

Howard's Australia

How Foreign Policy Decisions Shaped a Nation

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**Bachelor of Arts in Politics and International Studies with Honours (BA(Hons))
Murdoch University**

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Declaration

I, Christopher Bean, declare that this thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Politics and International Studies with Honours (BA (Hons)) at Murdoch University in 2010, and is entirely my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted at any other academic institution.

Christopher Bean

5th November 2010

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Abstract

Unlike liberalism, the realist theory of International Relations leaves very little space for individual leaders or other domestic factors to influence the direction of a state's foreign policy. It therefore provides an insufficient explanation for the enormous influence former Australian Prime Minister John Howard had on Australian foreign policy-making. When considering potential domestic influences on a state's foreign policy, such as public opinion, Australia's political institutions and societal structure, John Howard's influence far outshone them all.

Howard claimed to be a realist and indeed his actions generally confirmed that. Yet the fact that he was able to shape Australian foreign policy in his mould, from the more liberal internationalist bipartisanism of the previous few decades, ironically demonstrates the importance of domestic factors in the making of foreign policy over international ones. While in Australia the Prime Minister has always had far more influence in this field than any other factor, this is a trend which Howard consolidated.

Howard's influence was so great not only because of the centralised nature of the Australian foreign policy-making structure he inherited upon winning office in 1996, but because of conscious decisions made during his prime ministership. These decisions included the establishment of the National Security Committee, the promotion of the Australian Federal Police at the expense of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and

the increased prominence of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Howard was then able to use his influence in Australian foreign policy-making to shape Australia in his own image.

The case studies of the 1999 peace-keeping operation in East Timor and the 2003 invasion of Iraq as part of the United States-led “Coalition of the Willing” demonstrate this argument. Not long after Australian troops entered East Timor – Howard’s first real intervention in foreign affairs – Howard outlined to parliament what quickly became known as the Howard Doctrine. This speech foreshadowed the full expression of Howard’s vision of Australia, a vision that was:

... centred upon the Anzac tradition; mateship; military valour; mourning; remembrance; the martial defence of Western values [and] the most intimate association with Australia’s two wartime great and powerful friends, the United Kingdom and the United States (Manne, 2004, 50).

The War on Terror, especially Australia’s contribution to the invasion of Iraq, represented the most extreme expression of the Howard Doctrine, and demonstrates most clearly Howard’s dominance of the foreign policy-making arena.

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Introduction, Scope and Structure

Introduction

Within the field of International Relations (IR), the effect on the formulation of a state's foreign policy of domestic factors has been a long-running argument. Realists, generally speaking, deny the strength of the influence of domestic politics relative to other factors, and give little weight to the role of individual leaders, whereas liberals instead emphasise the role inter-societal interactions play in the formulation of foreign policy. In this thesis, foreign policy-making under former Australian Prime Minister John Howard is examined in light of this debate. Howard was often seen as a "realist" foreign policy maker, yet he exerted so much influence on foreign policy-making that he was able to re-shape Australia in his own image. This thesis demonstrates that this is due to Howard's ability to dominate the interrelationship between various domestic factors, such as public opinion, Australia's political institutions, policy networks, and societal structures.

While Australia has always been recognised as a liberal democracy, "a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property" (Zakaria, 1997, 22), it is difficult to see how the formulation of Australian foreign policy adheres to this ideal type. While elections in Australia are certainly free and fair, the formulation of Australian foreign policy has involved violations of the rule of law, a consolidation of power in the hands of the few, and a muzzle on free speech in parliament.

While this does not involve the actual erosion of constitutional rights, the foreign policy-making process in Australia permits the consolidation of power in a way that resembles the illiberal democratic regimes of Boris Yeltsin's Russia and Carlos Menem's Argentina (Zakaria, 1997, 23). This is not unique to the prime ministership of John Howard – Australian leaders have always exploited the system they inherited. For example, former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam noted that, when confronted by a hostile Senate, “foreign policy was the field in which we were most fully able to implement the [Labor] Party's program” (Salla, 1995, 209). This was made possible because foreign policy-making in Australia is the preserve of the executive branch of government. The increasing centralisation of foreign policy-making in Australia, however, was a trend that accelerated during the prime ministership of John Howard, and one which continued under Howard's Australian Labor Party (ALP) successor, Kevin Rudd.

Thesis Scope and Structure

One of the key ongoing debates in the field of IR has been the extent to which domestic politics is relevant to the formulation of a state's foreign policy. On one side of the divide, realists argue that domestic factors are less relevant to the formulation of a state's foreign policy than the constraints on state behaviour imposed by the structure of the international system. On the other, liberals and liberal institutionalists argue that the inter-societal interactions within states result in a “clash of interests, bargaining, and need for compromise” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 229) and that these interactions within a state help explain its interactions with other states. Constructivists point to the influence of a state's particular history, beliefs, values and norms on foreign policy. This thesis engages with this

debate by using the example of Australia's foreign policy-making under Howard. It finds that although there is a relationship between domestic structures and foreign policy-making, it is not necessarily the linear one anticipated by liberals. Indeed, foreign policy-making processes in Australia are shaped by a range of factors, which will be specified and examined throughout the rest of this chapter. These factors range from the highly influential, such as the National Security Committee (NSC) and John Howard himself, to the less relevant, such as public opinion.

Many major international events occurred during John Howard's long prime ministership, with direct and indirect long-term repercussions for Australia. These events ranged from the Asian economic crisis and the creation of an independent East Timorese state, to the rise of transnational terrorism and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In responding to these events, John Howard has been credited with revolutionising Australian foreign policy (Sheridan, 2006, 149), primarily by:

... abandoning the post-Whitlam bipartisan consensus [which] introduced a more independent and internationalist foreign policy with a clearer focus on Asia ... to focus foreign policy more openly on the national interest and to link it more closely to the domestic political agenda (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59)

John Howard was a self-proclaimed IR realist. The realist paradigm, whilst acknowledging their existence, does not consider domestic issues to be as important in the formulation of a state's foreign policy as the systemic pressures exerted on states, seen as unitary actors acting in an anarchical world in which power and security are paramount concerns

(McCraw, 2008, 466). But just how important was John Howard's own influence in the shaping of Australian foreign policy during his prime ministership? In other words, is it that Australian foreign policy is indeed shaped by external constraints, or is it that the domestic structures shaping Australian foreign policy have enabled Australian foreign policy to assume a realist form under Howard?

In order to assess the impact of John Howard's realist beliefs and values on foreign policy-making, this thesis will examine Australian foreign policy from a liberal perspective, a perspective that does acknowledge the importance of domestic issues in foreign policy-making, issues such as public opinion, "party and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups, and the leader's own political advisors" (Putnam, 1988, 434). The thesis, therefore, begins with a brief description of the realist theory of IR, and why Howard's personal foreign policy approach should be considered realist. Then, it will outline a domestic explanation of a state's foreign policy, before examining the influence of Howard's beliefs on the formulation of Australian foreign policy relative to other domestic factors. Part 1 of this thesis contends that, relative to other domestic actors, John Howard's influence on foreign policy was considerable, as well as the reasons for this.

Part 2 then explores in-depth two events that occurred during Howard's prime ministership that best demonstrate his influence over foreign policy relative to other factors – Australia's military involvement in East Timor and Iraq. In doing so it will show that while Howard's

influence over foreign policy was great, and innovations such as the NSC helped centralise power into the hands of the Prime Minister even more than before, Australian Prime Ministers have long enjoyed considerable freedom to act in ways they consider to be in the “national interest” in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives, contrary, perhaps, to the spirit of liberal democracy. Howard, therefore, had not so much revolutionised Australian foreign policy-making as built on existing foreign policy-making structures to shape Australia’s foreign policy in his own image.

The Beliefs and Values of John Winston Howard

John Howard was a self-proclaimed realist, but before we go any further, the realist theory of IR needs to be understood, so that John Howard’s words and actions can be placed within its intellectual context. With a few idiosyncratic quirks which will be discussed later, John Howard’s understanding of foreign policy is deeply rooted in the realist tradition. The following section will briefly outline the main tenets of classical realism, before providing an explanation as to why John Howard should be considered a realist first and foremost.

The Intellectual Context - Classical Realism

David McCraw argues that there are three strands to classical realism:

[Firstly] the essentially conflicting nature of international affairs [secondly] that the most important elements in the international system are unitary states, rather than

international organisations or sub-national groups [and finally] the primacy in all political life of power and security in human motivation (2008, 466)

In order to help explain this anarchical international system, Doyle and Ikenberry use the metaphor of a jungle, as opposed to a cultivated garden, to help visualise this world (1997, 11-12). It is a world where there is no central authority above that of the state, and “within this system, each state strives to protect or promote its interests, and these inevitably conflict with the interest of other states. The conflict may lead to war” (McCraw, 2008, 466). Because of the “constant possibility of war among all states” (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 10), realists believe that “a state’s fundamental national interest must be survival. To ensure survival, each state strives to ensure its security” (McCraw, 2008, 466), and security can only be achieved, say realists, by the maximisation of power, in this case defined as “the ability to control or influence outcomes or the actions of others” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 591). Peace can therefore “only be assured by an equality of power, or balance of power, between states. Since power is unequally distributed, the strongest power needed to be balanced against by means of an alliance” (McCraw, 2008, 466).

Importantly, while realists consider themselves to be, by definition, pragmatic and “realistic” and opposed to idealism, realist moral philosophy nevertheless requires individuals to accept the “national interest” as an ideal (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 11). For realists, failing to follow the national interest “is a prescription for national disaster, for an increase in unnecessary global violence, and for irresponsible acts of statesmanship that

place private interests or ideals above public needs” (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 11). It is the national interest that drives realists.

John Howard – A Realist of Convenience?

Realism has long been the dominant theme in IR (Wendzel, 1977, 241). However, ever since the election of Gough Whitlam in 1972, the influence of realism in Australian foreign policy-making had arguably been on a steady downwards trend, with successive governments favouring a bipartisan, internationalist position with a far greater emphasis on nurturing a positive relationship with the Asian states to Australia’s north, rather than one characterised by fear and uncertainty (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59). John Howard, however, upon reading the mood of the nation, a nation uneasy with what was perceived as the ALP’s unnecessary pandering towards the region, moved to bring the realist paradigm back to its dominant intellectual position in the formulation of Australian foreign policy. The following section will explain the different aspects of Howard the realist.

Howard and the Australian Defence Force (ADF)

Given classical realism’s emphasis on the use of military power in defence of the “national interest” in a hostile world, John Howard’s policies towards Australia’s armed forces displayed a definite realist inclination (McCraw, 2008, 469). Firstly, notes McCraw, the Howard government gave a “high priority to the expansion and upgrade of Australia’s defence forces”. Secondly, “it made frequent use of the armed forces to achieve foreign policy goals” (2008, 469). Furthermore, when his government was first elected in 1996,

Howard was keen to argue that because Australia's "defences had been allowed to run down while the Labor Party had been in government [and because] the situation that Australia was facing, especially in East and Southeast Asia, was increasingly tense" (McCraw, 2008, 469-70), massive increases in military capability were required. In a time of relatively poor economic performance, Howard's Minister of Defence, Ian McLachlan, announced in May 1996 that "Defence would be the only federal government agency that would not suffer a reduction of funds" (McCraw, 2008, 470). Furthermore, Howard frequently turned to the ADF to achieve political goals, starting in 1998 when he sent elite Special Air Service (SAS) troops to the Middle East in order to support the efforts of the United States (US) to take action against Iraq (McCraw, 2008, 470). This was followed by leading the United Nations (UN) intervention force to East Timor in 1999, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan as part of the US-led "War on Terror", the 2003 invasion of Iraq as part of the US-led "Coalition of the Willing", leading the 2003 mission to restore order in the Solomon Islands (McCraw, 2008, 470), as well as a joint effort with New Zealand to quell riots in Tonga in late 2006. For Howard, the insecurity perceived in the world generally and in the Asia-Pacific region specifically, was best combated by the deployment of Australian military personnel, an obvious expression of Australian power.

In order to increase Australia's ability to project its military power, the Howard government announced soon after its first election victory "that it intended to enhance the combat capabilities of the ADF to better protect Australia's interests and maintain its relative military position in the region" (McCraw, 2008, 469). This idea of maintaining the balance of power is "very realist" (McCraw, 2008, 469). Furthermore, Howard's approach towards

defence was matched by a concurrent change of opinion in defence circles, with one commentator noting that “as the relative strength of Australia’s economy was in decline, we needed to move towards a much more robust and pro-active defence posture” (Cheeseman, 2002, 201). This perspective was articulated in the 1997 Strategic Policy Paper, which heralded a move away from the ideas of continental defence as promoted by the previous ALP government (Edwards and Tow, 2001, 171), to a quasi-forward defence strategy which promoted “greater emphasis on Australia’s strategic strike and force-projection capabilities” (Cheeseman, 2002, 202). The government’s approach led to a complete restructuring of Australia’s armed forces. Military personnel numbers decreased from 57 000 troops to just 42 500 (Firth, 2005, 162), but expenditure on high technology increased to give the armed forces a “knowledge edge” in times of war (Firth, 2005, 161). And when the economic climate improved during Howard’s prime ministership, the Howard government’s 2000 White Paper on Defence “announced a rise in the Defence budget from an annual \$12 billion to \$16 billion by the end of the decade” (McCraw, 2008, 470). These enhancements to Australian military capabilities were to be matched by greater cooperation with US forces throughout the region (Cheeseman, 2002, 202).

Howard and the American Alliance

For realists, alliances are a key strategy for maintaining a favourable balance of power, and Howard has long cherished the Australian-American alliance, enshrined, according to Howard, in the ANZUS Security Treaty (McCraw, 2008, 471). In Howard’s own words: “from the moment of our election in 1996, as a deliberate act of policy, my government intensified Australia’s post-Cold War relationship with the United States” (McCraw, 2008,

471). For example, after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. in September 2001, Howard invoked the bilateral ANZUS Security Treaty for the first time in its history (Ayson, 2006, 251). Furthermore, the Australian-American alliance was “the major factor in Australia’s policy towards intervention in Iraq” (McCraw, 2008, 471). In 2004 Howard stated that “I have made no secret of the fact that the alliance relationship was a factor in the government’s decision to join the US-led campaign in Iraq” (McCraw, 2008, 471-2). Finally, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer argued that:

ANZUS was more than just ‘a factor’ when he said that the alliance with the US would have weakened ‘very substantially’ if the government had refused to go to war against Iraq: ‘It wasn’t a time in our history to have a great and historic breach with the United States’ (McCraw, 2008, 472)

Howard and the National Interest

The moral philosophy of acting in the “national interest” loomed large in Howard’s discourse on foreign policy too. Howard made repeated references to acting in the national interest throughout his prime ministership. Indeed, the DFAT White Paper that was published in early 2003 was titled *Advancing the National Interest*. So if the interests referred to in the “national interest” meant the interests of “the people”, and if “the people” meant “the entire people or nation”, then the nation is assumed to be “monolithic or sufficiently united to be able to have a clearly distinguishable set of interests, or, to put it crudely, a will and a mind of its own” (Camilleri, 2003, 432). This understanding of the state as a unitary actor acting on behalf of a territorially bounded political community is pure realism.

Howard's Pragmatism

In other respects, however, Howard can be considered a realist of convenience. For example, when it came to the increasingly-pertinent issue of globalisation, Stewart Firth argues that Howard spoke with two voices (2005, 146). On the one hand he espoused realist ideas when he spoke about the national interest, which in this case involved the linking of the Australian economy with long-term ally the United States, “for security as much as for prosperity” (2005, 146). On the other hand, however, Howard was a champion of “APEC, the WTO, the multilateral trading regime and the promise of further integration into the global economy” (Firth, 2005, 146). This apparent contradiction can be explained in terms of sensitivity to the domestic situation. While accepting the need for greater economic interdependence and free trade:

The Howard government delayed the move towards free trade in motor vehicles, as well as textiles, clothing and footwear, fearing an electoral backlash, and secured GATS exemptions in the politically sensitive areas of the media, education and health (Firth, 2005, 146)

Another example of Howard moving away from realist orthodoxy can be seen in his promotion of Australian values in foreign policy-making (McCraw, 2008, 476). These were most obvious in the intervention in East Timor and the invasion of Iraq. Soon after the East Timor intervention, Howard stated that part of the reason for intervening was that “we were defending the values we hold dear as Australians” (McCraw, 2008, 476). After Iraq, Howard stated that “[Australia] can lend a hand for freedom at a moment when voices of

democratic hope are being heard right across the Middle East” (Weisser, 2006, 307). In 2005, Howard summed up his views by saying that:

The responsibility of elected leaders is to serve the interests and promote the values of the people as we see them and as best we can. This does not mean adjusting to opinion polls, but it does mean that foreign policy can never be conducted over the heads of our people (McCraw, 2008, 476).

These examples demonstrate an almost-constant theme in Australian foreign policy-making under Howard – a desire to make foreign policy decisions popular with Australian voters.

This concern for the domestic electorate in foreign policy making is arguably unique within the Australian context, to Howard (Sheridan, 2006, 149; Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59), and certainly not realist. Howard, the best politician staunch critic Mungo MacCullum has ever met (2004, 57), was ever the pragmatist. However, regardless of whether Howard’s realism stemmed from deeply held personal convictions, from the expression of crude populist policies or from a desire to force the ALP opposition into political irrelevancy, it will soon be demonstrated that Howard’s beliefs, wherever they came from, strongly influenced the direction of Australian foreign policy, and why that had been the case.

A Domestic Explanation of Foreign Policy-Making

We now understand how Howard’s particular beliefs and values rest within the broader realm of the realist theory of IR. Howard, however, had a particularly keen eye for reading the domestic landscape too, and this sharp political mind, after a slow start, began to use

foreign policy initiatives to marginalise the ALP, in an important deviation not only from orthodox realist thought, but the Australian political tradition since Whitlam too, a tradition in which issues of foreign policy have enjoyed bipartisan consensus (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59). Realism as an analytic framework then, with its emphasis on the unitary state, is inadequate for explaining Australian foreign policy under Howard. Scope for domestic factors is required, and so this section will outline what is meant by a domestic explanation for foreign-policy making.

First, however, it is essential to locate the domestic explanation within the broader ambit of the debate in IR over the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy. This is the area upon which James. D Fearon focuses his article 'Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations'. For Fearon, a domestic-political explanation of a state's foreign policy is simply one which is defined in explicit contrast to explanations which are not domestic-political (1998, 291). In other words, domestic-political explanations of a state's foreign policy are defined in opposition to what the literature terms "systemic" or "structural" explanations (1998, 291).

Systemic IR Theory

In order to differentiate between domestic and systemic, Fearon then defines two broad categories of systemic IR theory. The first category, which he dubs S1, simply refers to theories which "envision ... states as unitary and purposive actors that consider what other states will or might do when they choose foreign policies" (1998, 291). For Fearon, this is

classic systemic theory, and theories with S1 at their core, theories that treat states as unitary and rational, are “ubiquitous in IR” (Fearon, 1998, 298). Generally speaking, S1 theories correspond to classical realist theories. For example, with its emphasis on the unitary, rational state as the principal actor with a focus on national security (Viotti and Kauppi, 5-7), realism has clear parallels with Fearon’s class of S1 theories, which “envisions states as unitary and purposive actors that consider what other states will or might do when they choose foreign policies” (Fearon, 1998, 291). However, it must be noted that Fearon’s S1 category is somewhat broader than classical realism. For example, Alexander Wendt’s constructivist theories as articulated in 1992’s ‘Anarchy Is What States Make of It’ “can fit under this heading, at least under a broad definition of ‘rational’” (Fearon, 1998, 298-9), despite constructivist theory originally emerging in opposition to Kenneth Waltz’s strand of realist theory, neorealism.

In contrast to the broad sweep of theories which contain S1 at their core, the second systemic IR theory, dubbed S2 by Fearon “is the same as the first, except that it adds conditions on which explanatory values can operate or how they can operate in a properly systemic theory” (1998, 291). This modification to S1 theories follows the ground-breaking work of Kenneth Waltz. For Waltz, an IR theory “ceases to be systemic when characteristics of particular states are relevant to the explanation offered, as opposed to properties of the system like the distribution of (relative) power” (Fearon, 1998, 291). These beliefs, “that one can understand the important features of states’ foreign policies without looking at domestic politics” (Fearon, 1998, 292), is what we generally understand as neorealism, a strict sub-set of classical realist theory. It must be noted however that because most

theorists reject total structural determinism, Fearon's S2 theories are relatively few (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 581). Most theorists therefore, accept that domestic issues do influence foreign policy-making, including many realists. However, for realists, domestic issues within states are of less relevance than the systemic pressures exerted on states.

Domestic IR Theory

If, as Fearon argues, domestic-political explanations of states' foreign policy are defined in explicit contrast to explanations which are not domestic-political, that is, systemic (1998, 291), then S1 and S2, Fearon's "two broad classes" (1998, 291) of systemic explanations of states' foreign policy, also implies the existence of two broad classes of domestic-political explanations. These are dubbed D1 and D2 by Fearon (1998, 291). So therefore:

If, as in S1, a systemic theory is understood to picture states as unitary, rational actors, then a domestic-political explanation represents at least one state as nonunitary, and at least one such state pursues a suboptimal foreign policy due to the interaction of the actors represented within the state (Fearon, 1998, 291)

In other words "a D1 domestic-political argument explains how domestic-political interactions lead a state to choose suboptimal policies, relative to some normative standard" (Fearon, 1998, 291). For example, liberal IR theories would look to analyse how a state's domestic interests influences its foreign policy (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 13).

And finally if, as in Fearon’s S2 class of theories, a systemic IR theory not only assumes unitary, rational actors, but also the “restriction that particular state characteristics do not enter into the explanation, then the set of domestic-political explanations is necessarily much larger” (Fearon, 1998, 292). For not only does it include an explanation of how a state “chooses bad or foolish foreign policies, relative to some normative standard” (Fearon, 1998, 292) as in D1, but a D2 perspective must also contain arguments “in which states’ particular characteristics (other than power) are relevant to explaining their foreign policy choices, or in which domestic political interactions give rise to diverse state foreign policy practices” (Fearon, 1998, 292). In other words, by definition, as a “strict subset of S1, the set of domestic-political IR arguments that corresponds to S2 is larger than D1” (Fearon, 1998, 300). D2 thus contains the same arguments as D1, with additional arguments that take into account “unit-level properties of states, such as their regime types or particular foreign policy goals” (Fearon, 1998, 300). Fearon summarises his systemic and domestic-political theories in a table, reproduced in its entirety below:

Two Ways to Distinguish between Systemic and Domestic-political IR Theories

S1	Systemic theories picture states as unitary and rational
	Examples: Classical rational deterrence theory (Schelling 1960); some “democratic peace” theories (eg Bueno de Mesquita & Lalman 1992)
Vs	
D1	Domestic-political theories picture one or more states as nonunitary, with domestic interactions yielding suboptimal foreign policy choices
	Examples: Interest-group (Olsonian) explanations for protectionist trade policies (Grossman & Helpman 1994); “bureaucratic politics” explanations for foreign policy (Allison 1971)

S2 Systemic theories picture states as unitary and rational, and in addition do not rely on unit-level attributes of states to explain variation in foreign policies

Examples: Waltzian neorealism (Waltz 1979); Wagner (1987) and Niou et al (1989) on balance of power politics.

Vs

D2 Domestic-political theories are the same as D1, but also include arguments that explain differences in states' foreign policies by referring to unit-level attributes of states.

Examples: Democratic-peace theories (eg Russett 1993); classical rational deterrence theory (Schelling 1960)

Table 1: (Fearon, 1998, 300)

Two-level Game Theory and Classical Liberalism

Now that both the competing structural and domestic explanations for a state's foreign policy are understood, Fearon asks his readers a simple question: "How, exactly, does domestic politics shape foreign policy?" (1998, 291) The answer to this question falls outside the scope of Fearon's article, and so the rest of this chapter seeks to provide an answer by drawing on the Australian example. In order to help conceptualise the situation further, two-level game theory provides a useful explanatory framework, because the relationship between the two levels, domestic and international, can be understood as a two-level game.

Two-level Game Theory

Two-level Game Theory, developed by Robert D. Putnam and based upon the principals of traditional game theory, entails an analysis of the influence of domestic issues on foreign policy in a democratic state. In a two-level game:

“At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favourable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximise their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimising the adverse consequences of foreign developments” (Putnam, 1988, 434)

So far, if we use Kenneth Waltz’s idea of distinct levels of analysis, an idea in which the international system, a particular state and society, as well as the bureaucracy and key individuals, are considered separate fields of study (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 13-14), then Putnam is operating at the international system level, as well as the state and society level.

However, Putnam notes that:

Each national political leader appears at both game boards. Across the international table sits his foreign counterparts, and at his elbow sit diplomats and other international advisors. Around the domestic table behind him sit party and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups, and the leader’s own political advisors (Putnam, 1988, 434).

By now it is clear that Putnam’s two-game theory also operates at the bureaucratic and individual levels of analysis too. The complexity of such a game is evident when one considers situations in which a move on one board is considered rational, such as, in Putnam’s example, “limiting auto imports” (1988, 434) may be “impolitic for that same player at the other board” (Putnam, 1988, 434). Clearly then, the aim of the game is to achieve a win-win situation, whereby the political leader builds consensus at the domestic level, before seeking to achieve his aims at the international level without breaking the

domestic consensus. This concern for domestic consensus is a hallmark of the classical liberal theory of IR.

Classical Liberalism

Unlike realists, who generally view the state as a “hypothetical single, rational, national actor in a state of war, [liberals see the state as] a conglomerate of coalitions and interests representing individuals and groups” (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 12). Furthermore, for a liberal, a state’s interests are not only determined by its place in the international system, but also by “which of the many interests, ideals, and activities of its members captures (albeit temporarily) governmental authority” (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 12). In other words, liberals emphasise that “domestic interests define the political character of a state and that this definition then influences the state’s foreign policy” (Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997, 13). Therefore, argue liberals:

The state is not an independent, coherent, autonomous actor separated or aloof from society. Its primary function is as arbiter of conflicting demands and claims, or as an arena for the expression of such interests. Furthermore, the focus of analysis is less on the state and more on the competition among individuals and groups (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 233)

The liberal perspective asks us to consider the interactions within a state to help explain the state’s interactions with other states. These domestic interactions result in a “clash of interests, bargaining, and need for compromise” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 229) that results in the state losing the rationality it has in a realist theory, leading to less-than-perfect

decision making (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 229). This idea parallels the theories contained within Fearon's D1 class of theories, in which at least "one state [is] nonunitary, and at least one such state pursues a suboptimal foreign policy due to the interaction of the actors represented within the state" (Fearon, 1998, 291). These influences on a state's foreign policy are explored in the following section.

Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy

So far we have argued that the realist perspective of IR is not by itself sufficient for explaining Australian foreign policy, and that the liberal perspective is much better at providing an explanation for the complexities inherent in the formulation of foreign policy. Robert Putnam explains this in terms of a two-level game in which a political leader attempts to build consensus at the domestic level, before seeking to achieve his aims at the international level without breaking the domestic consensus. We now turn towards analysing the domestic structure of Australian foreign policy-making, and how John Howard's realist beliefs and values influenced its formulation.

Public opinion is a major factor when considering the domestic influences of foreign policy, but Thomas Risse argues that the foreign policy of a state depends less on public attitudes, or even the actual issues involved, and more on the "domestic structure and the coalition-building processes" (Risse, 1991, 480) within the state. Analysing the domestic structures of the United States, France, Germany and Japan, Risse demonstrates that it is each state's

political institutions, policy networks, and societal structures which account for the differing foreign policy outcomes displayed by these states in response to the Cold War during the 1980s, despite broad similarities in public opinion (1991, 480). Analyses of Howard's Australia, taking into account not only public opinion, but Australia's political institutions, policy networks, and societal structures too, can provide similar insights. The relative influence of these factors on Australian foreign policy-making will be examined briefly in turn below.

Public Opinion

According to the literature, the relationship between mass public opinion and the state elites with the ability to enact foreign policy fall into two broad camps (Risse, 1991, 480). The first category, which corresponds with the liberal theory, is a "bottom-up" approach which "assumes that the general public has a measurable and distinct impact on the foreign policy-making process ... leaders follow masses" (Risse, 1991, 480). However, as Risse points out, there is much empirical evidence to the contrary, situations where "crucial foreign policy decisions have been taken in the absence of mass public consensus" (1991, 481). In the Australian case, the decision to take part in the 2003 invasion of Iraq is one example where the "bottom-up" approach does not make sense (Goot, 2007, 270).

The second approach to the relationship between mass public opinion and the state elites that Risse identifies in the literature is a "top-down" approach in which "popular consensus is a function of the elite consensus and elite cleavages trickle down to mass public opinion"

(1991, 481). This approach closely aligns with the state-centred, realist approach to foreign policy. This approach assumes that the public is easily manipulated by their political leaders because of “(1) the low salience, or significance, of foreign and security policy issues as compared with economic policies, (2) the low degree of knowledge about the issues involved, and (3) the volatility of public opinion” (Risse, 1991, 481). However, like the “bottom-up” approach, there is much empirical evidence that casts doubt on the “top-down” approach too.

Risse notes that while only a small proportion of the public can be considered politically active, “large proportions of the public seem regularly to follow news about foreign policy in the media” (1991, 481). Furthermore, evidence suggests that the public is “more rational and less open to elite manipulation than the top-down thesis asserts” (Risse, 1991, 482). Finally, argues Risse, the “very existence of state propaganda and efforts to ‘spin control’ belies the ‘power elite’ hypothesis” (1991, 482), because it suggests that leaders “take the power of the uneducated masses seriously and feel vulnerable to it” (Risse, 1991, 482). This idea echoes Camilleri’s argument regarding the political motivations behind the Howard government’s appeal to the “national interest” (2003, 434), and these statements are also backed up in the Australian case by Murray Goot’s research (2007).

“Whatever its electoral impact” argues Goot “the government’s handling of foreign policy issues certainly affected judgements of its performance” (2007, 254). For example, at the tenth anniversary of the Howard government’s 1996 election victory, a national poll asked

respondents to name the worst thing the Howard government had done during its first 10 years in power, and 49 per cent of respondents nominated, unprompted, an issue related to foreign policy, either:

... the war in Iraq (20 per cent) or the sending of troops overseas (5 per cent), Australia's proximity to the USA or to President George W. Bush (12 per cent), the treatment of refugees (6 per cent) or the claims about refugees throwing their children overboard (6 per cent) (Goot, 2007, 254).

On the other hand, when asked to name the best thing the Howard government had done, only 10 per cent chose a foreign policy issue, the majority of those (6 per cent) nominating Howard's stance on terrorism (Goot, 2007, 254). Furthermore, in two separate surveys compiled by the Australian Election Study (AES), a group which is run by the Australian National University (ANU), in 2001 and 2004, the only issues ranked higher by the Australian electorate than asylum seekers and security were health and education (Goot, 2007, 300). All this casts doubt on the "top-down" approaches assumptions on public ignorance and apathy to foreign policy issues.

However, offering some support to the notion that economic issues are more important to the general public than foreign and security policy issues, ACNielsen held a similar poll to the AES, asking respondents to rank the issues most important to them in deciding how they would vote in the Federal election to be held later that year. The results are illustrated in the following graph:

The Most Important Issues at the 2004 Federal Election

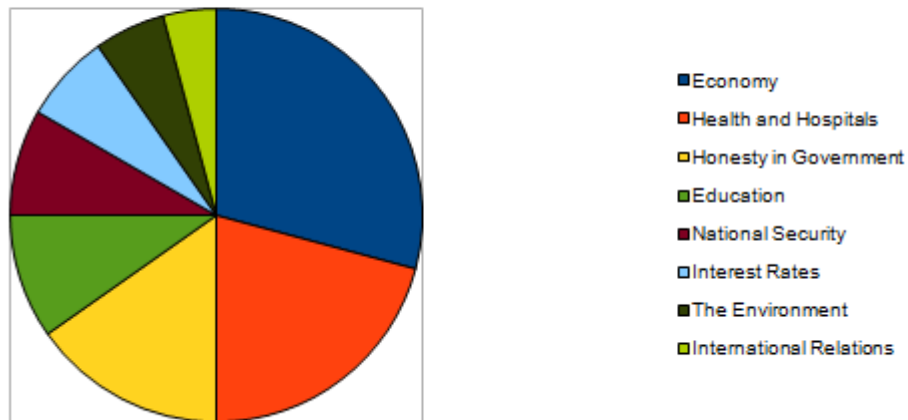


Figure 1: Based on data in Goot (2007, 300)

So while there is evidence to support both the “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches, both have clear empirical shortcomings, and Risse also notes some conceptual issues too. Perhaps the most obvious is that both approaches treat the general public and state elites as unitary actors (Risse, 1991, 482). As far as the general public goes, Risse argues that there are at least three divisions that need to be acknowledged. These are the differences between mass public opinion, the attentive public, who are interested in politics, and what Risse dubs “issue publics” (1991, 482) who are “particularly attentive to particular questions” (1991 482) but care less for other issues. Furthermore, “state elites are often themselves divided and each group attempts to sway the general public to their particular viewpoint” (Risse, 1991, 482). Witness the divisions between the Australian political parties, and within the ALP opposition throughout Howard’s prime ministership. Howard’s marginalisation of the ALP in areas of foreign policy was a recurring feature of his prime ministership.

Risse also notes the more subtle interplay between the general public and state elites that is often ignored if a simplistic “bottom-up” or “top-down” approach is utilised (1991, 482-3). Such effects could include changes in the prioritisation by the government of certain policy goals, modifications to the rhetoric used by ministers rather than actual policy changes or even changes in the strength of the position of certain members of the government or realignments of political parties based on the actions of public interest groups (1991, 482-3).

Perhaps in recognition of these shortcomings in the “bottom-up” or “top-down” models, Derek McDougall and Kingsley Edney argue that Howard subscribed to a pragmatist model when it came to the role of public opinion in formulating foreign policy (2010, 206). This means that Howard “believed that political leaders should form their own judgements about major issues and then attempt to persuade public opinion as to the correctness of the proposed policy course” (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 206). While there are clear parallels to the “top-down” approach described by Risse, McDougall and Edney make a distinction between deliberative contexts and crisis contexts (2010, 206). In crisis situations, such as East Timor, Howard was more constrained by public opinion, whereas in deliberative contexts, such as Iraq, there was more opportunity for Howard to lead public opinion (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 206, 213). Nevertheless:

Howard’s preference was always to follow the policy that he believed was right for the particular issue, with some effort being put into winning the public over if there were strongly articulated views in the community that were contrary to his own (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 206)

While this is the situation in Australia, one cannot assume that “public and elite opinion interact with each other and are transformed into policy decisions in the same way across different countries” (Risse, 1991, 483). The reason for this forms the centre of Risse’s thesis. For Risse, it is the domestic structures and coalition-building processes of the state which form the missing link between mass public opinion and the decisions of state elites in the field of foreign policy (1991, 484).

Political Institutions

When analysing the political institutions of the United States and France, Risse distinguishes between a centralised and decentralised “foreign and security policy-making structure” (Risse, 1991, 487). The structure of the United States, notes Risse, is very decentralised, not only due to “built-in tensions within the executive between the Pentagon, the State Department, and the National Security Council, which lead to continuous infighting” (1991, 487), but Congress has more authority in areas of foreign policy than other Western parliaments too (Risse, 1991, 487). France could not be more different. In France, foreign and defence policy making is the “*domaine réservée* of the President” (Risse, 1991, 487) and the French Parliament “plays an almost-negligible role in foreign policy” (Risse, 1991, 487).

Australia mirrors the French example closely. Stewart Firth notes that:

The defining characteristic of foreign policy-making in Australia is concentration of power. The Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Trade Minister, the Cabinet and the

senior public servants and ministerial staff who advise them are the makers of foreign policy, and they are located in the executive under Australia's version of the Westminster system of parliamentary government. The executive's influence over foreign policy, moreover, is increasing (2005, 76)

Furthermore, McDonald and Merefield add that:

The Prime Minister of Australia is ... enabled by a weak separation of powers in which there is a significant overlap of the executive and legislative branches of government [and therefore the Australian Prime Minister] can make more of a claim than in other democratic states to be 'speaking for' the country's elected representatives (2010, 194).

For example, since Federation, the Australian Parliament "has never been consulted on a commitment to go to war" (Verrier, 2007, 317). Furthermore, the Australian Prime Minister's central role in the foreign policy-making arena is constantly highlighted in the literature. For example, McDonald and Merefield note that Howard's "relatively dictatorial approach to Cabinet (or even unilateral decision making) suggest a more central role for his voice in government than need necessarily be the case" (2010, 194). Gyngell and Wesley on the other hand are more to the point: "the Prime Minister is the most influential individual in Australian foreign policy making" (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 73).

Upon coming to power in 1996, Howard established the NSC, a committee of Cabinet which quickly became the "heart of foreign policy-making in Australia" (Firth, 2005, 76). The NSC represents a "who's-who" of the "political, bureaucratic, military and intelligence elite of Australia" (Firth, 2005, 76), and is indicative of the centralised structure of Australian

foreign policy-making. At the political level the NSC consists of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Treasurer, the Defence Minister, the Immigration Minister and the Attorney-General (Firth, 2005, 76; Tiernan, 2007, 491). At the bureaucratic level the NSC includes:

... The senior public servants who are the heads of the relevant government departments ... they come not only from Foreign Affairs and Trade, Defence, Treasury and Attorney-General's, but also significantly from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) (Firth, 2005, 76)

The inclusion of senior public servants from PM&C is significant because it further highlights the centralisation of power in Australian foreign policy-making. PM&C bureaucrats answer directly to the Prime Minister, and, like the Prime Minister, are concerned primarily with the "domestic political effects of foreign policy decisions" (Firth, 2005, 76). The Commander of the Defence Force and Director-General of the Office of National Assessments (ONA) also attend NSC meetings. The ONA is an "intelligence analysis organisation" that answers directly to the Prime Minister (Firth, 2005, 76). Finally, representatives from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) are often present at NSC meetings too. Crucially, the non-political members of the NSC were allowed to participate in all discussions as equals, although ministers did remain in charge (Tiernan, 2007, 492).

And in stark contrast to the "turf wars" which characterise the American example, "bureaucratic conflict in foreign policy making are particularly inappropriate to the Australian experience, which is overwhelmingly collegial" (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 7). For

example, while the relationship between the Defence Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is sometimes one characterised by stereotypes at the working level by the uniformed ranks, of “wimpish diplomats versus practical, action-oriented warriors” (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 80), such a division is not apparent at the higher, policy debating level. As Gyngell and Wesley notes, “Defence finds it easy to dominate policy in areas relating to force structure, but beyond that it has relatively little influence on foreign policy” (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 80), a field which is still dominated, relative to other government bureaucracies, by DFAT (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59).

The reasons behind this relatively harmonious relationship are fairly simple. Certainly in comparison to the United States, “Australia’s foreign and strategic policy community is small” (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 84). Furthermore, the senior officers in DFAT, Defence, PM&C and the various intelligence agencies “have usually spent time working in other agencies” (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 84). For example:

In 2003, the heads of Defence, Immigration, ONA, ASIS, ASIO and the International Division of PM&C all had backgrounds in DFAT. In the same year, the Secretary of DFAT and the four deputy secretaries had all worked outside the department in other relevant parts of the bureaucracy (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 84).

As a result, just under 70 per cent of DFAT officers who responded to Gyngell and Wesley’s comprehensive questionnaire report that their “professional contacts with officers in other Commonwealth departments and agencies is ‘mostly collegial, but competitive at times’” (2003, 84), and almost 25 per cent considered the relationship “invariably collegial” (2003,

273), and “‘finance/money’ was by far the most common reason for any bureaucratic conflict” (2003, 84), while turf wars ranked at a lowly 12.9 per cent (2003, 84). Like France therefore, and unlike the United States, Australia presents a relatively centralised “foreign and security policy-making structure” (Risse, 1991, 487).

Under Howard, however, the role of DFAT has shrunk, and this enhances the observation that the role of the Prime Minister in foreign policy-making is increasing. Tony Kevin argues that:

DFAT is now mostly an implementing agency, not a policy engine. DFAT is heavily into the business of packaging and spinning declared policy. It no longer aspires to advise governments on foreign-policy architecture and priorities, because it well understands that those issues have already been settled by the Prime Minister’s advisory entourage (2004, 303)

Indeed, Howard demonstrated his disdain for DFAT by cutting its funding soon after coming to power (Firth, 2005, 234). However, at the same time that the role of DFAT has been shrinking, the role of the AFP has been increasing in the field of foreign policy. In Kevin’s words:

The landmarks in the AFP’s march to power under Howard were the placement of a large contingent of unarmed police in pre-referendum East Timor in 1999; the AFP’s successful overt and covert people smuggling disruption program in Indonesia in 2000-2001; the Bali bombings investigation, and offers of counter-terrorism policing assistance in Asia; and the current long-term Solomon Islands peace-keeping deployment (2004, 305)

Kevin argues that the increasing prominence of the AFP is due to Howard's eye for the domestic landscape. Because the AFP is relatively well-trusted in Australia, Howard is able to call upon that good will to demonstrate to the electorate that we have not lost "our independence as foot-soldiers in the American global war on terrorism [and] that we are at least doing something off our own bat and in our own backyard" (2004, 306). Clearly then, Australia's centralised foreign policy-making structure, which was further centralised under Howard, meant that Howard's influence on foreign policy-making was substantial.

Societal Structure

As well as an analysis of the relevant political institutions of foreign policy-making, Risse also analyses the general structure of society, rating them either as heterogeneous or homogeneous, and with strong social coalitions and organisations able to influence foreign policy, or weak social coalitions and organisations with negligible impact on foreign policy-making (1991, 492). French public opinion, says Risse, is "more divided on security policy than ... most other Western European nations" (1991, 489). For example, and as a result of this fragmentation, while a majority of the French public were opposed to France's independent nuclear force for many years during the Cold War, this opposition "never manifested itself in strong peace movements" (Risse, 1991, 489), as had been the case in the United States, West Germany and Japan (Risse, 1991 489). Furthermore, notes Risse, this division is most apparent along party lines. For example, on the issue of defence spending, "supporters of the French Socialist Party (PSF) have been more than 20 percentage points apart from adherents of the Gaullist Party (RPR)" (Risse, 1991, 489). Germany, by contrast, showed a difference of only 10-15 per cent between supporters of its

two major parties, the German Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) (Risse, 1991, 489). However, despite this variation in the levels of heterogeneity, both French and German society is considered heterogeneous by Risse (1991, 492).

Australia, too, would be considered heterogeneous by Risse. For example, Murray Goot examines the opinions of voters of the Liberal-National Coalition and ALP on foreign policy and other related issues in the years 2001 and 2004 based on polls conducted by the AES, and “Coalition respondents were generally more inclined than Labor respondents to rank these issues highly” (2007, 299). The results are displayed in the table below:

Foreign Policy and Related Issues Regarded as ‘Extremely Important’, by Vote, 2001 and 2004 (Percentages)

	2001			2004		
	LNP	ALP	Gap	LNP	ALP	Gap
Immigration	54	44	+10	33	25	+8
Refugees, asylum seekers	55	43	+12	26	27	-1
Defence, national security	60	46	+14	61	38	+23
Terrorism	63	48	+15	58	36	+22
Iraq	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	53	-24

Table 2: (Goot, 2007, 299)

As was the case with Germany and France, Australian society is clearly heterogeneous, with significant gaps between supporters of the major parties on most foreign policy issues (Goot, 2007, 299). The general drop in concern for foreign policy issues between the 2001 and 2004 elections can be explained by Gyngell and Wesley's argument that 2001 was, thanks to the "War on Terror", a "foreign policy election" (2003, 193) and 2004 was not. Other foreign policy elections in Australia's history identified by Gyngell and Wesley were the "war and conscription elections of 1914 and 1917; the war elections of 1940 and 1943; the Cold War elections of 1949, 1951, 1954, 1955 and 1958 [and] the Vietnam War elections of 1966, 1969 and 1972" (2003, 193-4). This argument is backed up by Goot, who claims that, contrary to conventional wisdom, world affairs played a large role in the 2001 Federal election (2007, 302). In contrast, the heavy defeat the ALP suffered at the 2004 election, despite the Iraq War "likely to have generated more votes for Labor than it garnered for the Coalition" (Goot, 2007, 299), as well as the general drop in the number of voters indicating foreign policy and related issues as "extremely important", indicates that the focus of the 2004 election was not on foreign policy matters. Indeed, Goot notes that the state of the economy was of far greater concern to the electorate than national security and IR in 2004 (2007, 300). The heterogeneity of Australian society offers another explanation to the lack of widespread, effective opposition to Howard's foreign policy endeavours.

Policy Networks

As well as the heterogeneity (or otherwise) of society, Risse also considers the ability of social coalitions and organisations to influence foreign policy (1991, 486). Risse argues that

the French policy network is “almost completely dominated by the state and, above all, the presidency, particularly concerning foreign and defence policy” (1991, 491). On the other hand, Risse argues that the United States is society-dominated because of the “constant building and rebuilding of coalitions among societal actors and political elites ... even in foreign and security policy” (1991, 490-1). Therefore, argues Risse, the openness of the American political system provides society with “comparatively easy access to the decision-making process” (1991, 491). Germany and Japan, according to Risse, are different again, with both countries adopting a corporatist model (1991, 491). In Germany, for example, “the party system not only permeates the state institutions, but it also forms the most important link between society and the political system” (Risse, 1991, 491). In other words, the two major political parties in Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) are “essentially catch-all organisations that integrate rather divergent societal demands” (Risse, 1991, 491). Therefore, the German predilection for consensus building and “the mutually beneficial reconciliation of diverging societal interests” (Risse, 1991, 491) – *Interressenausgleich* in German – explains the:

... clear analogy between the domestic emphasis on social partnership and a foreign policy trying to achieve its goals by security partnership with Germany’s neighbours ... [For example, between] 1977-84 ... ‘international cooperation’ was by far the most frequently mentioned [German] foreign policy objective” (Risse, 1991, 491)

For Japan, consensus-building is even more important than it is for Germany (Risse, 1991, 491-2). Australia, on the other hand, would align closer to the state-dominated French example than either the society-dominated United States or corporatist Germany and Japan. The increasing centralisation of power in the hands of the state, and especially in

executive bodies like Cabinet and the NSC, bodies which are in turn dominated by the Prime Minister, demonstrates the extent to which Australia mirrors the French example. What this means, argues Risse, is that the assumption can be made that “public opinion is likely to play only a marginal role in the foreign-policy making process” (Risse, 1991, 493). Gyngell and Wesley’s argument that conventional wisdom states that world affairs hardly play a part in modern Australian elections (2003, 193-4), as well as Howard’s contribution to the American-led “Coalition of the Willing” during the 2003 Iraq War despite widespread public opposition, brings credence to Risse’s assumption. Furthermore, argues Risse, a “centralised political system and a fragmented societal structure make it difficult to build a public consensus on policy issues and would be expected to limit the public impact on foreign and security policy” (Risse, 1991, 493). Howard’s dominance of Australian foreign policy, through Cabinet and the NSC, indicates the accuracy of this assumption.

It is by now clear that John Howard, like every Prime Minister before him, had a large role to play in the formulation of Australian foreign policy, due to the structure of Australian state-society relations and the political institutions mediating these, identified above. He was able to ignore public opinion and Parliament in order to wage a war very few governments agreed with in 2003, and win the subsequent election in 2004 to such an extent the Coalition gained a majority in both Houses of Parliament, the first time this had occurred in Australia since the 1970s. Furthermore, the Australian foreign policy-making apparatus is highly centralised around the Prime Minister and a few key ministers and department heads. Finally, Australian society is relatively disinterested in international relations and foreign policy, being more concerned with issues such as the economy, as

shown by the Howard government's eventual defeat at the 2007 election due to popular dissatisfaction with the Work Choices legislation. Part 2 of this thesis will analyse two case studies in order to demonstrate that the Prime Minister and key figures within the foreign policy-making bureaucracy he dominates are the most important factors in the formulation of Australian foreign policy. So influential had Howard been, relative to other factors, that if one looks solely at the foreign policy-making apparatus, it could hardly be said that Australia's government functioned as befitting a liberal democracy at all.

Australian Foreign Policy-Making under Howard: East Timor and Iraq

In the previous chapter, I have argued that John Howard's influence on the direction of Australian foreign policy was considerable relative to other domestic explanations of a state's foreign policy, such as public opinion. Australia's pre-existing centralised foreign policy-making institutions enhanced Howard's influence, as did Australia's heterogeneous society and inability of social coalitions to influence foreign policy. These enduring factors suggest that Howard's influence was perhaps no different to that of previous leaders, although Howard's introduction of NSC brought even greater control of the foreign policy-making apparatus into the hands of the Prime Minister. For McDougall and Edney, this increasing centralisation is evidence that, under Howard, "the role of the Prime Minister became more 'presidential', with strong Cabinet (and even backbench) discipline" (2010, 206). In order to demonstrate this, the following case studies will explore examples of Howard's influence on foreign policy, firstly with regards to East Timor, and then Iraq. These case studies will show how the seeds were sown in East Timor for the eventual full expression of Howard's realist vision of Australia, a vision that is:

... centred upon the Anzac tradition; mateship; military valour; mourning; remembrance; the martial defence of Western values [and] the most intimate association with Australia's two wartime great and powerful friends, the United Kingdom and the United States (Manne, 2004, 50).

East Timor started this process in 1999, and was Howard's first real foray into the field of IR. By the time of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the process was well underway.

East Timor

If John Howard can be said to have revolutionised Australian foreign policy, as one commentator claims (Sheridan, 2006, 149), by focussing foreign policy on what he perceived as the "national interest", and, more importantly, a determination to link foreign policy objectives closely to the domestic political agenda (Gyngell and Wesley, 2003, 59), then perhaps no other example better illustrates the advantages to Howard's methods over his predecessors than his handling of East Timor. One Howard critic, for example, called Howard's handling of the East Timor crisis his "finest hour" (Manne, 2004, 46). This section will place the East Timor situation within its historical context, before explaining how Australia responded to the events of 1975 and the late 1990's. This analysis will demonstrate that after a very rocky start, Howard succeeded in overturning the bipartisan consensus on the question of East Timor that was rapidly achieved soon after Indonesia's invasion in 1975, in the process consciously aligning a major foreign policy initiative with public opinion. It should be clear by now, however, that public opinion's effect on Australian foreign policy making is negligible at best, and the domestic agenda Howard really had in mind was the electoral marginalisation of the ALP, greater centralisation of power, and the expression of his realist vision of Australia.

Historical Background

During the age of colonialism, the island of Timor was occupied by two European nations, the Netherlands in the west and Portugal in the east (Firth, 2005, 184). When the Dutch were expelled from the region following the Second World War, West Timor became part of the Indonesian republic, a new state created from the colonial Dutch East Indies in 1949 (Firth, 2005, 184). East Timor remained a Portuguese colony, a “tropical backwater of empire with a population of about 680 000 by the 1970s” (Firth, 2005 184). However, in 1974 a democratic revolution in Portugal signalled a change in official policy concerning empire, and Portugal’s colonies were given the right to self-determination (Firth, 2005, 184). With the announcement that political parties were now legal, two major East Timorese political parties quickly emerged, the conservative Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) and the left-wing Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), with both parties favouring the creation of an independent East Timorese state (Firth, 2005, 184). A third, minor party, called *Apodeti*, called for integration with Indonesia (Salla, 1995, 211). For its part, Indonesia responded to these developments by launching *Operasi Komodo*, “a secret campaign of propaganda, disinformation and subversion designed to sow dissension among the East Timorese and bring about the kind of political turmoil that would justify Indonesian intervention” (Firth, 2005, 184). Unfortunately for its subsequent history, the East Timorese “obliged the Indonesians by fighting a brief, two-week civil war in August 1975, causing refugees to flee across the border to West Timor as well as by sea to Darwin” (Firth, 2005, 184). Fretilin emerged victorious over the UDT, and declared an independent East Timor on 28 November 1975.

Indonesia's response was as swift as it was brutal. Its invasion began on 7 December 1975 and "ranks as one of the more brutal military campaigns of modern times" (Firth, 2005, 1975). Stewart Firth described the Indonesian invasion in depressing detail:

Indonesian soldiers shot civilians, looted houses and demanded women and girls whom they then raped. They killed 2000 people in the capital, Dili, in the first week, putting tens of thousands to death in the months that followed. Most Indonesian soldiers are Muslims whereas most East Timorese are Christians, and the soldiers were told they were fighting Communists and infidels. Troops sent to reinforce the invasion carried out fresh massacres of the local population. Hundreds of thousands of people fled to the mountains, hoping to find security behind the lines which Fretilin now maintained against the invaders (Firth, 2005, 184-5)

Resistance lasted for decades. Fretilin was able to hold the interior against the invaders until the end of 1978, before evolving into an underground resistance force (Firth, 2005, 185). Fretilin's leader, Xanana Gusmao, was eventually captured in 1992 and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment (Firth, 2005, 184). This coincided with the heart of the resistance shifting from the rural interior to the urban centres, as "disaffected young East Timorese resented high unemployment, the heavy hand of the military and the influx of people from other parts of Indonesia such as Sulawesi" (Firth, 2005, 185). With this, the resistance had gained its second wind.

Australia's Bipartisan Acquiescence, 1975-1998

Australia's first reaction following the 1975 invasion was to demand that Indonesia withdraw its forces, but the realisation that an aggressive, expansionist colonial power now existed on Australia's doorstep forced the abandonment of the Australian government's

belief in the moral principles of self-determination and an opposition to the practice of colonialism, and the application of pragmatic *realpolitik* instead. To use the language of game theory, it was deemed more rational for Australia to negotiate with a friendly Indonesia over access to the huge reserves of oil and gas that existed in the Timor Sea, rather than antagonise Indonesia by supporting the cause of the beleaguered East Timorese people. The Australian Prime Minister of the time, Gough Whitlam, was opposed to an independent East Timor for several reasons. The first was, according to Gregory Clark, “an ‘obsession about the stupidity of creating small nation states’” (Salla, 1995, 210). For Whitlam, small states meant regional instability. Whitlam’s vision for the region saw no room for an independent East Timor, whose existence would have had the potential to destabilise its neighbours, with Whitlam reasoning that, in Helen Hill’s words, “‘because the new state would be economically weak all sorts of other bigger powers might want to step in and use aid to influence it’” (Salla, 1995, 210). Finally, and for Salla the most important reason, was the “anti-colonial framework used by Whitlam to interpret the whole issue” (1995, 210). In Whitlam’s own words:

... the division of the island of Timor is no more than an accident of Western colonial history ... four hundred years of Portuguese domination may have distorted the picture which the people of Portuguese Timor have of themselves, and perhaps obscured for them their ethnic kinship with the people of Indonesia. Time will be required for them to sort themselves out. (Salla, 1995, 210)

Like Howard many years later when dealing with foreign affairs, when formulating his policy on East Timor, Whitlam ignored public opinion (Salla, 1995, 210) and the views of his parliamentary colleagues (Salla, 1995, 212). He also ignored the advice offered to him by

the Department of Defence, which argued that Whitlam's handling of the crisis was strengthening the position of Indonesian hard-liners (Salla, 1995, 212). Taking advantage of the centralised nature of Australian foreign policy making, despite his otherwise tenuous grasp on the prime ministership, Whitlam was able to claim that "foreign policy was the one area in which we were free of State and Senate obstructions. As a result, foreign policy was the field in which we were most fully able to implement the [Labor] Party's program" (Salla, 1995, 209).

The Liberal Prime Minister who succeeded Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, a noted opponent of colonialism in Africa, was unwilling to apply the same principles to his own backyard. De facto recognition of East Timor's incorporation into Indonesia as that state's twenty-seventh province occurred in January 1978, a time when Fretilin still held large areas of the East Timorese countryside. The de jure recognition that was given in early 1979 was Australia's acceptance that the Indonesian invasion was legal (Firth, 2005, 185). Australia was the only country in the world to offer this level of acceptance of Indonesia's actions (Haigh, 2001, 11). The Australian ambassador to Indonesia at the time, Richard Woolcott, argued in a confidential memo to the Australian Government that he believed that negotiations over the oil and gas reserves of the Timor Sea "could be more readily negotiated with Indonesia ... than with Portuguese Timor or independent [East Timor]" (Firth, 2005, 186). When justifying this position, Woolcott spoke from the realist play-book, for in his words he was:

... recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about, as even those countries with

ideological bases for their foreign policy, like China and the Soviet Union, have acknowledged (Firth, 2005, 186)

With this, policies begun under Gough Whitlam towards East Timor had achieved complete bipartisan consensus. Negotiations with Indonesia over resources in the so-called Timor Gap, started under a Coalition government, eventually reached their zenith under an ALP government, with the signing of the Timor Gap Treaty in December 1989 (Firth, 2005, 187). Australia's Foreign Minister of the time, Gareth Evans, and his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, "signed the treaty and celebrated with champagne in an aircraft flying over the Timor Sea" (Firth, 2005, 187).

The Dili Massacre and the Impotence of Public Opinion

In November 1991, the same year as the Timor Gap Treaty came into effect, journalists from Yorkshire Television "filmed Indonesian soldiers [in East Timor] shooting people in the back as they fled, trampling over each other in the rush to escape" (Firth, 2005, 187). The footage "demolished the Indonesian claim that all was well in the province and undermined Gareth Evans's efforts to build domestic support for Labor's strongly pro-Indonesian position" (Firth, 2005, 187), and public opinion viewed the Indonesian regime as "dictatorial, repressive and untrustworthy" (Firth, 2005, 187). Australian critics of the ALP's position argued that "East Timor revealed the hypocrisy of Australia's claim to take a consistent foreign policy approach to human rights abuses" (Firth, 2005, 187). Furthermore, others claimed that "ministers and diplomats [were] the instruments by which Australia betrayed the East Timorese people and failed to prevent attempted genocide" (Firth, 2005,

187). Finally, numerous critics argued that “Australia sacrificed the East Timorese for the sake of good relations between Canberra and Jakarta, and for the oil and gas of the Timor Sea” (Firth, 2005, 187-8). For their part, all governments since the 1975 invasion, both Coalition and the ALP, argued that “Australia did all it could for the East Timorese through aid and diplomacy, given the wider diplomatic context which no government could responsibly ignore” (Firth, 2005, 188). It is not surprising therefore, despite barely 15 per cent of the Australian electorate supporting the status quo (McKew, 1999, par. 25), considering the lack of influence of public opinion on foreign policy in general (Risse, 1991, 481), and in Australia specifically (Goot, 2007), that this bipartisan position held sway from 1975 until after the Howard government’s second term had begun in 1998.

John Howard and East Timor

When Howard’s Coalition defeated ALP at the 1996 Federal election, the new government quickly demonstrated that “it did not share Labor’s eagerness for Australia to play a notable role in global organisations such as the UN, especially a security role” (Firth, 2005, 234). Unlike his immediate predecessors, the ALP Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, Howard believed in “emphasising bilateral relations with states of key importance rather than pursuing initiatives in international forums” (Firth, 2005, 234). So whereas the ALP viewed the relationship with Indonesia, for example, as a stepping-stone to greater integration with Asia, the Coalition considered a healthy bipartisan relationship as an end in itself. Furthermore, the Coalition only (officially) supported “Australian involvement in peacekeeping operations where they were seen as ‘relevant to our operational experience and consistent with our security interests and international obligations’” (Firth, 2005, 234).

Finally, the new government argued that Australia had “‘no strategic interests at stake’ in situations such as those that arose in Somalia and Rwanda” (Firth, 2005, 234), countries the ALP had a keen interest in from a humanitarian perspective, a somewhat hypocritical stance considering the blind eye the ALP turned towards East Timor. Howard, too, considered East Timor’s incorporation within Indonesia as an “‘irreversible’ reality” (Manne, 2004, 44) upon coming to power.

However, as Indonesia was engulfed in the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997, violence swept the country and Indonesia’s dictator Suharto was forced to stand aside in favour of his vice-president, B.J. Habibie in 1998, a man with a more open mind than Suharto on the question of East Timor. For its part, the Howard government, under advisement from DFAT, responded to these developments by speaking with high-level East Timorese leaders, in the process beginning to “review its entire East Timor policy in light of the rapid changes taking place” (Firth, 2005, 188), in order to finally cure the longest-running sore in Australian foreign policy. By the end of 1998, the Howard government had succeeded in refashioning Australia’s policy towards East Timor (Firth, 2005, 188). Before this historic change was made public, John Howard, on advice from Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, wrote to B.J. Habibie outlining the Australian government’s seemingly muddled preferences, that:

“The East Timorese should eventually be able to participate in an act of self-determination, after a period of years during which the Indonesian government would have the chance to persuade them to stay as part of the Indonesian republic” (Firth, 2005, 188).

The importance of the “Howard Letter” as it became known, has divided commentators ever since. Anthony Milner argued that the “Howard Letter” had a profound influence on Habibie’s decision to allow a vote on East Timorese independence (2002, 41) whereas Robert Manne argues the exact opposite, that the “Australian proposal [was] rejected rather indignantly by Dr Habibie [and] in January 1999 the letter was leaked to the Jakarta press” (2004, 45). Regardless of its actual influence, the existence of the “Howard Letter” does demonstrate the Howard government’s preference for fostering personal, bilateral relationships with regional leaders at the expense of multilateral. Neither the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) nor the UN was involved at this stage, for Howard was keen to avoid direct involvement of Australian troops on the ground in East Timor without Indonesian approval.

In any case, in late January 1999 Habibie did decide on a “radical policy shift” (Manne, 2004, 45) on the question of East Timor, and events rapidly spiralled out of Australia’s control. The people of East Timor were to be allowed to choose between autonomy within Indonesia, or full independence (Manne, 2004, 45). When the poll took place on 30 August 1999, 21.5 per cent of the East Timorese population voted for autonomy, and 78.5 per cent voted for full independence (Manne, 2004, 45). Violence within East Timor increased dramatically, as the pro-integration militias controlled by Indonesia went on a rampage. Many East Timorese were killed, and “hundreds of thousands forcibly ‘relocated’ [and] Australia was obliged to organise an air evacuation of its own citizens, the UN civilian mission and 1 900 particularly vulnerable East Timorese (Manne, 2004, 45). Clearly, and despite the expectations of the Australian government, military intervention was required (Manne, 2004, 45). On 6

September 1999, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, “formally asked whether Australia would lead an international peace-keeping force” (Manne, 2004, 45). Despite the government’s ambivalence towards the UN, Howard agreed. Habibie was aghast. If Australian troops entered East Timor, he warned, it would be considered a declaration of war (Manne, 2004, 45). At an APEC meeting that was held in New Zealand between 10 and 13 September, United States President Bill Clinton intervened, and while he would not commit American troops to the UN mission, only assistance, he nevertheless “threatened Indonesia with financial punishment if [Habibie] would not agree to a UN peace-keeping force. Habibie caved in.” (Manne, 2004, 45). On 19 September 1999, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), led by Australian Major General Peter Cosgrove, entered East Timor (Manne, 2004, 45).

If Howard’s approach to the East Timor question appears somewhat muddled, as Manne argues, then this is because East Timor was his first serious intervention in foreign policy (Manne, 2004, 44). Prior to East Timor, and as far as foreign policy was concerned, Howard believed that the previous Keating government “had been far too exclusively concerned with Asia” (Manne, 2004, 44), and that there was no need for Australia to choose between what Howard called its “‘history and geography’, that is to say between Asia, on the one hand, and the United States and United Kingdom, on the other” (Manne, 2004, 44). With these beliefs forming a broad template, implementation of foreign policy had been generally left to Alexander Downer. East Timor changed everything. The conventional wisdom of the time was that the ALP’s multilaterally focussed, strongly pro-Asia policies

under Paul Keating were far superior to Howard's. When commenting on Keating's prime ministership, Greg Sheridan stated that:

Keating has undoubtedly pushed Australia further into Asia than any previous Prime Minister. He has led and augmented a trend. But no Prime Minister, no matter how determined could produce single-handedly such a transformation of the national outlook, the national psyche, the national experience [as Keating] (1995, xix)

This type of sentiment was challenged by, among others, Tony Abbott, who considered the whole thing "the Keating fantasy" (1995, 219). In a striking echo of the criticisms the ALP were later to level at Howard, and as further evidence to demonstrate that the centralised Australian foreign policy-making structure confers significant power upon prime ministers willing to use it, Abbott argued that Keating's most notable contribution to foreign policy had been to use Australia's relationship with Asia as a "useful stick with which to belabour his domestic enemies" (1995, 225). Nevertheless, the sentiment Sheridan expressed was a reflection of the conventional wisdom. And yet Howard was able to marshal an impressive coalition for INTERFET that grew to eventually include contributions from countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Perhaps then, Howard's policies were not as muddled as they first seem, and deserve to be recognised as Howard's "finest hour" (Manne, 2004, 46).

Another interpretation for Howard's approach to East Timor is provided by McDougall and Edney, who argue that his approach was one of pragmatism. While Howard did not press for an independent East Timor upon coming to power, the vote on East Timorese independence changed the dynamics of the situation. It was now a crisis, and if Australia acted too rashly, war with Indonesia was a very real possibility, one which President Habibie himself threatened (Manne, 2004, 45). So while the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a poll on 14 September 1999 that showed that "72 per cent of respondents supported the despatch of peacekeeping troops to East Timor, with 34 per cent saying Australia should intervene, even without UN authorisation" (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 215), and while Alexander Downer acknowledged that the government was "'forced to endure vociferous criticism' for ruling out intervention that was not multilateral, UN-sponsored and supported by Indonesia" (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 215), Howard's pragmatism, argues McDougall and Edney, ensured that he:

... developed a policy that was appropriate for Australian national interests as he saw them, while also accommodating the need to demonstrate to the public that the government was acting decisively to uphold East Timor's act of self-determination. ... from this perspective, Howard was able to use the strength of Australian public opinion to advance the course of action he believed appropriate, while at the same time winning domestic political kudos for 'an exercise that appealed to the vast majority of Australian voters (2010, 215-6)

This perspective explains Howard's seemingly muddled approach to East Timor not in terms of inexperience in foreign policy-making, as does Robert Manne, but as part of a deliberate attempt to balance consensus in public opinion with the difficult task of achieving

“Indonesian consent to a UN-authorized intervention” (McDougall and Edney, 2010, 216) in East Timor.

East Timor, the NSC and the Centralisation of Power

The increasing centralisation that has occurred in the area of foreign policy-making was symbolised by the Howard government’s reconstitution of “the NSC when it took office in 1996” (Jennings, 2004, 36). Throughout the East Timor crisis, the NSC met daily “as the decision-making centre of government” (Jennings, 2004, 36). During this time, the NSC gradually became “an experienced crisis management team with a deep knowledge about national security policy” (Jennings, 2004, 37). Furthermore, the NSC has learned, by experience in East Timor, that “to achieve national security objectives, one must combine different instruments of power such as military force, aid and diplomacy, domestic and foreign intelligence, police and other agencies” (Jennings, 2004, 37).

Since East Timor, the NSC has become the “peak political decision-making body in Australian government on security-related policy, strategy and resource” (Tiernan, 2007, 491). Furthermore, it has “a broad ambit, spanning a spectrum from defence and foreign affairs strategy to defence procurement, workforce development and international economic issues” (Tiernan, 2007, 491). It is no wonder then that Howard described the NSC as “the most effective whole of government arrangement with which I’ve been involved as Prime Minister” (Tiernan, 2007, 493). And while department heads and other bureaucrats have always had some influence on the direction of Australian foreign policy, Howard’s

great innovation, argues Tiernan, has been to “consolidate the views of ... disparate players, by bringing them into a single forum” (2007, 497). And many of these players are Howard’s people, for upon winning the 1996 election:

[Howard] sacked a full third of all department heads and replaced them with hand-picked substitutes whose talents seemed to lie more in their loyalty to the new government than in their eagerness to give frank and impartial advice (MacCullum, 2004, 64)

For but one example, Max Moore-Wilton, a man noted for his merciless treatment of dissenters in the ranks, was made head of PM&C “with more power and influence than any other minister – more indeed than anyone but members of Howard’s immediate family” (MacCullum, 2004, 64). Moore-Wilton always believed himself to part of the government, and “showed his contempt for convention by attending Howard’s victory party in 2001” (MacCullum, 2004, 64). So while Australian foreign policy-making has always been centralised, Howard consolidated that trend.

The Marginalisation of the Australian Labor Party

The East Timor intervention caused great friction within the ALP. Similar to the divisions that would later cripple the ALP during the debate over the decision to invade Iraq, Howard was able to successfully marginalise the ALP over East Timor. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating, who in 1993 gave the Indonesian regime \$114 million in military aid (Lehmann,

1999, par. 4), and who entered into a security agreement with Indonesia in 1995, made the following comments soon after the deployment of Australian troops in East Timor:

Howard claims to be battling in the name of principle, not interest. But his policy has its genesis in the lowest interest of all, that's rank domestic opportunism. He thought he'd come at the Australian Labor Party from the Left. He thought he'd tie up the Catholic Church and the East Timor constituency by coming at Labor from that quarter. Howard didn't play the human rights card in Timor, he played the opportunist card. This is basically the reason why he made the move (McKew, 1999, par. 15-20)

Regardless of whether Keating's comments were accurate or not, they were completely out of synch with the mood of the electorate. Barely 15 per cent of the Australian people agreed with them (McKew, 1999, par. 25). And the ALP's then-contemporary leadership compounded Keating's folly by not, in Barrie Cassidy's words, "repudiat[ing] him firmly and unambiguously" (McKew, 1999, par. 26), with Opposition Leader Kim Beazley responding to Keating's claims by saying that:

"[Keating] is his own man. He says his things in his own way. I'm sure when Malcolm Fraser stands up and makes a speech, nobody expects John Howard to sit round there ticking off box by box as it goes through. And I will claim the same privilege" (McKew, 1999, par. 29).

Highlighting the great divisions Howard had exposed within the ALP, former Senator Graham Richardson, who served in the Cabinet under both Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, was far more critical of Keating's stance, stating that:

I don't know about the rest of you, but millions and millions of Australians who watched the television, who saw the slaughter of innocent men, women and children by Indonesian-backed militia. Everyone who saw it wanted Australia to intervene, and anyone with an ounce of compassion, a skerrick of it, wanted it to happen, as well. But not Paul Keating and why? Not because he isn't a man of compassion, not because he doesn't care. But to ever admit that that intervention was necessary is to make an admission that he was far too close to Indonesia, that he was indeed a rank apologist for them (McKew, 1999, par. 31-34)

It is difficult to say if Keating would have responded to the situation in East Timor following the Asian Economic Crisis in the same way as Howard – Graham Richardson certainly did not think that Keating's ego would allow him to. These divisions harmed the Opposition severely, and Howard enjoyed the ascendancy over the ALP in matters of foreign policy right up until he lost power at the 2007 Federal election. And Howard lost that election because of opposition to his workplace relations reforms, not because of any foreign policy initiative.

East Timor and Howard's Australia

Howard successfully achieved credit for Australia's efforts in East Timor. Alexander Downer claimed that "our leadership in East Timor ... demonstrate the seriousness with which we approach peace and security in our region" (2005, 8), a perspective, understandably, more in line with McDougall and Edney's pragmatic explanation for Howard's actions (2010, 216) than Robert Manne's argument that Australia was surprised and ill-prepared for the need to intervene (2004, 45), or Paul Keating's assertion that Howard acted irresponsibly and for purely partisan reasons (Cotton, 2002, 226). Regardless, the Australian-led intervention had wide-ranging consequences. Most immediately, "Australian intervention in East Timor was

seen as a possible harbinger of future interference in Indonesia's internal affairs, especially in connection with West Papua" (Cotton, 2002, 229), and while the Australian government denied this accusation, Colin Powell, who was nominated as the future Secretary of State by US president-elect George W. Bush, made statements in which he "signalled a new scepticism of humanitarian interventions, and indicated that more reliance would be placed on allies, specifically referring to Australia's decision to 'take the lead' regarding Indonesia" (Cotton, 2002, 229). These comments did not go down well with Indonesia.

However, more far-reaching consequences than the short-term difficulties with Indonesia were soon made apparent.¹ On 21 September 1999, the day after INTERFET began its intervention; Howard spoke to Parliament and outlined just what East Timor meant for the future direction of Australian foreign policy (Cotton, 2002, 230). Firstly, argued Howard:

Foreign policy needs to be based on a clear sense of 'national interest' and 'values'. The national interest requires Australia to pursue relationships on the basis of mutual interest and to recognise, 'where they exist, differences in values and political systems' (Cotton, 2002, 230).

Secondly, Howard argued that Australia occupied:

¹ While relations with Indonesia were damaged by the East Timor intervention, by 2005 these had improved markedly (Wesley, 2007, 61), thanks largely to Australia's generous aid package to Indonesia following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, and Howard's strong personal relationship with new Indonesian President Yudhoyono (Ravenhill, 2007, 211). These factors reinforced Howard's faith in cultivating close bilateral relationships.

A unique intersection – a Western nation next to Asia with strong links to the United States and Europe – and therefore commands ‘unique assets’: We have stopped worrying about whether we are Asian, in Asia, enmeshed in Asia or part of a mythical East Asian hemisphere. We have got on with the job of being ourselves in the region. In turn, the region has recognised that we are an asset and have a constructive role to play in it (Cotton, 2002, 230-31)

The assets listed by Howard included the “ANZUS and Five Power security alliances, as well as bilateral defence cooperation programs” (Cotton, 2002, 231). The alliance with the United States was given special prominence (Cotton, 2002, 231). Furthermore, Howard stressed that because “the prevailing security climate was ‘uncertain’, [Australia’s defence resources] were ... insufficient, and additional expenditure was thus foreshadowed” (Cotton, 2002, 231). Finally, Howard argued that “the values of the Australian community” (Cotton, 2002, 231) needs to be taken into account when formulating foreign policy. Referring to the East Timor intervention, Howard argued that this means that “Australia should not seek ‘a good relationship with Indonesia at all costs or at the expense of doing the right thing according to our own values’” (Cotton, 2002, 231).

While this promotion of values idea is not part of orthodox realist thought (McCraw, 2008, 477), and closer to constructivist thought, everything else Howard articulated in what became known as the Howard Doctrine, an emphasis on the national interest, bilateralism and defence and security operations in concert with close allies, was.

Howard, argue some commentators, damaged Australia's perception in the region when attempting to explain the Howard Doctrine to the Australian people during an interview on 28 September 1999, when he:

... trumpeted the arrival of a new Howard Doctrine, in which Australia would cast aside the unhealthy 'special relationship' with Indonesia cultivated by Paul Keating and play instead, in South-East Asia, the role of military deputy (or deputy sheriff as the journalist put it) to the United States (Manne, 2004, 46).

Others (including the Howard government) argue that the journalist in question misinterpreted Howard's comments. In any case, the Howard Doctrine would prove highly influential for Australian foreign policy-making after the declaration of a global "War on Terror" in 2001.

And Howard, it seems, was ready. Just before the start of 2001, on the 6 December 2000, he announced the release of a new Defence White Paper, "Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force" (White, 2007, 173). This White Paper "committed [the] government to a new and more expansive conception of Australia's strategic interests and military objectives and to substantial and sustained increases in defence funding" (White, 2007, 173). While these decisions were "in part a prudent policy response to long-term strategic and fiscal trends stretching back a decade or more" (White, 2007, 173), Hugh White argues that "the tone and style as well as the content of the White Paper clearly showed that, for Howard, security was also at the centre of the government's political agenda" (2007, 173). And this is despite that, according to White, "in January 2001 the prospect of a direct military attack on Australia seemed as remote as any time in recent decades" (2007, 173). However, White

identifies a series of international events that occurred since Howard assumed office that “sensitised the government and the electorate to new and significant security issues in Australia’s neighbourhood and beyond” (2007, 174). These included the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, which highlighted the possibility of war between the United States and China, the Sandline crisis in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1997, which raised the possibility of Australian military intervention in the region before the East Timor crisis erupted in 1999 (White, 2007, 174). In 2000, ADF forces were deployed to the Solomon Islands, and helped secure the Sydney Olympic Games against the threat of terrorism (White, 2007, 174). While an invasion of Australia by a foreign power was highly improbable at this time, “no one in Australia’s political class would have contested the proposition that defence and security were among the key policy and political issues of the time” (White, 2007, 174), and the War on Terror, in which the Iraq campaign proved the most controversial element, provided the veracity of this proposition.

Iraq

If we accept Robert Manne’s argument that East Timor was the story of a domestically minded Prime Minister coming to grips with foreign affairs for the first time, then Iraq shows just how adept John Howard had become at dealing with foreign affairs. The following section will demonstrate how easily Howard was able to structure Australia’s approach to the “War on Terror” to align with the so-called Howard Doctrine as it was articulated to Parliament as Australian troops entered East Timor. This objective was achieved despite widespread resistance that manifested itself within Australia as Howard began to commit Australian troops to the Iraq campaign.

Historical Background

Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded its tiny neighbour Kuwait in 1990, and:

For the first time since World War II the Soviet Union and the USA stood together on a major international security issue. They voted together in the Security Council for economic sanctions against Iraq and later for military action authorised by the UN (Firth, 2005, 216).

The Australian government at the time, led by ALP Prime Minister Bob Hawke, agreed with the beliefs of the Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, who considered the resulting Gulf War, in which the overwhelming firepower of the American-led forces crushed the Iraqi military and drove them out of Kuwait in less than two months, "a watershed between past and future" (Firth, 2005, 216). It would be a future, they believed, in which global security would be based on respect for international law, collective security and an effective UN" (Firth, 2005, 216). Australia therefore became involved in the Gulf War in the belief that it would "hasten the arrival of what American president George Bush Senior called the 'New World Order', one in which the UN would function as originally intended" (Firth, 2005, 216).

Soon after the terrorist attacks that occurred in New York and Washington, D.C on 11 September 2001, and the subsequent declaration by US President George W. Bush of a global "War on Terror", the US led a UN-sponsored international invasion of Afghanistan, a country whose ruling Taliban government provided safe haven for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network, who had claimed responsibility for the attacks. Therefore, the

“principle of obtaining UN authority for ... war had been maintained, and international law had been upheld” (Firth, 2005, 216).

However, hawks in the Bush administration quickly put Iraq on the agenda. It is unknown when exactly the decision was made to invade Iraq. Some say Bush was ready to invade as early as September 2001, while others claim that the decision was made sometime in 2002 (Firth, 2005, 218). For his part, Bush “depicted himself as driven unwillingly to war in 2003 only after exhausting all avenues for peace” (Firth 2005, 218). From the outset, however, it was clear that there was no link between secular dictator Saddam Hussein and the fundamentalist Muslims of bin Laden’s terrorist network (Firth, 2005, 218). In light of this, the American, British and Australian governments stressed that Saddam’s possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and unwillingness to comply with the demands of UN weapons inspectors made the Iraqi regime a threat to world peace not to be tolerated in a post-9/11 world (Firth, 2005, 218). This was the initial justification for war. Howard even stated that “If Iraq had genuinely disarmed, I couldn’t justify on its own a military invasion of Iraq to change the regime. I’ve never advocated that” (Manne, 2004, 49).

No WMDs were ever found in Iraq (Manne, 2004, 49). So while Howard farewelled the troops on HMAS Kanimbla by saying that “I believe it is right for the international community to try and disarm Iraq” (Manne, 2004, 49), he welcomed them home after the fall of Baghdad by saying that “You were sent in a just cause to liberate an oppressed people” (Manne, 2004, 49). Later, Howard offered a new justification for war, arguing that

“The American-led victory over Saddam Hussein has opened up an opportunity to achieve a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians” (Manne, 2004, 49). Regardless of the justifications used by Howard, “UN approval [was] not forthcoming, and the world’s [only] superpower proceeded to invade anyway [and so] international law and the international community [were] weakened” (Firth, 2005, 218).

Public Opinion during the Countdown to Invasion

If the findings of Thomas Risse hold any weight, then Howard’s shifting goal posts regarding the reasons for war with Iraq should not have had any impact on the government’s electoral success, because, according to Risse, of the “low salience, or significance, of foreign and security policy issues as compared with economic policies” (Risse, 1991, 481) amongst the general public. Murray Goot analysed public opinion in the months preceding the 2003 American invasion of Iraq. In August 2002, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer “warned that the world could no longer afford to appease Iraq” (Goot, 2007, 268), and Prime Minister John Howard “indicated that if Australia were to receive a request to help in a US-led attack it would consider it on its merits” (Goot, 2007, 268). Opinion polls on the topic surfaced not long after, and opposition to Australian participation was strong. In August 2002, a McNair poll conducted in Victoria showed that “less than a third (29 per cent) of the respondents favoured ‘sending Australian troops to take part in an attack on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq’” (Goot, 2007, 269). Interviews conducted by Newspoll the following month showed that 85 per cent of respondents argued that the Prime Minister “must detail in advance to the Australian people the case and evidence to warrant Australia’s involvement in any military campaign being taken against Iraq” (Goot, 2007, 269). According to the polls,

Howard appeared to have failed. When in February 2003 Howard announced that “Australia has now sent some troops to the gulf region in preparation for a possible war against Iraq” (Goot, 2007, 269), Newspoll reported that most (60 per cent) of respondents were “against the sending of Australian troops at this stage” (Goot, 2007, 269).

Before the outbreak of hostilities in March 2003, no major poll showed majority support for Australian forces contributing to a US-led attack on Iraq, on average, “little more than a third (36 per cent) supported Australian involvement” (Goot, 2007, 269). From Foreign Minister Downer’s original comments in August 2002 until January 2003, Newspoll reported that those who “strongly opposed” Australian involvement outnumbered those who “strongly supported” Australian involvement “two to one, 18:35” (Goot, 2007, 269). Morgan reported similar findings between September and December 2002, 16:40 (Goot, 2007, 269). Furthermore:

500 000 marched on 16 February [2003] in anti-war demonstrations around the country, with Newspoll reporting that two-thirds (65 per cent) of its respondents supported the idea that ‘governments around the world’ should take the anti-war demonstrations ‘into account’ when ‘deciding what action to take against Iraq’” (Goot, 2007, 271)

The following graph illustrates the support in Australia of military action against Iraq. Support for an Australian contribution to the US-led war reached a majority only when war finally broke out in March 2003, when Australian troops were committed by Howard to the conflict:

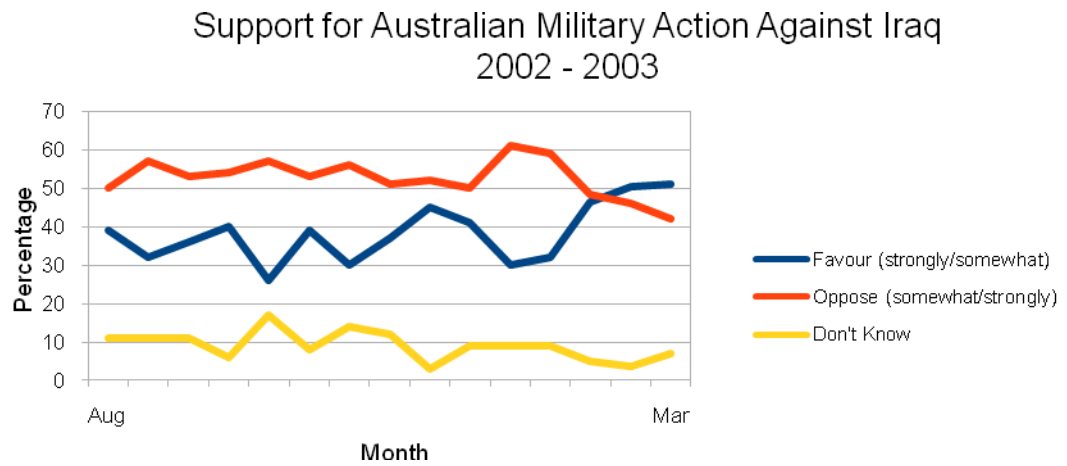


Figure 2: Based on data in Goot (2007, 270)

This evidence, that the Australian government deployed Australian troops to an invasion of Iraq despite strong public opposition, and that support for the war increased dramatically once this step was taken (eventually peaking to almost 60 per cent by April 2003 (Goot, 2007, 271)) demonstrates once again the impotence of public opinion in Australian foreign policy-making: a crucial foreign policy decision was made in the absence of mass public consensus.

The Marginalisation of the Australian Labor Party

In a striking contrast to the situation in Australia, during the Iraq debate in the British House of Commons on 18 March 2003:

139 members of the governing party crossed the floor, the Leader of the House, Robin Cook, having resigned over this issue the previous day. Cook, his former colleague Clare Short, and others then divulged some details of the character of the deliberations that had led to the Iraq invasion (Cotton and Ravenhill, 2007, 5)

In contrast, the Coalition in Australia rallied behind Howard to the extent that not one member crossed the floor during the third (and final) debate on Iraq before war broke out, unlike their equivalents in both Britain, and the United States (Verrier, 2007, 318). The ALP opposition meanwhile, “struggled with the ideological range of views within its ranks from the pacifists opposed to war at any price through the pragmatists who recognised the importance of the US alliance and to those not opposed to war per se” (Verrier, 2007, 320). Such divisions paralysed the ALP during the majority of Howard’s Prime Ministership, and were a contributing factor in the ALP changing leaders in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2006.

As a result of these factors, and in the case of the Iraq War, “Howard was able to claim a constitutional mandate for making war a matter of executive decision only requiring *ex post facto* parliamentary debate” (McDonald and Merefield, 2010, 194). Howard owes Australian history for this ability:

Under the British monarchy from which Australia’s system of government ultimately derives, the Crown claimed a prerogative (or exclusive privilege) to deal with other states on behalf of the nation and to enter into treaties with them. This tradition, which gives governments extraordinary freedom of action in foreign and defence policy, survives in modern Australia (Firth, 2005, 96-7)

Howard was far from the only Australian Prime Minister to take advantage of this element of the Australian foreign policy-making process. Bob Hawke, when joining the UN-authorized 1991 Gulf War stated that the “decision to commit Australian forces to combat is of course one that constitutionally is the prerogative of the Executive” (Firth, 2005, 97). However, rather than sticking to tradition, like Hawke did, and adhere “to the Charter of the United Nations, which requires member countries to seek UN Security Council approval before engaging in hostilities” (McKeown, 2010, par. 9), Howard, along with Bush and Blair, invaded Iraq pre-emptively and unilaterally.

Iraq and Howard’s Australia

Robert Manne identifies several reasons as to why Australia’s involvement in Iraq was possible. Firstly, he notes the “general quiescence of the Australian media, and the continuing pro-war position of the extremely influential Murdoch press” (2004, 49). A related issue was the “government’s policy of intimidating the ABC, mounted for the occasion by the Minister for Communications, Senator Richard Alston” (Manne, 2004, 49). One early example of this was Howard’s choice for the Chairman of the ABC Board, Donald McDonald, who “officiated at a Howard fund-raiser in 1998” (MacCallum, 2004, 64). Secondly, Manne argues that “the massive failures of intelligence were not seen as an Australian responsibility but attributed to the secret services of Australia’s great and powerful friends” (Manne, 2004, 49-50). However, the most important factor identified by Manne was the “unchallenged mastery Howard had maintained over the Labor Opposition since he had solved the riddle of Australian politics with his conservative populist solution, in the period between *Tampa* and the election of 10 November 2001” (2004, 50).

This conservative populism manifested itself in many ways after that election victory.

Robert Manne argues that it was only then, as his third term began, that Howard had finally succeeded in not only eliminating Paul Keating's vision of Australia, but had replaced it with one of his own: "it was of an Australia whose fundamental values were forged on a series of battlefields, stretching from Gallipoli to Baghdad" (Manne, 2004, 50). Furthermore:

John Howard was the first Australian Prime Minister who personally farewelled troops and then welcomed them home, on every possible occasion. He was the first Prime Minister to take the royal military salute, a function previously belonging to the Governor-General, the commander-in-chief (Manne, 2004, 50)

Giving credit where credit is due, however, Manne does concede that "when on 12 October 2002, eighty-eight Australians were killed in a heinous terrorist attack, even Howard's greatest detractors could not deny that he responded to the sacrifice of these young lives with passion and intensity" (2004, 50). Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine a Prime Minister reacting differently to Howard after such an event, and the terrorist attack did give Howard ammunition to defend his emphasis on defence and security.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that a purely realist understanding of foreign policy is insufficient to explain the complexities of international relations. While realists argue that domestic factors are less relevant to the formulation of a state's foreign policy than the constraints on state behaviour imposed by the structure of the international system, liberals

argue that the inter-societal interactions within states result in a “clash of interests, bargaining, and need for compromise” (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993, 229), and that these interactions within a state help explain its interactions with other states. An acknowledgement of these domestic factors formed the nucleus of this thesis. In the Australian case under Howard, some domestic factors, such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the National Security Committee, have proven highly influential while others, such as public opinion, have proven far less so. Australian Prime Ministers have always had wide-ranging freedom to act as they see fit in the field of foreign affairs. They can, for example, declare war and commit troops to overseas operations without referring to Parliament. However, the consolidation of power in the hands of the few accelerated under the prime ministership of John Howard, and this is a process that continued under Howard’s successor, the ALP’s Kevin Rudd.

The intervention in East Timor and the decision to contribute to the US-led invasion of Iraq as part of President George W. Bush’s “Coalition of the Willing” are two examples, at opposite ends of the Howard prime ministership, that demonstrate how Howard gradually built on existing foreign policy-making structures to shape Australia’s foreign policy in his own image. In the case of East Timor, Howard overturned decades of bipartisan consensus on the question of East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia, and as a result Australia led a highly successful UN-authorized peace keeping mission that marshalled an impressive coalition of regional allies, which even included a contribution from Malaysia, whose Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohammad, was a persistent critic of Australia. In the general feeling of triumphalism that followed, Howard made a speech to parliament during which

he outlined his plans to implement his (generally) realist agenda in foreign policy. These were described by Howard in terms of five home truths. Firstly, foreign policy would be “based on a clear sense of ‘national interest’ and ‘values’” (Cotton, 2002, 230). Secondly, Howard argued that Australia is able to play an important role in the region, emphasising “the ANZUS and Five Power security alliances, as well as bilateral defence cooperation programs” (Cotton, 2002, 231). Thirdly, the connection with the US was emphasised in addition to the formal ANZUS alliance, foreshadowing a deepening of that bilateral relationship (Cotton, 2002, 231). Fourthly, Howard argued that because of an insecure Asia-Pacific region, increased defence expenditure was required (Cotton, 2002, 231). Finally, Howard argued that Australian foreign policy makers had to take into account “the values of the Australian community” (Cotton, 2002, 231).

After East Timor, Howard proudly proclaimed that he did not believe that Australia “had stood taller and stronger in the chanceries of the world than it does at the present time” (Firth, 2005, 235). It was based on the East Timor experience, argues Stewart Firth, that the government “predicted that coalitions of the willing, with UN endorsement, would be centrally important to maintaining global security in the future” (2005, 235), and this prediction appeared to come true after Australia contributed to the US-led, UN-authorized invasion of Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. However, as the case for the invasion of Iraq was being made, it quickly became clear that no UN authorisation would be forthcoming:

Forced to choose between the UN and the USA, Australia chose the USA. That could hardly have surprised anyone familiar with the Howard government's position, which was that, in cases where the UN was not able to respond to a security crisis, Australia would join coalitions in accordance with its national security and global interests. The war on Iraq placed Australia where the Howard government wanted it to be: with the USA under any circumstances, but with the UN only if that could be arranged (Firth, 2005, 235)

Following East Timor, Howard sought to reshape Australian foreign policy in his own image, and by the time Australian troops entered Iraq some 30 hours before President Bush's ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq expired (Kevin, 2004, 332), was largely successful. Realism, with its emphasis on the constraints on state behaviour imposed by the structure of the international system, leaves very little space for individual leaders to influence the direction of a state's foreign policy. The examples used throughout this thesis, which demonstrate Howard's dominance of Australian foreign policy-making, also shows that realism provides an insufficient explanation for the formulation of a state's foreign policy, and that greater attention has to be placed on understanding the domestic dynamics shaping foreign policy-making.

Some Thoughts for the Future

The need for future research is required because the analysis provided in this thesis is necessarily incomplete in understanding the domestic dynamics of Australian foreign policy-making. A useful future research agenda would be comparative both across countries and between different prime ministers. This was not possible here in depth for space considerations. For an example of one possible research avenue, at the time of writing, the

Australian parliament, led by the minority ALP government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard, is undertaking a broad review of Australia's involvement in the war in Afghanistan, a war that is now into its ninth year. During the debate, Adam Bandt, a Greens MP whose support Gillard needs to remain in power, announced plans to introduce a private member's bill "to curtail the power of Julia Gillard to send troops overseas and require both the House and the Senate to approve any troop deployment" (Massola, 2010, par. 2), a situation that exists in countries such as Germany, Spain, Denmark, South Korea and Turkey (Massola, 2010, par. 4). This was immediately denounced by Julia Gillard and the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, ensuring bipartisan consensus and the continuation of the status quo in which the Prime Minister of the day does not need to consult Parliament before committing troops overseas (Massola, par. 5, 28). Stewart Firth offers an explanation as to why this state of affairs is tolerated in Australia:

Foreign policy possesses a mystique which arises from [the] historic association of the state with defending national territory, waging war, spying on enemies and raising armed forces. People tend to treat with respect and even awe the area of government activity dedicated to preserving and protecting the state itself. Governments depend on the mystique when they say foreign policy decisions serve the 'national interest', when they censor parliamentary reports, and when they act without reference to the customary institutions of accountability such as Cabinet and parliament. As much as anything else, this mystique explains why the making of Australian foreign policy remains secretive, centralised and insulated from democratic pressures (2005, 97)

Australian foreign policy-making has long been "secretive, centralised and insulated from democratic pressures" (Firth, 2005, 97) and this was a feature of the foreign policy-making process that increased under the prime ministership of John Howard, and if the response to

Adam Bandt's proposal from both the ALP and the Coalition means anything, it will not be decreasing any time soon. The possible effects of Bandt's proposal, as well as further reform and decentralisation of the Australian foreign policy-making process, are areas of research well worth looking into.

Glossary

ADF	Australian Defence Force	IR	International Relations
AES	Australian Election Study	LNP	Liberal-National Party Coalition
AFP	Australian Federal Police	NSC	National Security Committee
ALP	Australian Labor Party	ONA	Office of National Assessments
ANU	Australian National University	PM& C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty	PNG	Papua New Guinea
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	PSF	French Socialist party
ASIO	Australian Secret Intelligence Organisation	RPR	Gaullist Party
ASIS	Australian Secret Intelligence Service	SAS	Special Air Service
CDU	Christian Democratic Union	SPD	German Social Democrats
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services	UK	United Kingdom
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor	UN	United Nations
		US(A)	United States of America
		WMD	Weapon(s) of Mass Destruction
		WTO	World Trade Organisation

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