East Asia 'in its own right, rather than through British or American eyes.¹⁸ Shedding away all 'ideological considerations' and military alliances, Whitlam's policies were dominated by the desire to establish trade, promote progress through aid programmes and encourage security through regional co-operation rather than military pacts. When Whitlam returned from his tour to South East Asia in Feb 1974 he pointed out that his aim of visit was 'to hear the views of our friends and neighbours on issues of common concern" and expressed happiness and satisfaction over Australia's wider acceptance in the region.¹⁹ Reiterating his promises he noted "we are now seen as a steadfast and interested partner - a true participant - in the destiny of the region. There can be no turning back from this commitment."²⁰

17. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 44(2), February 1973, p.98.

18. Hudson; n.3. p.284.

19. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Volume 45(2), February 1974, pp. 72-73.

20. ibid.

Whitlam's initiation to the power brought about two significant changes in Australian Foreign Policy - firstly, downgrading of SEATO and ASPAC as 'moribund' and 'anachronistic' and secondly recognition of the Peoples Republic of China. Whitlam downgraded the SEATO because he wished to end prevailing contradiction in Australian foreign policy. Australia's diplomatic relations with China ran contrary to the maxims of the SEATO which was evolved to contain the Chinese Communism. Taiwan's continued presence in the Asian and Pacific Council as its member obligated Whitlam to dubb the ASPAC as 'moribund'. Whitlam's desire was to see SEATO being transformed into a cultural and economic organisation. On his visit to Thailand Whitlam expressed that "with an understanding of the position of Thailand particularly in mind and the importance. Thailand attaches to the Manila Treaty are therefore agreed to work within the organisation for modification of its operation and orientation; underpin confidence yes, underwrite containment, no. And with the co-operation and agreement of all members, this is what we have done."²¹

21. Whitlam's speech to the Thai-Australian Association Bangkok, quoted in Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol 45(2), February 1974, p.76.

Moreover, the communist victories in Cambodia and Vietnam expedited demise of the SEATO. In Sept 1975 the SEATO Ministerial Council meeting at New York unanimously agreed to its dissolution. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was first significant act towards regional co-operation to emerge from the countries of the region designed to serve their own interests. Australia welcomed the emergence of the ASEAN in 1967 and successive Australian governments, also continued their support. Unlike the 'SEATO' and the ASPAC' the 'ASEAN' received full support of Whitlam who hailed it as "unquestionably the most important, the most relevant, the most natural organisation fostering greater regional co-operation in economic, social and cultural areas. It is evident that he was keen to forge some Australian link with ASEAN. He made it amply clear that 'Australia does not seek to be a member of ASEAN, through we have close bilateral and regional relationship with all its members.²² Although, Whitlam demied any yearning on Australia's part for membership of the ASEAN yet he extended wholehearted support for its proposal of ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Nautiality) and offered all help to the development projects in any of ASEAN countries. He reiterated his support and appreciated ASEAN as "the only

22. n.20, pp 74-6.

one which has a proper regional relevance, the only one which has a thriving future.'²³ Whitlam preferred to support ASEAN due to two factors, firstly, its membership was restricted strictly to regional members geographically and secondly presence of Indonesia, with whom Whitlam desired to have close economic and cultural ties.

When Whitlam proposed his Asia-Pacific Consultative Forum based on wider membership, scholars began to express fears about the ASEAN's fate. Whitlam acted promptly to quell any such fears and assured that "Australia does not belong to the Association of South East Asian Nations, which brings together Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand nor do we seek membership of it ASEAN has demonstrated its strength and viability as a sub regional grouping and it is not in our interest nor it is our intention willigly or unwillingly to disturb, the unity progress and harmony of that association."²⁴

In response to Whitlam's proposal of Asia Pacific consultative Forum' all ASEAN countries expressed first

23. Whitlam's Speech, Manila Press Conference on 12 February 1974, quoted in H.S. Albinski; Australian External Policy under Labor; St. Lucia. 1977, p.95.

24. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Volume 44(5), May 1973, p.339.

concern for ASEAN. As a consequence Whitlam's offer died out. In 1973 Australia was invited by the ASEAN Secretary-General to hold discussions about economic co-operation between ASEAN and Australia. Whitlam felt felicitated at the offer as it opened long jammed gate for Australia and secondly it implied wide acceptance of Australia in the region as a constructive associate partner. ASEAN offer carried some conditions which are as follows :-

1. assistance would be acceptable only from a country friendly to all the ASEAN members.
2. assistance should not be at the expense of assistance given to any individual member.
3. assistance should be for projects conceived by ASEAN which are of a regional character and designed for the benefit of all ASEAN member countries.
4. assistance should be carried out within the ASEAN area and
5. assistance should be to supplement ASEAN capability.²⁵

In April 1974 Australia proposed an aid of A\$ 5 million to joint ASEAN projects. Whitlam hailed ASEAN for the level of the cooperation and understanding achieved.

25. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Vol. 45(12), December 1974, p.830.

Impelled by geo-political imperatives of the region Whitlam mooted a new regional consultative forum in the Asia Pacific region.²⁶ It was a concept rather than a firm proposal for action comment's one critic²⁷ because it lacked a clear aim, organisation and structure. Whitlam introduced his plan meticulously while addressing at the Australian Institute of Political science summer school, Canberra, 27 Jan 1973 "The guidliness of the regional community that I forsee will be on organisation genuinely representative of the region without ideological overtones, conceived as an initiative to help for the region of great power rivalries that have bedeviled its progress for decades and designed to insulate the region against ideological interference from the great powers".²⁸

An eminent scholar considers Whitlam's idea of regional community as brilliant proposal because only Australia was capable of drawing China into dialogue with Asian powers which were virtually broken off in 1950's. Secondly, it was mooted to replace SEATO and ASPAC which

26. John, Knight, Australia and Proposals for Regional Consultation and Co-operation in the Asian and Pacific Area; Australian Outlook, Volume 28(3), December 1974, p.261.

27. ibid.

28. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Volume 44(1), January 1973, p.34.

casted a shadow of dependence upon Australia Whitlam thought that a new wider forum with China and not US as its member would make it more acceptable in the region. Finally the proposal was important because it ended the alienation of Australia from one of the most potent economic organisation in its vicinity.²⁹

Highlighting other factors an analysis says that the forum was born out of aims to broaden Australia's horizon and extinguish its security phobia. But most important cause was the belief that Australia must participate in a regional organisation with real partners rather than align with remotely placed friends and foes. It simply meant closing the defence perspective to continental limits and shedding off fortress Australia' concept.³⁰

In addition to the above arguments the proposition of this organisation or forum is significant due to the reason that it demonstrated Australia's will to seek multilateral support and base for the same. The main underlying cause of Whitlam's canvassing in favour of the organisation and seeking support of regional members did not originate from belief that Australia was unable to launch

29. Peter King, Whither Whitlam?, International Journal, Volume 29(3), Summer 1974, pp. 433-34.

30. ibid.,

and manage the forum single handedly. Instead, it was representative of Whitlam's desire interact on co-ordinate basis Whitlam contended.

"I do not intend that Australia should try to impose a detailed formulation for setting up such a community and we shall not seek to intrude beyond our realistic capacity to participate and assist in the realization of this concept".³¹ Flexibility of his concept was depicted in his statement "we remain completely flexible on the timing structure and membership of any future arrangements"³². Yet the Forum failed to evoke a warm response and was looked upon by regional members as object of caution and uncertainty.

Regional response to Whitlam's forum was apathetic to wider range of membership (Asia-Pacific) and long term benefits to the region. The proposal made a head way on his visit to Jakarta in Feb 1973. When Whitlam offered his plan to Indonesian President Suharto, his response was perplexed and non committal to such a vague concept. Later Shuharto responded in his independence day's speech that such ideas still require more thorough examination and consideration. Still showing preference for ASEAN he added "ASEAN has

31. Knight, n.26, p 261.

32. ibid.,

become a reality and is growing in strength. ----- Through this association we have succeeded in fostering together a feeling of natural trust. In the long run, it is our desire that there will be general capability of the peoples of South East Asia to take care of and to determine their own future and not all this future to be determined or intervened by other interests from outside."³³

The point which was somewhat confused in Indonesian response regarding forum turned clear in Malaysia's appraisal of Whitlam's regional community. Adam Malik (Indonesian foreign minister) on his visit to Australia observed "Current suggestions like Mr Whitlam's for longer regional groupings to include China and Japan are too ambitious. The time is not ripe, some countries in the area have not yet really worked out their economic relations with Japan, and some have no political or economic relations with China."³⁴

Malaysia however, thought that the inclusion of China and Japan would make USSR observe the forum as an anti USSR propaganda.³⁵ Malaysian Prime Minister Tun. Abdul Razak insisted on acknowledging ASEAN as the prime vehicle

33. ibid, p.263.

34. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 12 November 1973.

35. The Canberra Times, Canberra, 31 January 1974.

of regional co-operation. In his view "even though the proposal grouping didnot conflict with aspirations of ASEAN it would still act as rival organisation."³⁶

Singapore's response was not as discouraging as the Five Power Defence Arrangement Partner Malaysia. But to take Singapore as Convassor of the forum would be an error as its response was polite negation of the concept. Singapore's foreign Minister Mr. Rajaratnam said "Singapore does not oppose the Whitlam concept, but does not display great public enthusiasm for the idea at this stage and sees practical difficulties in the way of in early realization."³⁷ Singapore's sole suggestion was to extend membership of the forum to USSR also along with China and Japan.

The relevance of Whitlam's regional concept can be gauged only when the concept of regional community is placed beside General Ramulo's (foreign Secretary of Philippines) proposed 'Asian Forum' an organisation on pattern or Organisation of American States and compatible to Whitlam's proposal in content. Both proposals carried the basic feature of 'an informal consultative grouping without a special secretariat and holding meetings perhaps

36. The Australian, Canberra, 31 January 1974.

37. Knight, n.25, p.268.

annually.³⁸ Another rallying point was inclusion of all members of the region irrespective of their ideological differences. Whitlam felt encourage by Ramulo's offer since he perceived common objectives underlying his and Ramulo's offer. Whitlam pointed out.

"I have raised the general question of the need for a wider regional association than any new existing. President Marcos perceives the same need-the same gap in our existing opportunities for consultation and co-operation.³⁹ Australia's close ally and South Pacific member Papua New Guinea was also cautious in its response. Micheal Somare (The Chief Minister) expressed desire to peruse the proposal prior to any commitment while foreign Minister Mr. Kiki admitted that his country has no objection the idea.⁴⁰ Expressing his doubts about this regional community Micheal Somare added that the proposal was unlikely to evoke any enthusiastic interest from south Pacific countries on this matter.

The only ready support for the Forum was provided by the Labor Prime Minister of New Zealand Mr Kirk who offered intention to work with their Asianand Pacific

38. ibid., p.269.

39. n.19, pp 51-80

40. Canberra Times, Canberra, 19 December 1973.

neighbours in making adjustments to existing arrangements and seeking new forms of co-operation that took full account of the present realities of the situation in Asia and Pacific...offered to join in appropriate efforts to bring the countries of the Asia Pacific region together with new collective endeavour to promote the well being of their people.⁴¹ New Zealand showed interest in Indonesian proposal for a four nation association which was a two tier effort. The first, aimed to fuse the ASEAN and the South Pacific, while the second envisaged to accommodate.

The Major powers of the area Japan China and the Soviet Union. One scholar very aptly commented on the fate of Whitlam's proposal that "The lesson of this venture was that Australia could not easily take a major initiative in the south east Asian region. It just did not carry the political or economic weight..small in population, wealthy, white, Western, oriented, territorially large but almost empty separated from the mainland Asia geographically and psychologically. Australia was at best an associate member of the Asian group of States, capable of making a contribution but incapable of leading".⁴²

41. Whitlam - Kirk Joint Communique, Wellington, 22 January 1973, issued by Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, Selection of Statements etc., 8 August 1973.

42. T.B. Miller; Australia in Peace and War, Canberra, 1978, p. 168.

(b) South West Pacific Regional Security

The Australian regional security doctrine surfaced at the end of 19th century when they perceived Russian, French and German threat. Followed by perceived Japanese threat in 1918 and an actual Japanese threat in 1943-45 their regional security doctrine was imbued with desire for a predominant influence in the region. Increasing American influence in post second world war era in the south Pacific also was a concern which melted away with growing proximity under the ANZUS alliance (1951) between Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Commanding position of prime influence in the region had always been a cherished dream and aspiration of Australia. Evatt (Minister for F. affairs) told the house of Representatives (MARCH 1944) that.

"Australia and New Zealand have a duty to make a positive contribution to the future of the Pacific. They are the two British Pacific Dominions which must uphold Western civilization in this part of the world⁴³ The desire for prime influence gradually turned into an Australian Monroe Doctrine because it proclaimed that the south Pacific islands should be regarded as an Anglo-Saxon preserve in

43. H.V. Evatt; 'Foreign Policy of Australia', Sydney, 1945, p.172.

which other powers should not trespass.⁴⁴

The Australian Monroe Doctrine remained relevant till greater part of South Pacific remained under foreign rule. But with the beginning of the process of decolonization, starting with the independence of Western Samoa in 1962, self government in Cook islands under New Zealand in 1965, Nauru's independence in 1968 followed by Tonga and Fiji in 1970 ; Australian Monroe Doctrine lost its vigour and strength. The spree of islands to achieve independence appended with other turbulent events ; British withdrawal from East of Suez end of Vietnam war and the declaration of Nixon's Guam Doctrine (1969), all these had a combined effect on Whitlam's policies British retrenchment of troops and Nixon's Guam Doctrine formed prelude to Australia's impending task of fending for its security based on self reliance. Whitlam's emphasis on self reliant defence system was result of the fact that the American help was available only in face of a nuclear threat capable of disturbing the security balance and shrinking of US commitment towards the region.

Nevertheless, it was most opportune moment for Gough Whitlam's initiation to his post of Prime Minister.

44. Greg, E. Fry (ed); Australia's Regional Security. Sydney, 1990, p. 129

Tiding over his flamboyant 'regionalism imbued with non - militarism' and without any 'ideological overtones' Whitlam proposed his elaborate plan for an Asia -Pacific consulative forum to meet the new realities' and 'free the region of great power rivalries that have be dievilled its progress for decades and designed to insulate the region against ideological interfered from the great powers.⁴⁵ Another marked difference with outlook of previous Liberal country party Governments was the lack of any preoccupation for a militarist regional doctrine. Whitlam nourished no desire to act as an agent promoting the interest of Western Alliance, instead the underlying cause was aspiration to make Australia more acceptable to conservative and dithering economies of the region. Moreover the defeat prevailing betwixt the supper power rivalries made Whitlam's task easier Whitlam's approach to the region was only a lesser from of Australian mornroe Doctrine is argued by an eminent scholar on the subject, because "The idea of promoting regional security of seeking internal problems in South Pacific states as relevant to regional security and of developing a shared view of regional security and taking regional approach to their promotion-is itself part of an

45. T.B. Miller; The Foreign Policies of the Whitlam Government, Pacific Community, Volume 6(3), April 1975, p 397

attempt at Australian leadership or hegemony.⁴⁶

Whitlam's 'regional security' concept comprised of 'non-alignment values' 'based not on the presence of countervailing power but exclusion of all great powers. Whitlam's enthusiastic support for ASEAN proposal of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in the South East Asia and Sri Lankan proposal for Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace substantiated his resistance to any super power rivalry in the South Pacific region. Whitlam's government 'wanted no forward defence' doctrine for Australia in any military sense - no forward basing of troops and no military involvement'. He shaped regional security concept for Australia based on a community of states within the region - on regional co-operation.⁴⁷ Thus, disarmament and regional co-operation were desired aims for Whitlam Government.

'Until 1971 Australia's principal direct diplomatic contact with the islands of the South Pacific was through the South Pacific Commission (SPC)⁴⁸. The SPC was only a non political consultative and advisory body with

46. Fry, n.44, p 129.

47. E.G. Whitlam is speech on Australian Foreign Policy : New Directions New Definitions, 24th Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Brisbane, 30 Nov., 1973.

48. Hudson; n. 3, p. 336.

Australia, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom as its numbers. The emergence of a new more comprehensive regional organisation. South Pacific Forum didnot in any way affected Australian vigorous commitment towards South Pacific Commission. A more relevant and useful step of Whitlam Government was revision of twenty five years old **Canberra Agreement** which had established SPC. Earlier SPC had functioned as a major multilateral platform for the expression of Australian interests in the South Pacific but later in 1970, while reviewing SPC, the political leaders of island countries realised that their main hope to make SPC a platform to voice freely their regional and international political affairs remained unfulfilled. As a consequence the members of the Pacific Islands Producers Association (PIPA) with Fiji, Cook Islands, Gilbert & Ellice Islands, Tonga, W. Samoa, invited New Zealand to forge a new politicised organisation. New Zealand's approval led to establishment of South Pacific Form (SPF) in 1971. Australia was also included as member to acknowledge its growing identification with South Pacific community.

First Forum meeting in 1971 at Wellington lacked a formal structure, and the only important outcome of the meet was decision to meet regularly in future. At second Forum meet Canberra Feb. 1972 Sir Ratu Kamisese Mara (Fiji's Prime

Minister) particularly criticised Australia's discriminatory 'immigration policy' (which freely admitted citizens of Fiji with British origin without a visa while a Melanesian or Indian Fijian were required to carry an entry permit. Whitlam rectified Australia's discriminatory position by abolishing this incongruity in Australian foreign policy. At the same meet Australia agreed to finance South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation.(SPEC)

Third meeting of South Pacific Forum at Suva (Fiji) Sept. 1972 proved significant, as Australia succeeded in its move to earn membership for Papua New Guinea at this meeting. At earlier meeting membership to Papua New Guinea was denied by Polynesian membership on the pretext of its non-independent status. Another significant development was mounting pressure by Island countries for inclusion in NAFTA (New Zealand, Australia, Free Trade Agreement) which evoked negative response from Australia but a lesser resistance from New Zealand.

Fourth Forum meet at Apia in Mid-April -1973 proved momentous. Intended by Australia to demonstrate the Labor Government's commitment to the South Pacific'.The extraordinary large number of Australian participants was supported by a naval vessel on a goodwill visit and a military communications aircraft. Whitlam's enthusiasm and

show of support was marred by Sir Ratu Mara's complaint against activity of Australian unionists in Fiji (the Australian trade union officials instigated Fiji workers agitate against less wages) Whitlam diffused the issue by agreeing to host a meeting of Labour ministers in Oct. 1973 displaying a co-operative attitude towards the organisation.

Subsequent meeting of the Forum was held at Rarotonga March 1974. 'The Prime Ministers Mr Whitlam and Mr. Rowling (NZ P.M.) briefly attended the Rorotonga conference in September 1974 to indicate the significance their governments attached to the signify of ensuring Memorandum of understanding.

Traditionally, Australia enjoyed a very favourable balance of trade with the islands of the South Pacific. The following tables present Australia's trading relationship with the islands over a five year period.

Table 3.1

Exports to the Pacific Islands in \$000 for year ending June

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Islands (excluding PNG)	75,985	83,514	89,722	95,700	104741
PNG	147,298	163,369	159,965	134,697	133042
Total	223,283	246,883	249,687	230,397	237,783

(Australia, Bureau of Statistics, Aust., Imports & Exports
Country by Commodity, 1973-1974).

Table 3.2

Imports to the Pacific Islands in \$000 for year ending June

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Islands (excluding PNG)	26,783	22,844	18,007	22,374	35,477
PNG	21,631	22,630	23,576	24,668	36,614
Total	48,414	45,474	41,583	47,043	75,091

(Australia, Bureau of statistics, Imports and Exports
country by Commodity, 1973-74)

The decolonization of South West Pacific provided Australia with greater commercial opportunities among the former colonies. Fiji was the principal destination for Australian exports to the islands. (rising from \$19.9 million in 1970 to \$ 49 million in 1974) followed by New Caledonia (\$17 million in 1974), the New Hebrides (\$7.5 million), the Solomous (\$5.7 million) and Nauru (\$4.7 million). Imports amounted to \$19 million from Nauru in 1974, \$8.5 million from Fiji, \$4.5 million from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and \$ 1 million from Tonga⁴⁹ Whitlam Government reduced the tariff rates by ten percent to meet the demand of concessions in trade by island countries, still it feel short of bolting aspiration of these islands countries which demanded a place under NAFTA.

Australian aid diplomacy had been initiated by predecessor governments of Gorton and Mc Mahon but Whitlam Government used it to support its regional co-operativeness, objective. Budget 1973-74 saw the Australian aid to South Pacific countries doubled.⁵⁰

49. ibdi p. 341

50. ibid, p 342-3

Table 3.3

Australian Official Development Aid (in \$000 for year ending June)

Year	1971	1972	1973	1974
Monetary aid	922	1356	1368	3205
Non Monetary aid	421	541	709	926
Total	1343	1897	2077	4131

(Contemporary Parliamentary Debate, Senate Vol. (19-21) Aug. 1975, p.51-54.

Whitlam displayed an indefatigable enthusiasm for the Welfare of these island countries and evinced an enthusiastic support for his policies in return. The conservatism of social and political systems in this region provided a limited interpretation of 'ebullient egalitarianism projected by Labor Government. Yet, seeking a ban for French Open Air Nuclear Tests and enforcing a non discriminatory immigration law became focal point of his regional perception towards the South Pacific. The aim of projecting Australia as a strong ally of members of the region was fulfilled after his successful campaign against French Nuclear Tests. His loud protest on the issue, showed that Australia was acting for South West Pacific Island rather than acting with them.

There was an anxiousness among South Pacific members to enjoy friendship with a sympathetic middle power (Australia) still the natural acceptance like that of New Zealand was wanting. One of the friendly gestures of Whitlam was to return thousands of acres of Australian owned land to the peoples of New Hebrides. Some critics observe that Whitlam's interest in the region was determined by economic prospects only. But an analysis reveals the inevitable strategic location which obligates cordial links between Australia and South Pacific. The importance of the region has been acknowledged in Defence White Paper (1987) that

"Although remote from areas of major contention, South West Pacific is important for Australian defence planning because of its geographic proximity to Australia. Important lines of communication with Australia's major trading Partner, Japan, and with ... major ally, the United States run through the region." Further fears are noted as "An unfriendly maritime power in the area could inhibit our freedom of movement through these approaches could place in doubt the security of Australia's supply of military equipment and other strategic material from the United States."⁵¹

The years 1972-1975 coincided with intensified efforts by Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the strengthening of economic links between the two countries and for improved consultative arrangements in defence and

51. The Defence of Australia, 1987, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1987, pp. 16-17.

diplomacy. According to one New Zealand scholar, the accession of Labour freed Government in both capitals from an obsessive preoccupation with security aspects of the ANZAC relationship and enabled the two reasonably compatible Prime Ministers to reappraise and strengthen the ANZAC partnership unfettered by exaggerated notions of common interest."⁵² Australia and New Zealand attempted to convert a somewhat romantic and decreasingly productive special relationship into a more fruitful and disciplined natural relationship during Labour-Labor period in Australia and New Zealand.

In trade New Zealand and Australia had common interest and common strategies because of common produce and exports. The two economic agreements which governed Australia New Zealand trade were 1933 Agreement to recognise British preferential tariffs and the more ambitious New Zealand - Australia Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1965 which was revised and extended in 1975 during Whitlam period.

Australian decision to withdraw infantry troops from Malaysia and Singapore was not welcomed by New

52. Anthony Haas, Trans Tasman co-operation in Asia and the Pacific, Asia Pacific Research Unit, Wellington, 1974, p.2.

Zealand, firstly because it brought about involuntary and forced withdrawal of New Zealand unqualified to maintain its contingent without Australian logistic and military support and secondly it reduced New Zealand's importance in the South East Asian region. Both Australia and New Zealand had common perception of SEATO and advocated for its modification. A marked difference between Australia and New Zealand's projected image in the region was caused due to Australia's greater involvement with South East Asia, ignoring the South Pacific; while New Zealand scored a more intimate identity due to its continued liberal and ready support for island countries in the region. Australia nurtured a long cherished hope to be recognised as the spokesman for the Oceania. This ambition gathered strength and became more pronounced with the advent of Labor Government under Whitlam.

Co-operation in foreign policy reached a new and dramatic intensity during the period of South Pacific protests against French Nuclear tests at Murora Aloll in 1973. Both New Zealand and Australia acted in unison to protest against French nuclear Tests at UN session in 1972. 'Both Prime Minister's reminded a somewhat startled Western World that they were speaking and acting on behalf of the

smaller Pacific States as well as their own people'.⁵³

In their pursuit to voice concerns of the South Pacific nations, on 9 May 1973 both Governments sought a restraining order against France from the International Court of Justice at the Hague. Not content with this, Whitlam and Mr Kirk (Prime Minister of Australia and New Zealand respectively) raised the issue of French Nuclear Tests at the Commonwealth Heads of the Government meeting in Ottawa and at the South Pacific Conference in Guam. A French declaration to the effect that the 1974 Murora Atoll explosions would be their last nuclear test at once ushered in cordial relations between Australia and New Zealand. Overzealous support for the New Zealand policies experienced a setback when Whitlam showed reluctance to antagonise France or the United States by supporting a Nuclear-Free-testing Zone in the South Pacific envisaged by the New Zealand.

Australia's interests in the South Pacific were provided due importance under Labor Government. Whitlam's first visit after advent to power was to Wellington. He doubled the aid grants to the South Pacific and expressed

53. H.S. Albinski, Australian External Policy under Labor, St Lucia, 1977. p. 96.

greater solidarity with the South Pacific Forum. Reaffirming his principles of the Canberra Pact Whitlam proposed free entry of even non-European, non Maori New Zealanders to Australia and earned praise of New Zealanders. Australia had until 1974 restricted free entry of the non white or the non-Maori New Zealanders, mainly the cook Islanders. In Jan 73, during Mr. Kirks visit to Australia 'for all non-European non-Maori New Zealand citizens.⁵⁴ It was probably this reason that New Zealand also displayed great enthusiasm for Whitlams Asia-Pacific consultative Forum with China as one of its members.⁵⁵

Gough Whitlam's contribution to PNG's independence is noticeable, and due to his incessant efforts which bestowed independence upon Papua New Guinea, Micheal Somare (Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea) called him the 'liberator'. Whitlam's efforts to remove all hurdles in way of Papua New Guinea's independence greatly refurbished colonial image of Australia. In his enthusiastic commitment towards PNG's independence Whitlam declared that "No matter what PNG might want (or fail to want as a result of colonial dependency) the fact of imminent independence was not

54. n.28, p 30-35.

55. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney 12 November 1973.

negotiable, nor was even the date as negotiable as most people thought, although the form of independence was something PNG herself might decide."⁵⁶

He forwarded all help and contribution to prop up the newly founded independence of PNG. On the eve of PNG's independence 16 Sept. 1975 Whitlam assured that

"Papua New Guinea will have the first call on our foreign aid programme and we shall work closely with the central government of Papua New Guinea through a specific and guaranteed economic programme."⁵⁷

PNG's strategic location and rich mineral resources explains the great interest taken by Australia. It was the largest recipient of direct Australian grant but it totally in keeping with Whitlam's prior foreign policy objective to ensure "a secure, United and friendly Papua New Guinea",⁵⁸ PNG's common borders with Indonesia had a bearing upon Australia's security nexus, hence a friendly PNG was imperative to boost up Australia's security environment. Michael Somare thanked Australia for providing gratifying and benevolent historical link. But at the same time warned that "we resist any Australian action which

56. Hudson, n. 3 p. 348.

57. n.24, p.340.

58. n. 28, p.32.

attempts to use its aid programmes as a lever to guide our development philosophies."⁵⁹ Which was a sign of emerging foreign policy of newly independent PNG.

Though PNG was eager to enter into a long-term defence agreement, Whitlam government gave it a cool response. The Labor Government was hesitant due to the fact that 'Australia would be accused, at a later stage of infringing the sovereignty of this newly independent country through a bondage of neo-colonialism."⁶⁰ Whitlam averred that Australia's commitment was to play the role 'as a friend and neighbour, not as a ruler.

'PNG's response towards Whitlam's regional community' was positive but cautious. Mr. Kiki the foreign Minister of PNG expressed that his country 'has no objections to the idea' of Asia-Pacific consultative Forum.⁶¹

Whitlam's foreign policy commitments were always present in his regional security doctrine. Though it

59. Australian Foreign Affairs Records, Volume 45(4), April 1974, p.439.

60. Chakraborty, n.16, p. 81.

61. Canberra Times, Canberra, 19 December 1973.

differed in content vis-a-vis Liberal-Country Party's attitude which was based on 'forward defence' and distinct military fervor it was somewhat ambiguous in its foreign policy exercise, as it allowed the continuance of ANZUS alliance and US military bases. His independence stance faltered when it came to changing the old structure of traditional regional security conceptions. The traditional concept strengthening Australia's security by presence of a countervailing power was maintained in the continuance of ANZUS inspite of his non acceptance of bipolar world. The most striking failure was lack of support for South Pacific initiative on Nuclear free testing Zone, when Whitlam was championing the cause of nuclear - non proliferation. His proposal for a regional consultative Forum with China and Japan as members was a commendable attempt, though it failed to take off in lack of proper definition of its aim, organisation, structure and duration. As a consequence it became an object of suspicion through which Australia could to impose its hegemony in the region. His adulation for ASEAN was a pragmatic step sought with long term benefits. It made Australia first non-regional associate member of ASEAN. Under Whitlam the Australian foreign policy acquired positive attributes and reflected perfect continuity with Australian interests.

Chapter IV

Management of Alliance Relationship

Australian traditional belief attached its own security with its surrounding region. Britain had nursed Australia for a lifelong period, hence the Australian security structure became dependent and accustomed to function in presence of a friendly power willing to defend the Australian continent from external attack. As a consequence, for over a hundred years Australia's regional security efforts were directed towards the 'promotion of security arrangements in which powers which are considered to be potentially threatened are excluded, neutralized or controlled'.¹ Australia's insecurity also resulted from the realization of the fact that Australians, with small continent and small population, felt themselves to be an outpost in an alien world.

Being the last in a line of dominoes, being a vulnerable piece of South land in danger of having the north roll down the map and crush us; being a white, well laundered spot in a perilous yellow.....being too large to escape notice, being rich among clamorous poor or having

1. Greg fry, Australia's Regional security doctrine, old assemptious, New Challenges" in Greg, Fry (ed); Australia's regional securty, sydney, 1990 p-1.

under used resources among super industries neighbours; being drugged into dropping our guard by affluance and too much sun; or attractivity having no effective guard (we cannot defend ourselves) outside of our alliances--these are source of our private and public nightmares.² Moreover the impact of a constant flux in international scenario obligated an adjustment in the Australian perception of alliance system. In post Second World War era while the Australian security reposed complete faith in the protective umbrella of Britain, it was shocked over the crumbling of the British military under Japanese threat. 'The wartime ALP Governments appealed to Washington for support and thanks to America's naval victories, the only invasion threat that Australia has experienced was averted.'³

The impressive display of power by America during the Second World War made it more dependable ally for security. At first, American reluctauce disappointed Dr. Evatt, who was the main architect of the Australian diplomacy and had envisaged a glorified role for the United Nations. Evatt had not envisaged a completely independent

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2. H. Mayer; Foreign Policy : A Paranoia Posture in H Mayer (ed; Australian Politics: A second reader, Mulbourne, 1969, p 643
 3. J.L. Richardson, "Australian Foreign Policy under the Labor Government", Co-operation and conflict, Vol 9(1) 1974, p.10.

foreign policy but he contrived a concept for greater independence within the western alliance (Both British and American). Evatts theory of independent model for the Australian foreign policy was shaped by contingencies of the ensuing cold war and its implications for both, the communists and anti-communist were far reaching.

With Menzies becoming the Prime Minister (1949) the Australian Government reverted to its (1923-41) conservative tradition of paying little more than lip service to United Nations and of taking its lead unquestionably from external powers. The dilemma of choosing between Britain's and the United States or both was eliminated after Britain poor performance in the Suez war (1956). The Australian Government became convinced of the desirability of an alliance with the U.S.A.

During the Menzies period the Australian ties with the United States improved mainly upon Australia's initiative. One outstanding reason was to guarantee Australia's defence from the newly perceived threat of two communist giants, the Soviet Union and China. A more fanciful aspiration of Manzies was to accept the British thesis that in the event of third world war, Australia's place should be alongside Britain in the Middle East, and in the meantime, Australia should help Britain in that region,

and should also assume some measure of responsibility for ensuring that Malaya and Singapore did not succumb to communism.⁴

Percy Spender who succeeded Evatt as Foreign Minister and a realist, knew the consequences of Australia's subservience to Britain and foresaw decline in Britain's status as a great power. Spender's insistence against Menzies was that Australia's place in peace and in war was tied besides the US, with Asia and the Pacific. A sudden turnout of diplomatic events during the Korean War and Australia's ready help to the US affirmed its complete credence in the lead provided by the US. Spender was rewarded by the ANZUS Pact initiated in 1951 at San Francisco as a bargain over agreeing to Japan Peace Treaty.

With the signing of the ANZUS Pact, Australia became formally aligned with the United States. In due course the Pact revealed unexplored benefits for Australia, so also the threats which were absent prior to the Pact.

Some unavoidable repercussions of the ANZUS alliance were; greater involvement of Australia in the Cold War, accepting membership of the SEATO, active role in the Vietnam War, and hosting of a network of the American

4. Alan, Renouf; Malcolm Fraser and Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1986 p. 22-3.

intelligence facilities which made Australia an involuntary nuclear target. But it also bestowed benefits unthought of.

Firstly, it became a symbol of an alliance which was more important than the Pact itself. Secondly, it ensured protection for Australia with attached premiums, as access to intelligence material and highly sophisticated defence technology. An outstanding gift of the Pact was 'defence on the cheap'.⁵ The above argument is due to American obligation to defend Australia, in such circumstances Australia could maintain its security through minimum army provision and concentrate more upon its development obligations.

The crisis of Suez (1956) sparked off a debate over future alignment of Australia with Britain. Though US was given preference over Britain, no efforts were made to distance Australia from British organisations till British retrenchment, Australia participated along with Britain during Indonesia--Malaysia confrontation years to ensure stability. In 1962 Australia declared its military help to South Vietnam on its request under the SEATO obligations. Gradually Australia was fully enmeshed into the quagmire of Vietnam War. The Australian defence authorities, when consulted, endorsed the view that South Vietnam should be

5. ibid ; p 25

considered a key strategic area, and argued that if it fell the West would be unlikely to hold Laos, Cambodia or Thailand and this in turn would make uncertain the futures of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.' It was developed in lieu to Domino theory of Eisenhower (1954)⁶

The defeat of American forces in Vietnam sent shock waves all over Australia and obligated a review of policies regarding extra regional commitments. In addition, further discouragement to existent structure of the Australian military diplomacy was Britain's decision of withdrawing its forces from East of Suez (1967) and America's decision to limit its commitments in Asia (Nixon's Guam Doctrine 1969). As a consequence to above events a vacuum resulted in the region. Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, the Singapore Prime Minister, recommended, that 'Australia had been prepared to take on the role of 'Deputy sheriff' where either the US or Britain operated as Sheriff',⁷. It was an impracticable advice and Australia prudently turned it down. The period of 1967-72 signified a dilemma in Australia's external dipolomacy. The adulation and love for Britain was fast receding - firstly, due to British withdrawl from East of Suez, and, secondly, due to a series

6. Coral, Bell; Dependent Ally, Canberra, 1984, p. 98

7. ibid, p 118

of events such as Britain's entry into European Economic Community (EEC) and devaluation of Pound sterling. Relations between London and Canberra soured over protection for Australian farm commodities (butter, fruit, sugar, meat and wheat) during the transition period after Britain's entry to the EEC.

A major rift resulted when Britain refused to support French Nuclear Test ban issue. One of the British official's remark was indicative of growing disenchantment with Australia : Australian policy makers were entirely self interested, contributed little to international aid and would not care if Britain sank into North sea⁸ Thus, the final phase of the old economic and defence relationship with Britain was frayed and unsatisfactory one for both the sides.

The Australian policy began a retreat from the US induced domino theory and claimed that a battle victory in Vietnam would not necessarily decide the future of South East Asia. While the Australian Liberal Party tried to underplay Guam Doctrine's damaging implications upon Australian security, the leadership of Labour party was gearing itself with a new alternative model of foreign

8. Alexander, Downer; Six Prime Ministers, Melaborne, 1982, p 271.

policies capable of guaranteeing Australia a new position at the international platform.

Defeat in the Vietnam War and 'Nixon's Guam Doctrine formed the backdrop of Whitlam's advent to power. His foreign policy enjoyed the backing of a changed perspective towards People Republic of China and the Communist World. Under Whitlam Government, the legacies of the Liberal country Party Government were reviewed and a momentous change occurred in appearance of the Australian foreign policy. The tone of foreign policy acquired due to the US alliance and the SEATO was ameliorated with a 'more independent Australian stance in international affairs.'⁹

Here it is would be proper to discuss the management of alliance vis-a-vis the United Kingdom and the United States separately under Whitlam Government. Since the imperial links mark the early phase of the Australian foreign policy the alliance with the United Kingdom is first to be analysed.

A wider interpretation of the term 'alliance' connotes economic, political, social, military and cultural union of partners. Though, Whitlam's 'independent stance in

9. T.B. Miller; "The Foreign Policies of the Whitlam Government", Pacific community vol 6(3) April 1975, p. 293.

foreign policy depicted a changed relationship vis-a-vis Britain also, Whitlam was totally averse to maintaining any Australian military presence in the region. His commitment towards non-militarism and aim of fostering good, meaningful relations compelled him to criticise ANZUK brigade as a tool of 'Commonwealth imperialism' and even declare the withdrawal of Australian artillery contingent from Malaya and Singapore. In his zeal to usher in a new sense of national awareness. Whitlam discontinued the reference to Queen in oath of allegiance for naturalised citizens. The old anthem 'God save the Queen' was changed to 'Advance Australia fair'. In addition to all these Whitlam declined the Privy councillorship to which all prime ministers were customarily entitled. His declaration of withdrawing an Australian battalions and battery stationed in Singapore under the ANZUK agreement provoked an angry British reply that 'if Australia pulled out, Britain would reconsider her own commitments in the area.'¹⁰. In another move to scourge out the 'relics of colonialism' Whitlam demanded 'the revocation of Westminster's remaining powers to legislate for Australia and of Privy council's ability to hear appeals from the decisions of Australian courts'¹¹. The matter was

10. The Times; London, 6 February 1973.

11. G.C. Boltan; "The United Kingdom" in W.J. Hudson (ed), Australia in world Affairs (1971-75), Sydney, 1980, p. 220

taken up at wide discussion desks and A.S. Morrison, (British High Commissioner) averred that 'It is a far less a matter of "removing the vestiges of colonial rule' than an attack by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on the federal structure and the remaining state powers.¹² Whitlam, on his visit to Britain, clarified his position by stating, "The situation has been dramatized recently it is up to each country to realize that change between the two countries is inevitable and essential. The countries are not drifting apart just concentrating on their own regions more than in the past" ¹³. It was these manifestations of nationalism that formed the backdrop of souring of relations between Britain and Australia.

The issue which engendered growing discord was Whitlam's request to Mr Heath (U.K Prime minister) to support Whitlam in protest against the French Open Air Nuclear Tests. Mr. Heath, unwilling to jeopardize the newly formed proximity with European Economic Community, refused to do so. There was further setback in relations when Whitlam, at Brussels, 18 Dec 1974, warned the EEC with reprisals if too many restrictions were slapped on the

12. The Times; london, 21 April 1973.

13. ibid 21 April 1973

imports of Australian produce, and urged British to confess frankly about their commitment towards EEC and in deference towards Australia. His anguished remark was, "The days when Australia wanted a special relationship are past and called for a more natural and contemporary relationship."¹⁴

Thus Whitlam adopted a more aggressive approach to the British relationship and accused Britain of seeking to perpetrate its dominance of the Commonwealth through multinational corporations.¹⁵ On international issues like nuclear tests, Rhodesia and attitudes towards multinational corporations, Australia and Britain were on opposite sides at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference 1973.¹⁶

Whitlam's period didn't prove beneficial to Australian British relations. But the blame does not lie squarely on Whitlam's shoulders. Many other factors like difference over trade, British entry into EEC, and its refusal to criticise the French Nuclear Tests, all had a combined effect over loosening of the Australian bonds with Britain.

Management of successful alliance relationship

14. Canberra Times, Canberra, 19 Dec 1974

15. Miller, n. 9, 0 395

16. Richardson; n. 3. p.11

despite a series of constraints and hurdles marked the short era of Gough Whitlam. One scholar comments that 'the more independent Australian stance¹⁷ meant fundamentally more independence from the United State's influence. Relations between the new Labor Government and the US got off to an inauspicious beginning as the former was totally disenchanted with US techniques employed in vietnam war of 'massive bombing, the body count philosophy the support for corrupt inefficient and highly authoritarian governments whose existence appeared to have little relevance to the security of Australia,¹⁸. Whitlam strongly criticized the US President Nixon's decision of resumption of bombing in North Vietnam Dec 1972 (Haiphong and Hanoi). Criticism by Labor Cabinet Ministers caused must resentment in Washington. It was unfortunate that from the beginning, Nixon and Kissinger assumed that Whitlam--obviously a Leftist and a well known critic of the Vietnam war would be hostile to these policies.'¹⁹.

The independent Australian Stance propounded and practiced by Whitlam greatly antagonised the American State Department. As a matter of fact, most of the Australian

17. Miller n. 9 , p 392

18 ibid, p 393-4

19. Renouf, n. 4, p. 28

foreign policy earlier operated with the tacit approval of the United States. Whitlam discontinued this subservient practice and contended "I believe that America respects and welcomes the less compliant and more independent though equally friendly, approach. by Australia 20.

"To minimise his electoral vulnerability in steering the new course among the shoals of institutionalised paranoia, Whitlam-- stressed that Labor has the same (bureaucratic) foreign policy advisors as the previous government (1) that the ANZUS alliance is sacrosanct; that despite the more radical planks---there would be no fundamental challenge to the status quo. on the most controversial and important issue posed by the American alliance"21.

Australia's security anxiety made it imperative for the presence of a friendly power in the region as protector and counterveiling power, therefore it, felt deprived of security privileges with the declarations of with the Nixons Guam Doctrine. Nixon revealed US point of view in answer to a question that whether the US would withdraw from the Pacific and play a minor role ?

20. Australian foreign Affairs record, Vol 44(8) August 1973, p 528-9

21. Peter, King; Whither Whitlam, International Journal vol 29(3) summer 74, p.425

We will keep our treaty commitments--- but--- that as far as the problems of internal security are concerned, as far as the problems of military defence, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, the United States is going to encourage, and has a right to expect that the problem will be increasingly handled by and the responsibility for it taken by the Asian nations themselves..... 22

At the beginning of his tenure as Prime Minister Whitlam declared the SEATO as moribund. He added that it would be in the interest of the region if the US forces were withdrawn from Thailand, owing to the fear that American force in Thailand may produce a situation like Vietnam²³. to see the SEATO become a vehicle for co-operation and technical and cultural exchange rather than continue as a military pact owing its existence to fear of China and the sound of falling dominoes²⁴.

22. See Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon 1969, USGOP Washington 1971, (25 July, 279), p. 548

23. National Herald, 17 April, 1973.

24. Alan Fitzgerald, Labour's Whitlam fashioning a New Posture for Australia, International perspectives, May-June, 1973 (pp 30-4)

Mr. Whitlam did not want to sever the American connection and the ultimate guarantee which the connection appeared to provide ²⁵. His aim was to discard the image of dependence and subservience. Any commitment to right wing ideology was detrimental to Australian position and influence, restricted her freedom of action and obscured her identity. Whitlam's strong desire to bestow a distinct, independent foreign policy appearance to Australia was inspired with this aim and reflected in his statement.

"We want to change our father-son relationship with Britain and the United States to a relationship between cousins"²⁶. Long craving desire to be treated on a co-ordinate basis in alliance relationship prompted Whitlam to tone down his criticism. Whitlam went out of his way to acknowledge 'the pivotal role played by President Nixon in ushering in a newer and saner phase in our relations with China; in clearing the way for more intensive commercial, scientific, technical and cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union--What is conspicuous is to extol Nixon for 'achieving a successful first round of

25. Miller; n.8 p 394

26. Times of India New Delhi, 14 June 1973.

the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks and in ending foreign intervention in Vietnam.' 27.

But such steps achieved modest success and required firm line of action than mere rhetorics Whitlam valued ANZUS alliance as a document of mutual interest and stated.

"ANZUS is a legal embodiment of the common interests of the people of Australia New Zealand and the United States Those interests remain constant beyond changes of administration in Washington Wellington or Canberra.²⁸ At the same time Whitlam didn't want Australia to be taken for granted and put forth his stand that it cannot be taken for granted that Australia will necessarily agree with the United States either privately or publicly on all matters of common concern.²⁹

Addressing the National Press Club at Washington (30 July 1973) Whitlam spelled out the scope objective, continuity and shift of Australian view towards ANZUS alliance. He made it clear that Australia honored its

27. Contemporary parliamentary Debates House of Representatives, 25 May, 1973 Canberra, (p. 2645-46)

28. n.20, Vol. 44(1), Jan 1973, p. 36

29. Nation Review, 11-17, Jan 1974.

commitment to ANZUS owing to its importance as source of stability in the region. Under the preceding government ANZUS operated on common parental relationship between Australia, New Zealand and United States. Whitlam envisaged new role for the ANZUS from a military treaty into one which was an instrument for peace justice, political, social and economic advancement in the Pacific area,³⁰ He denied any change in emphasis over relations with the United States and deemed his duty to contribute toward international peace, He therefore contended, we do not propose to introduce a new imbalance by discarding or downgrading older relationships. We do not intend to substitute a new distortion for old distortions. Undoubtedly the most important of those relationship is the American connection.³¹ His independent posture was against any narrow interpretations as he stated 'my government wants to move away from the narrow view that the ANZUS treaty is the only significant factor in our relations with the United States and the equally narrow view that our relation with the united states are the only significant factor in Australia's foreign relation'.³² In his view the American alliance was important but obligations

30. Renouf, n. 4, (p.32)

31. n.20, Vol 44(8), August 1973, p 528.

32 ibid.

towards other regions carried equal value. Moreover he didnot want to develop new relations at the expense of sacrificing Australia's alliance with the US and was confident of this old friendship. In case of any conflict of interests he suggested 'I believe that this alliance is old enough and strong enough to stand a little frankness on both sides."³³

Whitlam proposed that a more independent and candid friendship between the US and Australia would provide an enduring and lasting relationship. A certain amount of frankness was expected on both sides to help resolution of bilateral problems. He openly recognized the fact that Australia is aligned to the US by ANZUS. Speaking at the UN he stated 'Australia stands ready to participate in peace keeping operations in whatever way would be most useful. Australia is of course allied by treaty with the United States, and we make no apologies for it. There is however no area of actual or potential conflict any where in the world where loyalties, ideology or interest, should make Australian involvement in peace keeping unacceptable or unwelcome',³⁴

33. ibid.

34. ibid, Vol 45(a) Septemeber 1974, p 580

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Considerable disenchantment resulted when White House reluctantly issued invitation to Whitlam after a long delay . The meeting between Nixon and Whitlam passed off peacefully. But New York Times called the President's behaviour "a foolish display of public petulance towards a friend and ally"³⁵ at a time when he was feting and teasing Brezhnev (General Secretary of the soviet communist party). The importance of his visit was that it provided him with an opportunity for unveiling base his new definition of Australian-American Alliance. While summing up Australia's new attitude towards alliance he said "we are not a satellite of any country. We are a friend and partner of the United States, particularly in the pacific, but with independent interests of our own,"³⁶ Whitlam's appearance as an anti American underwent a quick vicissitude due to acceptance of the inevitability of Australian-US alliance. Whitlam after his return from US announced that Australia was not a small and a relatively insignificant country as it was once called but a middle power of growing influence in the South East Asian and South Pacific regions and that 'America respects and welcomes the less complaint and more independent, though equally friendly approach which the

35. New York Times, New York, 16 June 1971

36. n.20, Vol 44(8) August 1973, (p 527-30)



Australian government adopts towards the United States.³⁷ The Labor Party's earlier reservations and criticisms about American bases began to haunt the new Whitlam government because of their continued existence as symbols violating sovereignty of Australia. The prime criticism was directed towards the secrecy surrounding these facilities. There was a growing demand by Australian Labor Party to reveal the true function of these bases. Whitlam government had fallen prey to its own game and as a consequence Lance Bernard (Defence Minister) agreed to reopen the question. On 28 february 1973, the Defence Minister made a public statement revealing Amberley (Airforce facility) and Alice springs (Joint Geological and Geophysical Research Station)-recorded the disturbances in the upper atmosphere and in the earth's crust and were tools of supervision of Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Commenting at Joint Defence Space Research facility at Pive Gap and Joint Defence Space Communication Station at Narrungar the Minister admitted to have an access to all information, but declined to divulge the information.³⁸ North West cape installation evoked a controversy when US forces became alert without knowledge

37. n.27, 22 August 1973, p200

38. See Neville Meaney; 'The United States' in W.J. Hundson a(ed) Australia in world Affairs (1971-75) Sydney, 1980, p (191-2)

of Australian Government on Nixon's command during the Yom Kippur war. The event brought sharp criticism from Whitlam.³⁹ And it led to a renegotiation meeting between the US and Australia. Lance Barnard (Australian Defence Minister) and Dr. James Schlesinger (American Secretary for Defence) in a Joint communique admitted the need for promotion of stable relations among the major powers to protect global balance. The US bases were recognised as key element in a complex system of communications. Though the only concession granted by the US was to agree to increase the number of Australian at the base to approximately 35 in supervisory position with a deputy commander and in case of any alert the Amberley and Alice Springs Seismic station were to be transferred to sole Australian control.⁴⁰ It gave Australian Joint control of the base and restored Australian sovereignty over land.

Omega, being a proposal for a new US base triggered off a new spate of protests, and though Whitlam succeeded in getting his motion passed but only with a

39 Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney 22 Nov 1973

40. n. 20, Vol 44(1), January 1973, (p 54.55)

41. King, n. 21 p. 426.

condition attached to ensure that 'it cannot be used for hostile acts without Australia's consent'.⁴² After almost two years of exhaustive inquiry, the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, on 13 May 1975, submitted a majority report favoring Omega. An assurance was also sought, disallowing any visits by nuclear weapon carrying submarines..⁴³

Whitlam governments acquiescence for Omega Station appeared to some ALP leaders as 'absurd' and W. Hartley (a Victorian member of the National Executive of the Party) commented "that at a time of great change in international relationships, when we need the maximum freedom of action and the largest possible number of alternative foreign policy options that these bases and outmoded treaties such as ANZUS and SEATO, keep us trapped in an inferior position in a dominant partner alliance."⁴⁴ But Whitlam's pragmatism prevailed over idealism and Australian interests were secured in a milieu ensured by a new base.

42. The Australian, Canberra, July 1973.

43. ibid, 28 May 1975

44. ibid, 11 January 1974

Both Nixon and McMahon had formulated their policies in a framework dominated by threats in the region from Chinese subversion and Russian interference. Under Whitlam it underwent a marked change and Labor government discounted any threat from China and Russia. Whitlam averred that every problem of the region was procreated by introduction of Super Power rivalry into its affairs. To circumvent such a contingency Whitlam suggested the South East Asian Nations to enter alone with Australia and New Zealand into a non-aggression pact.⁴⁵ Whitlam's overzealous enthusiasm for Sri Lankan proposal 'Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace' excluding USSR and the US' ran contrary to Australian affiliations towards the US.

A critical review of Whitlam's policy reveals that overtures to sustain good relations with the United States were less in number while other gestures indicative of his new regional organisation joined with his enthusiasm for 'Zones of Peace' occupied greater part of his policies. An 'Asia-Pacific consultative Forum' envisaged by Whitlam and his efforts to include China and Japan as its members while keeping the United States and USSR out discomfited the United States. The United States observed Whitlam efforts aimed to constrict the super power role of America. As a

45. n. 38, p 198

consequence his 'regional community' concept was given a discouraging response by the US. Though Whitlam remained committed to his foreign policy objectives of regional peace and co-operation till his fall (11 Nov 1975) his efforts for establishing a regional community failed due to over cautious attitude of South East Asian nations and even more due to imprecision and impracticability of the proposal. Major difference with the United States existed over 'SEATO' and 'regional community' doctrines of Whiltlam. America was particularly sensitive to Whitlam's apathy towards its policies when American was toiling hard to disengage itself from Indochina with grace and trying to prevent any further loses to commission in the are a 'for Americans' 'SEATO' remained more of a diplomatic restraint on communists at a time of military disengagement. ⁴⁶ During his visit to Washington (in July 1973) Mr. Whitlam informed the American Sectretary of State that 'while Australia believed SEATO should cease to be a military alliance aimed at containing China and North Vietnam - it would not 'for the moment' withdraw from the association. It had a flexible attitude to membership and recognising the United States commitment to Thailand under the treary, would not do any thing to torpedo the body. ⁴⁷ On 27 July 1975, the six surviving members of

46. ibid, p. 199

47. The Australian, Canberra, Aug. 1973

the organisation (the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Philippines) agreed that it (SEATO) should be phased out.⁴⁸ Thus the SEATO faded away without being a cause of disorder between Australian - American relations.

In Dec 1972 Labor's government broke solidarity with the United States and identified itself with its Asian neighbours.⁴⁹ American opposition to the proposal was founded on deterring Soviet Union's strategic control of the region. But Labor government ignored Soviet naval presence and resisted on the ground that an American build up would escalate arms race and a struggle for supremacy in the region.

Moreover, Whitlam's siding with India in criticising the American plan to build a communication center, enlarge airfield and expand naval base at Diego Garcia (Britain's territory leased out to the US in Feb 1973) at a cost of \$30 million⁵⁰ added salt to the wound. One scholar has analysed six costs of American alliance. Firstly it does not ensure hundred percent availability of

48. n. 20, vol 46(8), October 1975, (p 556-65)

49. n.20 vol 44(i) January 1974, (p 34-5)

50. Melbourne Age, 8, February 1974.

US military help in an actual crisis. Secondly, it delimits the manoeuvrability of the junior partner. Thirdly it makes Australia enemy of non-aligned countries. Fourthly, it makes Australia a nuclear target. Fifthly Australia will be automatically involved in any conflict in which the main player is the United States. Finally, it will stunt the growth of Australia's defence production, science and technology. 51

Another analyst pointed out that any alteration in Australia - American equation would have compelled it to choose from options of being a neutral or non aligned or based on regional alliance Whitlam chose the option of maintaining independent stance, and offer regional co-operation with China, Japan, members of South East Asia and South Pacific.⁵² Observing the costs of relinquishing ANZUS alliance the following points arise Firstly, it will would have deprived Australia of US commitment towards Australia's protection. Secondly, if Australia chose to be a non-aligned country US would not have divulged its sophisticated technology and intelligence information. Another critic dissatisfied with this alliance, argues that the most

51. H.G. Gelber, Costs and benefits in The Australian American Alliance, England 1968, p 68

52. B. Chakraborti, The Australian Millitary Alliances, Delhi, 1977, p 134.

sensitive information was not given to Australia and she had no need for much of what was given ⁵³ He added that Australia's privileged access to highly sophisticated defence technology was true but it is questionable whether Australia had a real need for such advanced technology.⁵⁴ Thirdly, it would have deprived Australia of US defence planning and strategies. fourthly it would have stripped down the aura of being under protective umbrella of a Super Power (invulnerability) Fifthly Australia would again turned into an isolated outpost of the Western civilization, in total contrast with its neighbour Asia.

Another expert on the subject argues that Australia's security in post Nixon's Doctrine Scenerio is viable only when guaranteed by American alliance. He further noted 'In the past critics of the installations have argued, corretly that they expose Australia to the risk of becoming a nuclear target in the event of a global nuclear war,'⁵⁵ but in his view risk in well worth taking because the presence of these installations on our soil gives Australia a stake in our surivival and helps to the bind her to us,⁵⁶

53. Renouf, n. 4, p-25

54. ibid

55. King, n.21, p 428

56. ibid.

further it may be argued that if US alliance is sustained these bases have a relevance, if another school of anti US base is entertained which believes that foundation of Australia's security is equilibrium between the great powers then, continuance of these bases may be a net diplomatic loss. Same scholar argues that the bases and the 'American connection generally are indisputably to Australias interest',⁵⁷

Australian American relations comprised of wider connotations that the ANZUS alliance was merely a security pact, nevertheless keystone of Australian. American alliance. Trade was an important constituent of this alliance. After japan, USA was the second largest destination of Australian exports. Despite the dogged efforts of predecessor Governments and Whitlam America didn't lift its protective barriers regarding meat and wool and as a consequence enjoyed favourable balance of trade. American corporations held the greatest share in the three most powerful and profitable industries, automobiles, petro chemical and mining.⁵⁸ Whitlam took strident measures to stream line losses in trade balance. On his visit to Washington July 1973, he opened up his policy to constrict

57. ibid, p 429

58. n.38, p 202

ownership of equity to less than 50% in newly formed industries.

Whitlam Governemnt's economic measures resulted in diminished strict American investment from A\$ 544 million in 1972-73 to merely A\$ 0 million in 73-74.

Whitlam's attitude towards Australia American alliance was thus marked by maturity and pragmatism. During his period relations with the US underwent a maturation process which was in many way healthier than it was before.⁶⁰ Labor government succeeded in projecting to the US the nation that it should take into account Australias own foreign Policy perspective rather than a presumed acquiescence. Whitlam sought a more constructive role for America in the Pacific, in his address to the National press Club at Washington (8 May 1975) Whitlam urged the United States to turn its back on the old ideological catch cries which had for so long distributed American foreign Policy and to seek to enlarge upon its success in removing in understandings between itself and Russia and China.⁶¹

59. ibid, p 204

60. The Australian, Canberra, 13 May 1975

61. n. 20, Vol. 46(5) May 1975.

Whitlam summarized aims of his alliance relationship in his banquet speech at New Delhi on 4 June 1973.

We are seeking no sharp break with our past role but we are certainly not satisfied by all the aspects of the role Amtralia has played in the past. We do not propose any radical change power our traditional dose friendship with the United States but we now look for a more mature, a give and take relationship. Again we will continue our very close friendship with Britain but we want a relationship based less on kin and more on kind, namely on the basis that we are two independent nations of a kind, with common interests as well as common institutions. So I would want our developing polices to be seen more as an effort to remove anomalier rather than as a complete breaking with the past.⁶²

62. Department of Foreign Affairs News Release Canberra, No M/92, 6 June 1973.

CONCLUSION

The Whitlam period stands as a bright spot in the Australian Foreign Policy when viewed against the dependent, conservative and uninnovative foreign policy of the preceding Liberal Country Party Government's rule of twenty three years. The militarily oriented, fear stricken foreign policy of the Liberal Country Party government had earned the approbrium of a satellite country of the U.S.A. This experienced a sea change under Whitlam who was all set to refurbish the dependent image of Australia. Independent stance in foreign policy implementatin proved to be the key stone of Whitlam's period. There was a strong desire for forging closer tier with the countries of South East Asia and South West Pacific. However, his tenure architect of the independent Australian foreign policy turned out to be too short (Dec. 1972 -Nov. 1975) yet it made deep impressions, 'An isolated', 'discriminatory', 'white racist', an outpost of western alliance, colonialist Australia was dragged into the international main stream by Whitlam superb blending of internationalism and new nationalism into a cohesive whole.

Whitlam accession to power was preceded by the epoch making events in international politics. Earlier, Australia had sided with anti communist crusaders and nurtured a sense of pride in its imperial links with

Britain. The Anzus alliances served as their key stone in the exercise of the Australian diplomacy and the preceding years proved beneficial. A discriminatory policy of immigration and frequent voting in favour of the colonial regimes at the UN coloured the image of Australia. Continued links with Britain began to turn sour with its decision to withdraw from East of Suez in 1967. The process of the receding status of Britain was highlighted in the face of the Suez crisis of 1956. Nevertheless, for Australia British withdrawal epitomised weakening of its influence in the region. Hence Australia reluctantly agreed to fill in the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. The situation acquired alarming dimension when American debacle in Vietnam war forced President Nixon to enunciate 'Guam Doctrine' aimed to assure American defence only in case of a nuclear threat, and no US military help in the local conflicts. All these developments left Liberal Country Party groping for an alternative security system. Another embarrassing aftermath of the Vietnam war, was the growing public discontent over conscription of the Australian soldiers for a cause advantageous to America and not to Australia.

Gough Whitlam, who was an Airforce Officer during the second World War did not win the election on the issues of 'Guam Doctrine' or British withdrawal from East of Suez'. His election was an acknowledgement of the alternative

defence and regional policies proposed by the Australian Labor Party. Whitlam's advent to power heralded a new era in Australia's international relations. Widely travelled and commanding respectability world wide Whitlam was one of the most dynamic Prime Ministers of Australia. Prior to his election as Prime Minister Whitlam led a Labor Party delegation to China which was viewed upon with anguish and suspicion by the then Liberal-Country Party Prime Minister McMahon. Fortunately, Whitlam emerged a triumphant victor when President Nixon revealed the American overtures to woo China. This astute and prudent political act, earned him prestige in his party and the nation as well.

Whitlam's policies were founded on 'no fear of communism' and respect for the United States. The Australian alignment with the United States under the ANZUS was no embarrassment to Whitlam. All his policies were directed to 'a more independent stance' from the American and British alliance. Under Whitlam the Australian foreign policy acquired speed and change long over due. Whitlam's speed could be better understood in the context of the denial of power to the Labor Party for a long period of twenty three years.

Whitlam's immediate move for recognition of People's Republic of China, and a change in voting pattern

at the UN, are hallmarks of his political career as Prime Minister. The adulation towards China was in lieu with decision of Canada and prejudgement of changing Sino American relation. This act of Whitlam paved way for the recognition of the Baltic States in Russia, opening of diplomatic relations with North Vietnam and East Germany. The policy of no fear of communism also emanated from his belief that a communist victory in Vietnam or even Indo China, could not enable it to devour Australia advocated by the protagonists of the Domino Theory.

His security doctrine derived strength from the diffusion of anti Australian environment. The SEATO had not done any good to the Australian interest and geographical imperatives necessitated regional enterprise rather than global and militarily oriented combination. Thus his non-militarist approach had the overtones of non-aligned ethos. His demand for an independent stance in foreign policy was compatible with his 'regionalism' and 'internationalism'. Security concerns under Whitlam were to be managed by developing a more self reliant defence structure and establishing good relations with neighbours, it was a point of difference with the earlier governments.

Independence within alliance was another shot in his arm. Whitlam was very prudent in not forfeiting the

alliance benefits provided under the ANZUS yet advocating an independent stance in foreign policy.

His independence stance was not only directed towards the US but also Britain. In his enthusiasm to secure greater national awareness, Whitlam, discontinued the reference to the British Queen in 'Oath ceremonies of citizenship by naturalization' and in honours being conferred to the Australian citizens. A major issue of controversy was switching over from 'god save the queen' to 'Advance Australia Fair as national anthem. Whitlam's displeasure and reluctance to sustain these 'relics of colonialism' were caused by Britain's receding interest in Australia. Britain's decision to enter EEC adversely affected Australian exports. Another more prominent reason for Whitlam's antipathy was Britain's reluctance to support Australia's move of opposing the French nuclear test and to endanger its links with the European Economic community.

Relations with the United States dipped to a dangerous low in the beginning of Whitlam's reign due to the fierce Labor criticism of American resumption of bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972. Unfortunately relations between Whitlam and Nixon were marked by an open tug-of-war. It also had its bearing upon the trade relations and overseas investments. Overseas investments from the US fell

from \$545 million (1972-73) to \$ 90 million (1973-74). Another cause of this sharp decline in overseas investment was the policy of economic nationalism of Whitlam. The SEATO formed an important factor in the Australian - American alliance. Under Whitlam the SEATO was downgraded as 'moribund' and allowed to phase out in 1975. THE ANZUS alliance was sacrosanct in the eyes of Whitlam but with a 'frankness' expected on both sides. The issue of military bases at North West Cape, Nurrungar, and Pine Gap formed another significant event in the Australian - American relations under Whitlam. Whitlam while acting with grace and diplomacy, opened a talk between the US and Australia, but had to be content with a modest success of securing 'joint facility' at North West Cape only, while Pine Gap and Nurrungar remained exclusively under the US possession.

Most significant and commendable effort of Whitlam was the exhibition of his commitment to regionalism, when he proposed a 'regional community' based on wider membership of China, Japan and all countries of South East Asia alongwith South West Pacific members. Many interpretations are available on his proposal. Firstly it was looked upon with caution and suspicion by the countries of South East Asia. Secondly the Americans construed it as an Australian measure to constrict the American influence in the region.

Both these reactions failed to under score the importance of the proposal envisaged to include members of the Asia Pacific region.

However, Whitlam's concept of regional community, was welcomed only by Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, while response of others was either reserved, or of non-committal. A very strong reason was the existence of the ASEAN as a developed organisation. Secondly geographically the ASEAN countries belong to south East Asia. As a consequence, the first priority of any South East Asian country would be to support the ASEAN.

But to deem the whole exercise as futile would be a grave error, for its consequences not only enhanced Australia's prestige in the region but also endowed it with greater acceptance as a constructive partner in the region. Though Whitlam's regional community failed to take off due to general apathy of desired support, it was successful to bring Australia and Indonesia closer and foster better relations with the ASEAN and Japan. The idea of Whitlam to moot this organisation with China and Japan as its members, was a brilliant act of internationalism accompanied with the economic support from Japan. It would have brought Australia in direct touch with the communist world. Exclusion of the USSR from the list was pointed out to be Malaysia and

Singapore and lack of diplomatic links with China stymied the progress of the concept.

Whitlam's pragmatism was unveiled in his support for the ASEAN as most 'relevant' and 'one with thriving future'. Any allegation that he 'mooted regional community' to sabotage the ASEAN due to Australia's non-inclusion in the ASEAN was denied by Whitlam. His argument was further justified when the ASEAN invited Australia as 'constructive partner' for associate membership of the ASEAN. It was another feather to his cap. Australia did not wish to disturb an established organisation of the region rather was willing to join this community.

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea were the two most favoured nations which found mention in his foreign policy commitment. Indonesia-Australia relations were normal and thriving since the fall of Sukarno in 1965. But establishment of the Five Power Defence Arrangement of the region were convinced that Australia was capable of advocating their concern at international forums. Aids to the South West Pacific countries were doubled making Australia a greater friend in the region. Whitlam was very optimistic about the regional South Pacific Forum, and at its Apia meeting acted in a subtle diplomatic manner to counter the demand of the South West Pacific members to be

accorded a place in the NAFTA (New Zealand, Australia Free Trade Agreement). Its relations with New Zealand gathered strength, firstly, due to return of Labour governments in both countries and secondly, the common interest in the region.

Whitlam's foreign policy was marked by the tenets of 'non-ideological commitments' towards 'international peace'. His policies were tailored to the regional security and the promotion of the Australian interests in the region. His commitment to anti-racial discrimination prompted him to disallow the South African sports team's passage through Australia. By legislating visa requirement even for Britons and European community members he fulfilled his long awaited anti discriminatory commitment.

Though his predecessor Government has signed the NPT (Nuclear non Proliferation Treaty 1967), Whitlam promptly ratified it, proclaiming Australia's obligation towards an anti-nuclear world.

Whitlam Government was unique in taking an anti-American stand over the 'Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace' proposal of Sri Lanka at the UN. In his enthusiasm for disarmaments he had already accepted and supported ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality a Malaysian proposal) proposed by the ASEAN.

Whitlam believed in 'evenhanded' approach to international problems' on the Palestine issue, he displayed a sense of fairness to both the parties. Even the 'oil crisis' (1973) induced by the Middle East countries could not shake him.

Australia New Zealand and Malayasia alignment under (Five Power Defence Arrangement) evoked angry reaction from Indonesia which observed the organisation as an anti-Indonesian development. Aid diplomacy of Whitlam caused substantial improvement in relations with Indonesia. Indonesia, vastly populated and strategically located was always a prime issue for Whitlam while its common border with PNG obligated good relations between the two. A more friendly gesture of Whitlam to acknowledge Indonesian claim over East Timor in 1975. All these factors combined are accredited to Whitlam's initiative and commitment to improve relations between the two.

Papua New Guinea, a trust territory which was granted self government in 1973 and independence on 16 Sept 1975 deemed Whitlam as the 'liberator' who expedited the process of its independence. Not only this Whitlam assured all help in future to PNG.

The independence of PNG enlists another deliberate

strategy of Whitlam. Australia had been a target of persistent criticism over paying merely lip service to the United Nation's commitment towards do-colonization while it still maintained its hold over PNG. Whitlam scoured out this lacuna in Australian foreign policy and exhibited a coherence between his internationalism and 'internal nationlaism'.

Rich natural deposits of PNG were the source of close links between PNG and Australia. Japan stepped in as the most important customer since 60's and Whitlam's expertise lay in manipulating the feeble negotiating position vis-a-vis Japan into a healthy and promising treaty. Whitlam successfully negotiated coaland uranium provisions to Japn and elicited a Japanese assurance for setting up of 'Uranium enrichment plant'. It designated his foresight to presume the enhanced importance of Uranium enrichment in future. Moreover Whitlam enunciated 'resource diplomacy' which prevented more than half equity in new Australian industries of crucial importance (Uranium, coal, oil and natural gas). It caused some Japanese resentment but subsequently Australia and Japan agreed to the proposals of the Nippon-Australia Relations Agreement (NARA), which was signed in the later governments period.

Another area of regional importance was South West

Pacific. Whitlam's vigour to pursue the matter of French Nuclear Test to the International Court of Justice made Whitlam champion of the South West Pacific region.

Thus the fundamental bases of the foreign policy changes introduced by Whitlam were derived from his belief, the international relation bipolarity was being replaced by multipolarity, and that the "communist" bogey, had been over exaggerated by the western bloc. Another important act on his part was to disengage Australia from the disputes between the communist and anti-communist forces, and concentrate upon the improvement of relations with the countries of the region. Finally, the United Nations was the champion of justice in the eyes of Whitlam and he believed, that Australia's commitment to the UN peace operations will be carried out even though Australia was aligned to the United States through the ANZUS.

Though Whitlam's period is confined to a short span of less than three years (Dec 72-Nov 75), yet it induced unprecedented changes in the perception of the Australian external and defence policies.

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