

# A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

THE EFFECT OF THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE ON THE 1966  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

Nell P.H. Duly

A thesis submitted in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of B.A. (Hons) in History

University of Sydney

November 2011

## ABSTRACT

The 1966 Australian Federal Election is unique in Australian history, in that it is the only Federal Election where issues of domestic policy were largely ignored in favour of debate over foreign policy. This thesis explores the issue which dominated 1966, the American Alliance. The Alliance was able to affect debate on the Australian use of conscripts in the Vietnam War as well as creating considerable friction in the Australian Labor Party. In addition the American Alliance created an environment which saw the first American President visit Australia, a visit and relationship which was exploited by both sides of politics.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks must go to Dr James Curran, whose supervision and patience has enabled this thesis to be written. To the Androvian's, past and present, with particular mention to The Gentleman's Club, whose help, encouragement, good humour, and friendship has gotten me not only through my thesis year but my whole degree, Muver whose encouragement did the same, and of course my friends who have stood by me despite my frequent disappearances into the 'study cave'.

Lastly I would like to recognize and thank both Anne Hanley for her endless support and overwhelming encouragement and Bec O'Brien who was there all year with 'wise' comments and welcome humour but stepped up at the last minute to get me over the line.

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## I INTRODUCTION

‘I like to come out and look my Prime Ministers over.’<sup>1</sup>

During his October 1966 Australian visit American President Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) made a comment to his Australian counterpart, Prime Minister Harold Holt, which sounded awfully familiar. This statement of ‘owning’ a Prime Minister seemed as though it would be better suited to have come from the monarch of the UK. Naturally LBJ’s comment was meant to be taken with a grain of salt, as some kind joke. But his ‘joke’ was very telling; suggesting that in 1966 America had gained enough influence over Australia to be able to ‘claim’ the country in one way or another. What is more interesting is that this comment came only a month before the Australian Federal Election of 1966, which raises the question, was an American President able to influence the outcome of an Australian election? Past scholarship has certainly been devoted to exploring the effect LBJ’s visit had on the election outcome, historians such as Paul Williams, Louise Overacker and Paul Ham have all explored the concept. But what has not been explored is the overall effect of the American Alliance on the 1966 Australian Federal Election. This is certainly an important concept which must be examined, as LBJ’s visit was a symptom of the Australia-American relationship, not a cause. Even the most comprehensive examination of Australian diplomacy during the late 1960s, Peter Edwards *A Nation at War* (the Australian War Memorial’s officially sanctioned history of Australian involvement in Indochina) fails to examine the effects of the American Alliance on the 1966 election in depth.

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<sup>1</sup> Pemberton, Gregory. *All The Way, Australia’s road to Vietnam* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1987), p.335.

This thesis examines the significant effects of the American Alliance upon the Australian Federal Election of 1966, the first election fought predominantly on issues of foreign rather than domestic policy.<sup>2</sup> Contested against the background of growing Australian military commitments in Indochina, 1966 focused on the twin issues of the Vietnam War and conscription, which were both linked to the Australian relationship with America under the Australian, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (hereby ANZUS).<sup>3</sup> With this alliance came, according to the Australian Government lead by the Liberal Country Party coalition (LCP), a new set of responsibilities in regards to defensive policy. Consequently the Australian Government presented its relationship with America as the primary reason for increasing Australia's military presence in Vietnam – an increase which, according to Prime Minister Harold Holt, could only be facilitated through conscription. This reasoning and the LCP growing dependence on America for its foreign policy stance were serious points of contention for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and particularly for its leader Arthur Calwell.

The American Alliance impacted upon the 1966 Election in three major ways. Firstly the Alliance appeared heavily during the conscription debate. Chapter two of this thesis will deal with this debate, and examine how the LCP used the American Alliance to promote conscription. The LCP's argument rested on idea that backing America's (and to a lesser extent South Vietnam) military commitment in Vietnam only if adequate numbers of Australians volunteered for the armed forces, would reflect poorly on Australia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Any subsequent references to the 1966 election refer to the Australian Federal Election of 1966.

<sup>3</sup>As this thesis will be exploring the effect of the American component of ANZUS on the 1966 election it should be noted that any references to the 'American Alliance' are referring to the ANZUS treaty. The phrase American Alliance is being used to avoid confusion, as unless otherwise stated the thesis is dealing exclusively with the American aspect of ANZUS.

<sup>4</sup> McEwen, John. 16 November 1966, *Vietnam*, A.B.C Radio: National, p.2.

The ALP's objection to conscription was based on their firm belief that the conflict occurring in Vietnam was not a case of one nation invading another but an instance of civil war. Calwell had first announced the ALP stance on Vietnam in 1965, declaring that:

'The war in South Vietnam is a civil war, aided and abetted by the North Vietnamese Government, but neither created nor principally maintained by it. To call it simply "foreign aggression" as the Prime Minister does, and as his colleagues do, is to misrepresent the facts and, thereby, confuse the issue with which we must ultimately come to terms.'<sup>5</sup>

Sending conscripted troops to die in a foreign civil war was in the eyes of Calwell grossly immoral. Consequently the ALP's anti conscription push during the 1966 election was based around this idea. The need to keep the American Alliance strong in order to protect Australia was used by the LCP to circumnavigate the ALP's anti-conscription position.

The second appearance of the American Alliance during the 1966 Election, and the focus of the third chapter of this thesis, was in the infighting of the ALP. During the election period Calwell and his deputy Gough Whitlam (as well as various other ALP members) were unable to maintain unity over the issue of Australian involvement in Vietnam. Calwell maintained that all Australian troops would be brought home if the ALP won the election, whilst Whitlam informed voters that regulars (non-conscripted members of the armed forces) would remain in South Vietnam.<sup>6</sup> The LCP was able to convince voters that the inability of the ALP to maintain Party unity demonstrated that they would struggle to maintain the strength of Australia's alliances.

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<sup>5</sup> Calwell, Arthur. Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 May 1965, p.1103.

<sup>6</sup> The Liberal Party of Australia, 'Mr. K.S. Beazley, the Liberals and the voters would like to know...' *The Queensland Liberal*, September 1966.

The third way in which the American Alliance affected the 1966 Election was during the official campaign period. Due to its proximity to the election the LBJ visit is considered to be part of the campaign period in this thesis. Chapter four will be examining how the visit itself is a clear example of the American Alliance impacting upon the 1966 election, but further to this the chapter will be exploring how several political Party's (including the LCP) used the American Alliance in their election materials. The LBJ visit gave a considerable lift to the already popular policies of the LCP, and was a clear representation of the goodwill between the two nations during 1966. The potential effect of the visit had been debated since it was announced by Holt, with politicians such as Fred Daly commenting that:

‘The visit was perfectly timed – almost on the eve of the elections. It was the first time in Australia that such a personality has been used so unscrupulously – and allowed himself to be – for political purposes. Holt was as good as elected the day LBJ departed.’<sup>7</sup>

The ALP's ‘other’ opposition, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) provides a very clear example of how the ALP's attitude to the Vietnam War and the American Alliance was utilized in election material, with one pamphlet informing voters that:

‘The ALP attacks our friends, the Americans, and defends our enemies.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Daly, Fred. *From Curtin to Kerr* (Melbourne: Sun Books Pty Ltd, 1977), p.179.

<sup>8</sup> The Democratic Labor Party. *Think Carefully*, election pamphlet (Potts Point: Braddon Printing Pty Ltd, 1966).



Statements such as this were exceedingly common during the 1966 election, and they demonstrate how the American Alliance was able to influence the election.

The Australian Federal Election of 1966 is unique in Australian history as it was fought almost exclusively on matters of foreign policy. And yet all pieces of scholarship on the election have focused solely on the matters of conscription for Vietnam, or the LBJ visit rather than examining how both of these were symptoms of the American Alliance impacting upon Australian policy decisions. This thesis will seek to close this gap in scholarship, and prove that the American Alliance played a significant role on the LCP landslide victory on the twenty-sixth of November 1966.

## II A BACKGROUND TO ANZUS AND THE ELECTION

The American Alliance is better known by its full name, the Australian, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS). Signed in 1951, the treaty was the result of years of petitioning for a Pacific Pact by Australia, and whilst it was initially given very little public attention it would be heralded as the main pillar of Australian foreign and defensive policy from the late 1950s onwards.<sup>9</sup> At its signing ANZUS was considered to be instrumental in developing Australian ties with the new democratic power of the post Second World War world, as well as a strong defence against the other power of the post war world, communism. However it took a considerable amount of time for the Australian – American relationship to be formalised into ANZUS despite several instances of defence cooperation between the two nations.

The Australian – American relationship significantly predates the signing of ANZUS, indeed there have been times when the relationship between the two nations was so strong that it is surprising that a treaty was not signed sooner. As early as 1907 the Australian Government showed interest in some form of a relationship with America, with the then Prime Minister Alfred Deakin encouraging his American counterpart Theodore Roosevelt to include Australia in the tour of the Great White Fleet (the battle fleet of the United States Navy). Roosevelt agreed that Australia being included in the Fleet's itinerary would be worthwhile and during late August and early September of 1908 the Fleet docked in Sydney, Melbourne, and Albany.<sup>10</sup> This visit by the American fleet was a resounding success and a signal to many Australians that despite their increasing sense of cultural isolation in their predominantly

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<sup>9</sup> Lowe, David. *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle' Australia's Cold War 1948-1954* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1999), p.77.

<sup>10</sup> Churchward, Lloyd Gordon. *Australia & America 1788-1972: An Alternative History* (Sydney: Alternative Publishing Cooperative Ltd, 1979), p.126.

Asian region there was a strong fellow minded power other than Britain able to flex its military muscle (Britain had coincidentally recently signed a treaty with Japan, a move many Australians found disturbing).<sup>11</sup> Several works of music and poetry were written during the visit which expressed the views of many ordinary Australians, one such song, entitled *Big Brother*, commented on the ‘sameness’ of the two nations cultural backgrounds and effectively called the two nations to stand together in a demonstration of race patriotism.<sup>12</sup> However no alliance ever came out of the Great White Fleet’s visit, historians such as Neville Meaney have correctly argued that this was because the Fleet tour was the result of the Australian Government seeking to force Britain into a more pro-active role in Pacific defence rather than seeking some form of alliance with America.<sup>13</sup>

The concept of an Australian-American relationship would again become a prominent issue during the Second World War when Prime Minister John Curtin, faced with Japanese entry into the conflict, and with the majority of the Australian defence force posted in Europe, announced on the eve of 1942 that ‘Australia looks to America, without any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom’.<sup>14</sup> At the time the statement caused considerable controversy, despite the likelihood of Japanese invasion and Britain indicating it would be unable to aid in Australian defence. The LCP feeling that the ALP was disloyal to Britain was only confirmed by the statement. The controversy Curtin caused was however quickly forgotten when the War in the Pacific became particularly heavy and American involvement was the only saving grace for Australians facing national defence without the aid of Britain. The placing of Australian troops under the direction of American General MacArthur certainly demonstrated the importance the Australian government placed on

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<sup>11</sup> Meaney, Neville, *The Search for Security in the Pacific 1901-1914 : A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1901-1923* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009), p.168.

<sup>12</sup> Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific 1901-1914*, p.169.

<sup>13</sup> Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific 1901-1914*, p.172.

<sup>14</sup> Curtin, John. 27 December 1941, *The Task Ahead*, *Herald* (Melbourne).

American defence capabilities.<sup>15</sup> However the relationship between Australia and America was still not formalised despite the close defence arrangements of the War.

The desire for a solidified Australian-American relationship would not be realised until the Menzies government came to office in 1949 and the LCP's Minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender began to actively seek a formalised alliance. Much to their chagrin, Britain was excluded, as were several other nations within the Pacific who felt that a Pacific Pact should include considerably more Pacific members. Spender's conviction that the United Nations would be unable to guarantee world security strengthened his belief that America must become Australia's greatest and most powerful friend.<sup>16</sup> According to several historians, including David Lowe, Menzies, in the face of the Cold War, was preparing for the outbreak of another hot war and so gave Spender considerable support. The conflict in Korea only encouraged Menzies suspicions, and in his drive for alliance building it took very little to convince Australia to become involved in the Korean War.<sup>17</sup> In addition to desiring a powerful ally Peter Edwards gives us valuable insight into the secondary reason Australia desired ANZUS. During both of the World Wars Australia had largely been ignored, or simply uninvited to major strategic conferences.<sup>18</sup> This snub had left several Australian Prime and External Affairs Ministers with damaged egos and confusion as to what exactly Australian sacrifices had brought at the world table. ANZUS was for Spender an attempt to gain Australia global influence. In addition to Australia desiring a new powerful ally, America was desperate for an arrangement through which Japan would be given a 'soft peace'. Despite having decimated Japan at the conclusion of the Second World War America was keen to rebuild Japan into a democratic nation modelled on America, and to place

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<sup>15</sup> Fitzsimons, Peter. *Kokoda* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2004), p.106.

<sup>16</sup> Forbes, Cameron. *The Korean War, Australia in the Giants' Playground* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, p.22).

<sup>17</sup> Forbes, *The Korean War*, p.22.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, Peter. *Permanent Friends?* (Double Bay: Longueville Media, 2005), p.16.

military instillations closer to communist forces.<sup>19</sup> Australia was against the American plans for Japan, fearing possible Japanese rearmament. However in return for Australian involvement in Korea, and agreement for a 'soft peace' with Japan America granted Australia the ANZUS treaty.

Neither Australia nor America truly got what they desired out of the treaty, Australia was not guaranteed any firm protection or influence and the Alliance was just another for America in the Cold War. Historian Paul Ham goes as far as to call the treaty (particularly for Australia) a 'very frayed safety net' with the wording of the treaty so vague that neither nation would actually be required to aid another in a full military capacity.<sup>20</sup> And yet as previously stated it became the 'pillar' of Australian security. At no time was this more evident than during the 1966 federal election when the issue of Vietnam and Australia's commitments to America under the Alliance became particularly prominent. What follows is an exploration of the major texts which will be used to support the argument that the American Alliance affected the outcome of the 1966 election on several levels.

The conscription debate was a central issue of the 1966 election, with the LCP advocating its scheme of national service as the only option for a rapid build-up of Australia's defence capabilities. The ALP argued that rather than allowing for an increase in national defence, conscription allowed the Australian government to call up those who were opposed to (and had previously been exempt from fighting in a) war. Edwards' study of Australian post World War Two involvement in South-East Asian conflicts provides an important background to understanding the controversy surrounding conscription. Of particular interest

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<sup>19</sup> Guthrie-Shimizu, Sayuri. 'Japan, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945–1960', Eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume 1: Origins*, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.247-248.

<sup>20</sup> Ham, *Vietnam, The Australian War*, p.90.

to this thesis as a whole is his work *Crisis and Commitments* as within this text Edwards provides a thorough examination of incidents which created the situation in 1966 in which America was able to exert influence on Australian politics. In particular Edwards examines the Malayan Emergency, the introduction of national service, and the beginnings of the conflict in Vietnam. This background information is important as the issues of the 1966 election were not completely new developments. Edwards's most important point in *Crisis and Commitments* is his linking of the initial Australian decision to commit to Vietnam with the Australian desire to keep the then new American Alliance strong.<sup>21</sup> This concept is of vital importance to this thesis as it demonstrates why the need for loyalty to America was framed around the Vietnam War during the 1966 election.

Of equal importance to Edwards' examination of the conscription debate is the work of Malcolm Brown's text *You're Leaving Tomorrow*, which examines the rationale driving the introduction of conscription and the battle between both the political parties and everyday Australians. Brown's arguments are in line with those found in Edward's second text *A Nation at War*, with both historians concluding that conscription was borne out of the Malayan emergency. This was because emergency prompted the Australian Government to realise that Great Britain was going to expect Australia to be responsible for Commonwealth nations within its region.<sup>22</sup> Brown furthers this point by suggesting that during the Emergency it became very clear to all those 'in the know' that there were never going to be enough regular members of the Australian army to meet the manpower demands in the increasingly unstable Indochina region and the issue of conscription would need to be addressed.<sup>23</sup> This however is

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<sup>21</sup> Edwards, Peter and Gregory Pemberton. *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1992), p.357-358.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, Malcolm. 'Caught up in the Mess.' *You're Leaving Tomorrow* (North Sydney: Random House Australia, 2007), p.1-76; p.6-8; Edwards, Peter. *A Nation at War: Australian Politics, Society and Diplomacy during the Vietnam War 1965-1975* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1997), p.76.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, 'Caught up in the Mess', p.12.

where Brown stops; he fails to examine the effect this realisation had on both the conscription debate during the 1966 election, and the decision to attempt to strengthen the relationship with America. Rather he simply asserts that these realisations (that Britain was leaving the region and that the Australian military was inadequate) were why the Australian public was initially so willing to accept both conscription and Australia's early involvement in the Vietnam War.

The arguments contained within Garry Woodard's work *Asian Alternatives* on conscription are in line with those of Brown and Ham (discussed below), in that Australian conscription debate had just as much to do with the LCP need for a 'bargaining chip' with America to provide Australia with security as it did with anything else.<sup>24</sup> In contrast Gregory Pemberton argues that conscription in Australia was not the result of Australia attempting to gain favour, but rather a response to considerable pressure placed upon the Menzies/Holt government by their American counterparts.<sup>25</sup> Woodard's argument also explores the important early developments of Australian American ties following the start of British removal from the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>26</sup> However Woodard fails to explore how Australian concern over security attributed to the near universal (within Australia) support for conscription in its early years, which is odd as the conscription debate in 1966 was very clearly linked to Australian fears over protection. This in turn was linked to a desire to keep the American Alliance strong by providing America with adequate troop numbers in Vietnam. Henry Albinski does however examine how public fear in Australia lead to a high level of support for conscription, his paper on the Australian Political Process provides considerable analysis on the Morgan

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<sup>24</sup> Woodard, Garry. *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*. (Carlton: Melbourne UP, 2006), p.322.

<sup>25</sup> Pemberton, *All the Way*, p.306-309; p.321-322.

<sup>26</sup> Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p.66.

Gallup polls relating to the issues of Australian men being conscripted, Australians fighting in Vietnam, and Australian conscripts fighting in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to an examination of the polls, Albinski also examines the platform the ALP, and more particularly Calwell, took on the issue of conscription. Albinski's main argument states that the particularly hard line Calwell took on conscription, being that it should be ended immediately and all troops returned to Australia (regardless of the impact it had upon America), alienated several electorates and members of his own party.<sup>28</sup> This is an important argument to examine under the as Calwell was clearly aware that an end to Australian national service would frustrate America as it would demonstrate to the world that even minor western powers were disinterested in the conflict. However whilst Albinski is correct in introducing this line of argument he fails to develop it further, preferring to examine how the possibility of damaging the American Alliance frustrated voters as opposed to exploring how the LCP used Calwell's willingness to anger America as a 'selling point' for conscription. This thesis will seek to close this gap in Albinski's argument. The work of individuals such as Trevor Reese, Jeffery Grey, Peter Pierce and L.G Churchward will be used to round out the examination of the conscription debate and how the American Alliance influenced said debate. Churchward in particular will be analysed due to his examination of the use of ANZUS to justify the decision to commit to Vietnam and raise a military through conscription.<sup>29</sup>

As previously stated the conscription debate was not the only feature of the 1966 election influenced by the American Alliance, as the public fracturing of the ALP gave considerable

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<sup>27</sup> Albinski, Henry S. 'Vietnamese Protest & the Australian Political Process', *Polity*, 1.3 (1969): 359-375, p. 362-367.

<sup>28</sup> Albinski, 'Vietnamese Protest and the Australian Political Process', p.367.

<sup>29</sup> Churchward, Lloyd Gordon. *Australia & America 1788-1972: An Alternative History* (Sydney: Alternative Publishing Cooperative Ltd, 1979), ch.8.



credence to the LCP claim that the ALP would be incapable to maintaining alliance strength.<sup>30</sup> This fracturing is important as a big part of the ALP infighting was focused on how the Party could continue to advocate for a cessation of hostilities in Indochina whilst remaining loyal to the American Alliance.

The works of historians Brian McKinlay and Louise Overacker will be heavily analysed in this thesis. McKinlay focuses on the history the Labor Party, and clearly his work on the Calwell years will be of interest. Despite the strong anti-LCP bias in his work, McKinlay does provide some interesting arguments for the collapse of ALP unity during the election year. In particular McKinlay argues that the increasingly emotional stance Calwell decided to take on conscription at the cost of all other potential election issues (such as those relating to domestic policies) alienated many within his own party. This gave the ALP, according to McKinlay, the appearance of being a single issue party in the final weeks before the nation went to the polls.<sup>31</sup> This concept is one of considerable relevance to this thesis due to its examination of conscription and Vietnam; however McKinlay fails to explore the issue further. Brown also presents an argument which concludes that the issue of conscription and loyalty towards America put the Labor Party in an awkward position, in which Calwell had to present a pro-America image despite activities by others within his Party.<sup>32</sup> Overacker presents a similar argument to McKinlay, but does goes further by correctly suggesting that along with the disunity over conscription the ALP's inability to cohesively present an alternative to the American Alliance for Australian security resulted in more confusion for

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<sup>30</sup> The Liberal Party of Australia, *Which Way to Freedom*, election pamphlet, (Leichhardt: Holland & Newton, 1966).

<sup>31</sup> McKinlay, Brian. *The ALP: A Short History of the Australian Labor Party* (Richmond: Drummond/Heinemann, 1981), p.129.

<sup>32</sup> Brown, 'Caught up in the Mess', p.14.

Australian voters as to where exactly Labor stood on the issues of Vietnam, national service, and loyalty to the American Alliance.<sup>33</sup>

A particular focus of the fourth chapter will be the infighting between Calwell and Whitlam; and consequently Graham Freudenberg's work *A Certain Grandeur*, which focuses on Gough Whitlam's time in the ALP, will be examined. Freudenberg not only analyses ALP events in which Whitlam was involved, but explores the origins of Whitlam's point of view on the decision to go to Vietnam and the twin issue of using conscripts there. Most importantly Freudenberg looks at the problem created by the ALP not developing a 'timetable' for troop withdrawal from Vietnam. The problem created by this was that the conflicting statements made by ALP members could not be denied by others within the party as no one knew what was going on.<sup>34</sup> Brian Carroll agrees with this argument, commenting that the differing statements issued by Calwell and Whitlam led to an environment in which not only the Party, but the Australian public were confused over the ALP's intentions.<sup>35</sup> In addition to this Freudenberg correctly argues that the ALP knew from the outset that they were at a major disadvantage in 1966 as Vietnam was a popular war, and they knew that any presentation of an anti-Vietnam campaign could be linked to anti-Americanism.<sup>36</sup> Whitlam went out of his way to demonstrate that members of the American government were just as opposed to Vietnam as the ALP was, and therefore (according to Freudenberg) the ALP would not be damaging the American alliance if it debated against continued involvement.<sup>37</sup> These attempts by Whitlam were however rendered void by the activities of other ALP members which will be discussed in chapter four.

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<sup>33</sup> Overacker, Louise. *Australian Parties in a Changing Society: 1945-67* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire Publishing Pty Ltd, 1968), p.312-313.

<sup>34</sup> Freudenberg, Graham. *A Certain Grandeur: Gough Whitlam in Politics* (South Melbourne: MacMillan Publishing, 1977), p.52-54.

<sup>35</sup> Carroll, Brian. *Whitlam* (Dural: Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, 2011), p.56.

<sup>36</sup> Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p.52-54.

<sup>37</sup> Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p.58-59.

Clearly if this thesis is going to be examining the effect of the American Alliance on the 1966 election then it is important that the events within the ‘official’ campaign period be examined, consequently this will be the focus of the final chapter of this thesis. Of particular importance will be a study of the LBJ visit of October 1966, as this visit highlighted the apparent influence the American Alliance could have on an Australian election. Edwards’ previously mentioned text *A Nation at War* is again useful in examining the campaign itself. Within this text are two chapters, both titled ‘The long election campaign’ which focus on the 1966 campaign for both the LCP and the ALP. Whilst there are few original arguments contained within these chapters they are useful for providing a good background framework to the campaign as they feature occurrences such as Holt’s 1966 visit to America, where he gave his infamous ‘all the way with LBJ’ speech. This is important as the speech would form part of the ALP’s supposed evidence that the LCP was willing to give America a ‘blank cheque’ for Vietnam.<sup>38</sup> Understanding the effect of this speech on the campaign is important, as it very much established the election as being one where the American Alliance would receive top billing.

Lastly, Paul Ham’s text *Vietnam, the Australian War* is worth analysing when exploring the election campaign of 1966. In particular his discussion of the effect of the LBJ visit, which has divided scholars since 1966. Ham does not make an outright comment on how he thinks the visit altered the election but he does make it very clear that LBJ was welcomed as a hero when he arrived in the country.<sup>39</sup> This is important to examine as the presidential visit (as previously mentioned) was very much a symptom of the developing Australian-American relationship. As with much of Edwards’ work, the lack of any clear-cut argument within

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<sup>38</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.113.

<sup>39</sup> Ham, *Vietnam: the Australian War*, ch.21.

Ham's text means that its best application is that of background knowledge to the campaign, however as he does focus on issues which occurred immediately prior to election day it is vital that this text be used in this thesis. Paul Williams' paper on the LBJ visit does however take a very clear stance on the effect of the LBJ visit. Williams supports the idea that whilst the visit was an outstanding exercise in putting a public face to the American Alliance it did not actually allow for the LCP victory. By examining the voter patterns in each electorate LBJ visited Williams believes he has proved conclusively that the visit did not swing non-Liberal or Country Party voters away from other parties.<sup>40</sup> Williams' argument is supported Albinski and Overacker, both of whom feel that it would be naive to assume that a visit by a foreign dignitary could affect an Australian election. The argument is however it is contested by others such as Ray Aitchison, who argues that the visit was full of pomp and ceremony, designed to impress the Australian public, and distract them from the issues of Vietnam and conscription.<sup>41</sup>

Aside from examining the effect of the LBJ visit other activities within the official campaign period will be analysed (both throughout the thesis and in chapter four) such as the image of party leaders. This is important to note as 1966 was, aside from being the first foreign policy election, one of the earliest elections where the appearance of the Party leader was important. Historians such as Ham are quick to suggest that one of the biggest problems faced by the ALP was the fact that Calwell came across as old and out of touch in comparison the Holt who appeared to be relevantly modern and suited to an election which was now run on television rather than print media.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Williams, Paul D. "Holt, Johnson and the 1966 Federal Election. A Question of Causality." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 47.3 (2001), p.384.

<sup>41</sup> Aitchison, Ray. *From Bob to Bungles and now to Billy: People in Politics 1966-71* (Melbourne: Sun Books Pty Ltd, 1971), p.30.

<sup>42</sup> Ham, *Vietnam: the Australian War*, p.265.

The Australian election of 1966 is unique in Australian history in that it focused almost solely on issues of foreign rather than domestic policy. In particular 1966 focused on the issues related to Australian involvement in the Vietnam War, conscription and loyalty to the American Alliance. This thesis will seek to argue that the American Alliance played a considerable role in the landslide re-election of the Holt lead LCP Government.

### III THE CONSCRIPTION DEBATE

In late 1964 a conspicuous brown envelope was delivered to the home of Barry Heard in the small remote Victorian town of Tongio. It informed him that his number had been drawn in the ballot for the first intake of conscripts and that he would be required to attend a medical to determine if he was fit for service. Conscription was not a subject that was often discussed among Barry's family and friends and the chances of being drafted seemed very remote for the nineteen-year-old farmhand. As the first person to be drafted in his district following the passing of the *National Service Act 1964* Barry was isolated in his feelings of trepidation and unable to fully comprehend the implications of his call up notice.<sup>43</sup> Although he failed his first medical examination Barry was successfully redrafted in February 1966 and was soon afterwards on his way to Puckapunyal – the Australian Army's Victorian recruit training centre.<sup>44</sup> Barry's experience of conscription and frustration at being unable to refuse the draft was common among young Australian men, particularly after the changes to the National Service Act in 1965, which allowed them to be posted overseas. Once that brown envelope arrived a young man was conscripted into the Australian Army for two years unless he could provide strong evidence for deferment.<sup>45</sup>

By the time Barry was re-drafted in 1966 the question of conscription under the National Service Act of 1965 had become a deeply contested issue in Australian Parliament. Despite the controversy surrounding the debate over conscription in 1966, this was by no means a new issue in either Australian politics or public consciousness.<sup>46</sup> Conscription had been

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<sup>43</sup> Heard, *Barry Well Done Those Men*, (Carlton North: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd, 2009), p.5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Heard, *Well Done Those Men*, p.11-13.

<sup>45</sup> Legitimate reasons for deferring the call up included undertaking university studies or apprenticeships. The only way to avoid conscription entirely was to be a student of divinity or to prove yourself to be a conscientious objector.

<sup>46</sup> In 1966 there was 'boyhood' conscription which focused on training Australian youths in the early post-federation years. In addition to this referendums had been held in both 1916 and 1917 by Prime Minister Billy

passed into law twice in Australian history prior to 1964, but it was the *1965 National Service Act* which created the most debate as it allowed men to be posted to any nation the Australian Government felt necessary. Whilst this act had been borne out of the Australian need to be self reliant in defence, by the 1966 election its reasoning had shifted away from self reliance and towards alliance building. The 1966 election was fought on foreign policy, particularly regarding the American Alliance. This alliance (by the time of the 1966 election) was publicly centred on only one issue - the Vietnam War. More importantly it was focused on the conscription of Australians to fight in Vietnam in the hope that the United States would remain engaged in South East Asia and repel Chinese communism.

Conscription in Australia had been an issue since the 1910s; indeed, the conscription debate was very heated during the First World War, with Prime Minister Hughes attempting to pass legislation allowing for conscription via referendum twice. Both of these attempts failed, although the debate was re-ignited with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and concerns over a possible invasion of Australia saw the creation of a Citizens Militia Force. In October 1939 it was announced that the Australian government would be building a reserve force by drafting all unmarried 21-year-old males and they would receive three months of training. Those who had been drafted into this reserve force were subsequently known as National Service Personnel.<sup>47</sup> Under this early incarnation of conscription, there was a strict condition that those who were drafted would only serve in Australia. Even under this model of conscription the concept of alliance loyalty appeared, with the External Affairs Minister William Hughes stating in parliament that a non-build up of Australia's defence force in the

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Hughes in an attempt to raise troop numbers for European service. Both these attempts to introduce conscription with national support received substantial criticism and were rejected; the issue was largely left alone for the next two decades. See Barrett, John. *Falling in: Australians and "boy conscription", 1911-1915*, (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979); Levi, Margaret. The Institution of Conscription, *Social Science History*, 20.1 (1996), p.134-135.

<sup>47</sup> Inglis, K.S. 'Conscription in Peace and War, 1911-1945', Forward, Roy, and Bob Reece, eds. *Conscription in Australia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1968), p.49.

face of such a war would be akin to the nation 'turning its back on Great Britain.'<sup>48</sup> In 1942, after an amendment to allow members of the Citizens Militia Force to serve in Australian territories in addition to the mainland, national service personnel were called up for active duty in defence of Australia. This had been deemed necessary as all volunteer military units were posted overseas and National Service Personnel were deployed to repel the Japanese in Papua New Guinea. This call up for military service raised the contentious question of Australia's loyalty to Britain who had been unable to answer Australian requests for military assistance in the Pacific during the Second World War (due to the extensive British commitment in Europe). By contrast, America's vested interest in defeating the Japanese in the Pacific meant that they were willing to offer Australia military assistance to defend Australian territories. Following the Japanese invasion of Papua New Guinea it was deemed necessary for Australian conscripts to be deployed to any nation in the Pacific, thereby avoiding future military threats to Australia.<sup>49</sup> The 1943 amendments to the *Defence Act* allowed for the Citizens Militia Force to serve in the South West Pacific region, thereby ending concerns that Australia would be unable to defend positions vacated by the American military.<sup>50</sup> Although the compulsory military training scheme of the Second World War was ended with the conclusion of the conflict in 1945, it provided the framework upon which the 1965 National Service Act was based.<sup>51</sup> The rhetoric used during the Second World War that linked conscription to alliance loyalty in the face of conflict was also recycled in 1966 by the LCP who had similarly advocated for the introduction of conscription in 1939.

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<sup>48</sup> Main, J. M., ed. *Conscription: the Australian Debate, 1901-1970* (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1970), p.110.

<sup>49</sup> Main, *Conscription: The Australian Debate*, p.115.

<sup>50</sup> Main, *Conscription: The Australian Debate*, p.124.

<sup>51</sup> Albinski, Henry S. *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia: the Impact of Vietnam and Conscription* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970), p.40.



In reaction to the Korean War, conscription was again reintroduced in 1951, although this too was abandoned in 1959.<sup>52</sup> The National Service Act of 1951 required all 18-year-olds to register for the call-up. Those who were drafted received training in one of the branches of the defence force for a period of five to six months. This scheme was criticised as being both irrelevant to Australia's defence needs and a drain on national finances because focus had moved away from producing large numbers of adequately trained troops to producing smaller groups of highly trained personnel.<sup>53</sup> By 1959 these criticisms had become loud enough for the scheme to be abandoned, and all National Service Personnel recruited during this period were honourably discharged. No National Service Personnel conscripted during this period were required to serve in foreign conflicts such as The Malayan Emergency.<sup>54</sup>

The Malayan Emergency inflamed Australian concerns over the growing threat of communism and its potential infiltration of Australian society in the 1950s. Fought between the Commonwealth Armed Forces and the Malayan Communist Party, the Emergency was the last conflict to which Commonwealth Armed Forces were deployed.<sup>55</sup> Borne out of World War Two, the Emergency was linked to British colonial laws aimed at preserving the dominance of ethnic Malay's over ethnic Chinese.<sup>56</sup> These laws meant that many ethnic Chinese felt more kinship with China than Malaya; with nationalism rife in post-war Asia, combined with the pressures of the post-war rebuilding, the appeal of Chinese communism was strong. In 1948 the hold of communism lead to a communist uprising in Malaya, and the proximity of this uprising to Australia caused considerable concern to the Australian

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<sup>52</sup> Main, *Conscription: The Australian Debate*, p.130.

<sup>53</sup> The Commonwealth of Australia, *National Service Act 1951*. Series number A5954, item number 275937. National Archives of Australia.

<sup>54</sup> Shields, Neville T. 'National Service Training, 1950-1959', Forward, Roy, and Bob Reece, eds. *Conscription in Australia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1968), p.75.

<sup>55</sup> The Commonwealth Armed Forces in this conflict included units from Britain, Africa, Fiji, Malaya, Nepal, Australia and New Zealand; see Jackson, Robert. *The Malayan Emergency: The Commonwealth's wars 1948-1966* (London: Rutledge, 1991), p.19.

<sup>56</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, p.22-24.

Government. By 1950 Australia had committed forces to ensure that the 'communist threat' in the region was removed. The strength of the Commonwealth armed forces force meant that the Malayan National Liberation Army was rendered ineffective by 1955 but the Emergency was not declared over until 1960.<sup>57</sup> Whilst it was a clear victory against both communist aggression and aggression in general, for the Australian government it became very clear that Britain was not the great and powerful protector it had once been and in its withdrawal from the Asia Pacific region, Britain was expecting Australia to take a much larger role in the defence of the region.<sup>58</sup>

The Indonesian declaration of independence in 1945 and the resulting territorial dispute over West New Guinea during the late 1950s and early 1960s aggravated Australian fears over the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific region. The lack of British or American support for Australian claims to West New Guinea as a 'buffer zone' against communism forced Australia to realise that it did not possess the military capabilities necessary to intervene independently in Pacific conflicts. Furthermore it forced the reconsideration of national defence plans which had previously been drawn up under the assumption that either Britain or America would provide military assistance.<sup>59</sup>

Apart from Australian concerns over the Pacific region, the 1960s also saw increased instability in Vietnam. Continued dissatisfaction over the 'splitting' of Vietnam into the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North) and the 'democratic' Republic of Vietnam (South) had resulted in a guerrilla war between the Viet Cong and the government

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<sup>57</sup> Australian War Memorial, *Malayan Emergency, 1950–60*, Australian military history overview, hosted by the Australian War Memorial, <<http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/emergency.asp>>. Viewed 25 Aug. 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Dennis, Peter and Jeffery Grey, eds. *Emergency and Confrontation: Australian Military Operations in Malaya and Borneo 1950-1966*, St Leonards: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1996, p.164-166.

<sup>59</sup> Chauvel, Richard. "Up the Creek Without a Paddle: Australia, West New Guinea and the 'Great and Powerful Friends'" *Menzies in War and Peace*. (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997), p.65.

of South Vietnam.<sup>60</sup> By the early 1960s attacks against South Vietnam had increased dramatically: in 1964 alone 429 village officials had been assassinated and a further 1,482 kidnapped.<sup>61</sup> In August 1964 Australian concerns over the situation in Vietnam were greatly intensified with the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, during which the Naval forces of America and North Vietnam briefly collided and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was passed in America.<sup>62</sup> This resolution was effectively an American declaration of war on North Vietnam and the Menzies Government again concluded that should instability in the region escalate, the numbers of active military personnel were inadequate to defend Australia and those nations whose security was vital to Australian interests.

By 1964 the criticisms of the National Service Scheme of the 1950s were forgotten, and the strength of Australia's Army was openly mocked by the Australian media and public.<sup>63</sup> In response Menzies and his government would present the *National Service Act of 1964*, effectively an amendment and re-introduction of the 1951 Act. This Act stipulated that all 20-year-old males must register for service. Only a certain number of those registered would be called up; those selected would then be required to undergo twenty-four months of continuous service but these individuals would not be required to serve outside of Australian territory.<sup>64</sup> The aim of this national service scheme was to increase the strength of the Australian Army from 22,750 men to approximately 33,000 by 1966 and this, reasoned the Menzies Government, would be an adequate amount of troops for Australia to repel any potential threat from Indonesia.<sup>65</sup> This re-introduction became a topic of conversation not

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<sup>60</sup> Ham, *Vietnam: The Australian War*, p.59

<sup>61</sup> Ham, *Vietnam: the Australian War*, p.66.

<sup>62</sup> Ham, *Vietnam: the Australian War*, p.81.

<sup>63</sup> Les Tanner, *Bulletin*, Cartoon, 14 November 1964. See Edwards, Peter and Gregory Pemberton. *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1992), p.327.

<sup>64</sup> The Commonwealth of Australia, *National Service Bill 1964*. Series number A432, item number 1184204, National Archives of Australia, p.1-4.

<sup>65</sup> Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, p.304.

only within Australia but also in America, where newspaper articles were quick to point out that this ‘peacetime’ conscription was a reaction to growing concerns over the likelihood of war with Indonesia. The issues of Vietnam and the rest of Indochina clearly played a very minor role even in the eyes of the American press, as evidenced by their reiteration of Menzies’ stance that Australian fears were centred on the increasingly aggressive Indonesia.<sup>66</sup> *The National Service Act of 1965* was a revision of the 1964 Act. The most important change contained within this revised Act was the decision that National Service personnel could serve outside of Australian territory.<sup>67</sup> This decision to extend where conscripts could serve was linked with the increasing fears over communism gaining strength in Indonesia and previous confrontation there, as well as the Tonkin Gulf Incident, growing insurgency in Vietnam, and general unrest in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed the announcement that Australia would be sending a battalion of troops to serve in Vietnam came only a week before the 1965 change to the National Service Act.<sup>68</sup>

There have been various arguments as to why the Australian Government decided to commit to Vietnam. The two most prominent arguments are firstly, that there was a clear Australian desire to keep America invested in the South East Asian region and secondly, that Australia was desperate to ensure communism would not become a threat within its own nation by any means necessary. Reese is a supporter of the first argument, and argues that Australian troop deployments (and increases) were clearly linked to American requests for help. In answering these calls Reese concludes that Australia’s primary aim for entering Vietnam was to ensure America was able to remain in the region.<sup>69</sup> However historians such as Churchward (who

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<sup>66</sup> ‘Australia Arms’ *The New York Times*, November 16, 1964, p.30.

<sup>67</sup> The Commonwealth of Australia, *National Service Act of 1965*, p.5.

<sup>68</sup> Forward, Roy ‘Conscription, 1964-1968’, Forward, Roy, and Bob Reece, eds. *Conscription in Australia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1968), p.79.

<sup>69</sup> Reese, Trevor R. *Australia, New Zealand, and the United States: A Survey of International Relations 1941-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.303-306.

does admit that the ANZUS alliance put Australia in an awkward position over Vietnam) are more inclined to support the second argument, stressing that the appearance of anti-communist ideology within Australia was centred around the belief of the Menzies government that Australia was preparing for a third World War.<sup>70</sup> According to Churchward, it was this ideology, manifesting itself in such ways as the attempted introduction of anti-communist legislation, which contributed to the Australian desire to confront the communist insurgency in South Vietnam. However by 1966 Australian involvement in Vietnam had clearly become a mix of both arguments, and the Australian public who had been ‘consuming’ the anti-communist propaganda of the Menzies government since the early 1950s, as well as the pro-ANZUS propaganda tied to Vietnam, largely accepted conflict in Indochina – and the National Service scheme with it.<sup>71</sup>

By 1966 National Service was clearly linked to Vietnam alone.<sup>72</sup> The Malayan Emergency had been concluded and concerns over Indonesian aggression had become a considerably more minor issue following the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, the reasons for conscription had shifted away from the original purpose of facilitating Australian military independence. It had become a way for Menzies, and later Holt, to meet Vietnam troop commitments agreed upon with America. Using conscription to meet American demands allowed the ALP to accuse the LCP of becoming subservient to a foreign power. On the other hand, the LCP argued that conscription, rather than demonstrating subservience, actually ensured the continuation of a strong American Alliance. Whilst the ALP agreed that a strong American Alliance was in Australia’s interest, it argued against the possibility of losing thousands of young men in a foreign conflict in order to keep it strong.

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<sup>70</sup> Churchward, *Australia & America 1788-1972*, p.170.

<sup>71</sup> Albinski, ‘Vietnamese Protest & the Australian Political Process’, p.364.

<sup>72</sup> The terms ‘National Service Personnel’ and ‘conscript’ are used interchangeably as they were during the Vietnam War. Unless stated otherwise refer to those called up under the National Service Act of 1965.

<sup>73</sup> Edwards, Peter. "Australia's Vietnam War." *Wartime The Australian Experience Of War* 10 (2000): p.41.

Calwell can be attributed with pushing the issue of conscription to the top of the agenda during the 1966 election. He had previously battled against conscription in 1916, publicly advocating for the 'no' vote in the Hughes referendums. As a Member of Parliament during the Second World War he was just as vocal over the issue of conscription. While his own Party was in Government, Calwell stated in Parliament that:

‘As a youth, I was an anti-conscriptionist in the 1916 and 1917 campaigns, and I am as much an anti-conscriptionist in 1942. I see no fundamental difference, and I moved a resolution at the meeting of the Victorian Central Executive of the Australian Labour party expressing the view that there was no fundamental difference between the proposals enunciated by the Prime Minister [Mr. Curtin] in 1942 and those enunciated by the right honourable member for North Sydney [Mr. Hughes] in 1916. To me it does not matter where a man goes after he leaves Australian territory on compulsory service. To me geography does not matter. Whether the compulsion is for the Southwest Pacific or for Europe, it is still military conscription for overseas service, and, therefore, abhorrent to the traditional democratic principles of this country, and something that should be abhorred and shunned.’<sup>74</sup>

His emotional appeal against conscription during the Second World War carried through to the 1960s. Calwell's pushing of the conscription matter during the 1966 election meant that matters of domestic policy that could have been the issues of 1966 (such as Government funding for private schools under the LCP's school science block program, water conservation and programs focused on rural development) were rendered of secondary

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<sup>74</sup> Calwell, Arthur. Hansard, House of Representatives, 10 December 1942, p.1713.

importance to the debate about conscription. Indeed, Calwell's strong personal stance against conscription had begun to reach such heights by the time of the election that several members of his own party (including his deputy Whitlam) began to fear that his increasingly emotional appeal, while comforting to those who shared his view, was alienating many voters.<sup>75</sup> This said, the ALP was clearly running on the anti-conscription ticket as evidenced by election material such as the poster seen in fig 1. This poster clearly implored Australian parents to consider how they would feel if their own son was called up. The LCP on the other hand employed images of alliance loyalty and keeping communism out of Australia, as seen in the poster of fig 2. The LCP appealed to the concept that while conscription was not ideal, it was a lesser evil than the possibility of losing the strength they gained through ANZUS.

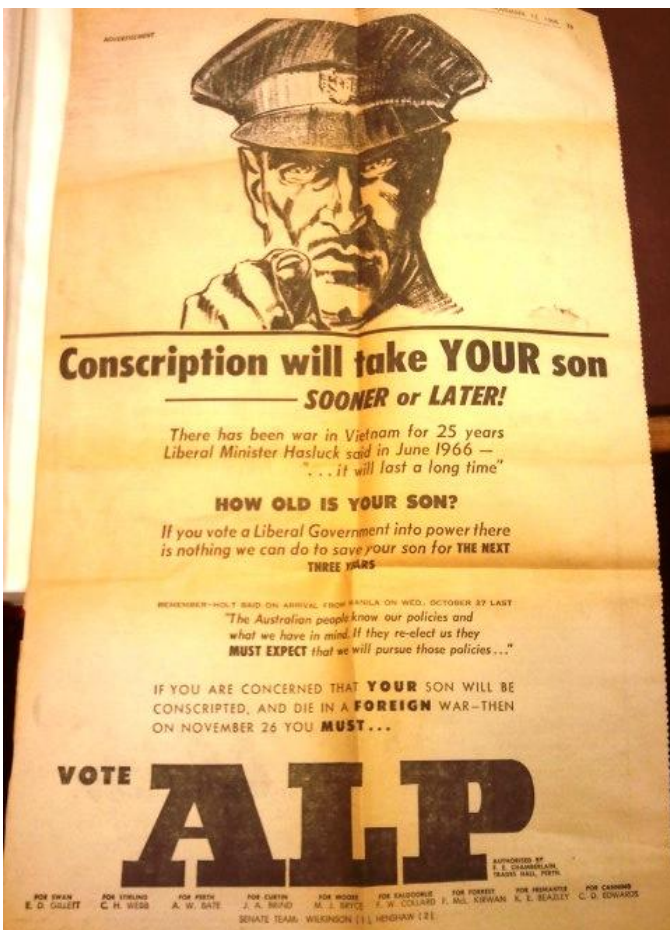


Fig 1.

The Australian Labor Party. 'Conscription will take your son' *The West Australian*, Saturday November 12, 1966, p.15.

<sup>75</sup> McKinlay, Brian. *The ALP*, p.129.



Fig 2.

The Liberal Party of Australia. *It's Your Choice*. Election pamphlet, (Sydney: The Land Printing House, 1966).

Interestingly enough Calwell and the ALP never sought to capitalise on the fact that America had not supported Australia over the West New Guinea issue, but simply perused the anti-conscription vote on the basis that forcing the conscripts to serve overseas was immoral.<sup>76</sup> It is likely that the ALP chose not to engage in the issue outlined above, but rather chose to focus on the 1964 introduction of conscription as linked to the fact that America did not come and Australia had to develop its own defence force.

For the ALP, the conscription debate came down to two main matters, primarily that it was morally wrong to force men to serve overseas. But the ALP also felt the conflict in Vietnam was a civil war rather than a symptom of the Cold War and therefore it was not in Australia's interests to join the conflict.<sup>77</sup> In May of 1965 Calwell had established the second part of this argument, well before the 1966 election was called. Following the LCP announcement that Australian troops would be sent to Vietnam Calwell gave what can only be called the most passionate speech of his political life in opposition to the commitment:

‘we [the ALP] oppose this decision firmly and completely. We do not think it is a wise decision. We do not think it is a timely decision. We do not think it is a right decision. We do not think it will help the fight against Communism. On the contrary, we believe it will harm that fight in the long term. We do not believe it will promote the welfare of the people of Vietnam. On the contrary, we believe it will prolong and deepen the suffering of that unhappy people so that Australia's very name may become a term of reproach among them. We do not believe that it represents a wise or even intelligent response to the challenge of Chinese power. On the contrary, we believe it mistakes entirely the nature of that power, and that it materially assists China in her subversive

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<sup>76</sup> Main, *Conscription The Australian Debate*, p.138-139

<sup>77</sup> Calwell, Arthur. Hansard, HoR, 4 May 1965, p.1103



aims. Indeed, we cannot conceive a decision by this Government more likely to promote the long term interests of China in Asia and the Pacific. We of the Labour Party do not believe that this decision serves, or is consistent with, the immediate strategic interests of Australia. On the contrary, we believe that, by sending one quarter of our pitifully small effective military strength to distant Vietnam, this Government dangerously denudes Australia and its immediate strategic environs of effective defence power. Thus, for all these and other reasons, we believe we have no choice but to oppose this decision in the name of Australia and of Australia's security.' <sup>78</sup>

Calwell's strong opposition to Australian involvement in Vietnam meant that his opposition to the use of national service personnel was more pronounced than it had been in previous conflicts.

The ALP called upon the disadvantages of conscription in increasing military capability, citing issues such as the burden of service not being shared by all young men and the drain on the defence budget, a drain resulting from training a force only required to serve for two years.<sup>79</sup> The former of these disadvantages stemmed from the 'birthday ballot' which determined who would be called up for service. Rather than employing a universal service, the *National Service Act of 1964 and 1965* made use of selective service, and in an effort to ensure there would be no bias in regards to who was called up, the selection was done by a twice yearly ballot. Under this ballot all twenty-year-old men were required to register for national service; however, this did not mean they would be drafted. Rather, dates were drawn on marbles, and the marbles placed into a lottery barrel. If a registered man's birth date was

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<sup>78</sup> Calwell, Arthur. Hansard, HoR, 4 May 1965, p.1103

<sup>79</sup> Van Gelder, M.M, 'Australia's Selective National Service Training Scheme 1965-72', *Defence Force Journal*, 19 (1979), p.54.

drawn from the barrel he was conscripted.<sup>80</sup> In the eyes of the ALP this was grossly unfair as the ‘lottery of death’ (as many ALP supporters called it) meant that you would only have to serve if you were unlucky enough to be born on a particular day of the month. The main election promise of the ALP was unsurprisingly that they would bring National Service personnel home from Vietnam at the earliest possible moment.

Calwell expressed the ALP’s views on conscription most effectively in his major policy announcement speech on 10 November 1966 in which he stated that:

‘The most important issue in this campaign is conscription, the conscription of a section of our twenty years old youths, against their wishes and their wills, to kill or be killed in the undeclared, civil war in Vietnam and the threatened extension of conscription to all twenty year olds and other age groups to increase our unwarranted and unnecessary commitment.’<sup>81</sup>

The LCP on the other hand stressed that whilst conscription was not the most desirable policy for the development of defence, it was the only viable option now that Australia was so involved in the defence of its region, for:

‘Withdrawal of national servicemen from Vietnam, as intended by the Labor Party, would render our task force ineffective and seriously disrupt the Army. It would inevitably mean loss of confidence in Australia by its allies.’<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Forward, Roy ‘Conscription, 1964-1968’, p.105-107.

<sup>81</sup> Calwell, Arthur. *Australian Labor Party Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*. (Canberra: Australian Labor Party, 1966), p.1.

<sup>82</sup> Holt, Harold. *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, (Canberra : Liberal Party of Australia, 1966), p.16.

It is clear from this segment of Holt's 1966 election policy speech that for the LCP, conscription was tied not only to Vietnam but also to Australia's alliances. If Australia was to retain the United States as a valuable security ally then it had to be prepared to stand and fight with them. Just as it had in 1939, the issue appeared of Australia turning its back on an ally if it failed to maintain a suitably sized defence force.<sup>83</sup> Loyalty was the main answer Holt and his Party provided in response to Calwell and his Party. If Australia were to withdraw conscripted troops from Vietnam then the whole strategy of Forward Defence would be pointless. The LCP made it very clear to voters that informing America that Australia could honour its obligations only if enough volunteers came forward would make it appear to be a very uncertain and un-worthwhile ally.<sup>84</sup> The need to appear as a worthwhile ally struck the Australian public, as Calwell had willingly admitted that the ALP would bring conscripted troops home even if it did cause harm to the American Alliance and serving American personnel.<sup>85</sup> This was problematic for the ALP, for loyalty to America (under the ANZUS treaty) had been presented to the Australian public as the solution to Australian security against communist threats in the region.<sup>86</sup> The ALP was quick to point out that if it had to, Australia could and would stand on its own, and the use of National Service Personnel should only be a last resort if defence issues appeared within Australian territories.<sup>87</sup>

Both the LCP and the ALP stood firm on the issue of conscription, but ultimately the call won out for providing adequate troop numbers to aid America and South Vietnam (who was supposedly fighting the insurgency alongside America and Australia) in order to ensure Australia's alliances remained strong. The Morgan Gallup polls of July 1966 demonstrated that 63% of Australians supported conscription, and yet only 36% agreed with sending them

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<sup>83</sup> Main, *Conscription*, p.110.

<sup>84</sup> Main, *Conscription*, p.145-146.

<sup>85</sup> Albinski, 'Vietnamese Protest & the Australian Political Process', p.360.

<sup>86</sup> Ham, *Vietnam, Australia's War*, p.89.

<sup>87</sup> Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia*, p.49.

to Vietnam. Despite this, 56% were in favour of continuing Australian involvement in the conflict.<sup>88</sup> This demonstrates that whilst a large portion of the population was not in favour of sending conscripts to Vietnam, the idea of leaving America to remove the communist threat in Vietnam by itself was not appealing. In addition to these statistics, a poll commissioned by *the Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1966, demonstrated that 64% of respondents were in favour of Holt's support for American Vietnam policy.<sup>89</sup> Whilst the opinions of Australian would shift dramatically as Australian commitment in Vietnam increased, the LCP was able to use the attitudes of Australians during 1966 in pro-alliance election material and rhetoric to ensure that conscription was accepted as a necessary evil in 1966.

According to these results, Australians had clearly absorbed the pro-ANZUS message delivered by Holt. Furthermore, they accepted to a large extent the 1966 message that staying in Vietnam, which entailed keeping conscripts in the conflict, was good for the American Alliance. The ALP was therefore fighting an uphill battle from the start of the election campaign period in 1966. By situating the conscription debate against the backdrop of American Alliance, the LCP was able to present a message that the ALP would be content to 'run out' on the American Alliance by withdrawing troops from Vietnam. This message of alliance abandonment won the LCP the conscription debate. The victory achieved here was further utilised by the LCP when fractures began to appear in the ALP's unity. The conscription debate would harm the ALP. Calwell's long-standing and firm opposition to national service was in stark contrast to the more 'middle ground' approach his deputy Whitlam wished to take. Unfortunately the inability of the two men to present a cohesive message on the issue meant the Australian public was unwilling to put them into a position of power.

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<sup>88</sup> Gallup Polls 1966-67, Morgan Gallup Poll number 184, July 16 1966 (Melbourne: The Roy Morgan Research Center), p.21-28.

<sup>89</sup> Ham, *Vietnam, The Australian War*, p.270.

#### IV LABOR FALLS APART

In 1967, the American Ambassador in Canberra, Edward Clark cabled LBJ with the following:

‘Calwell is suffering hardening of arteries which cuts down on blood flow to brain and thus affects full lucidity. Situation complicated by overindulgence in alcohol. Prognosis is for fairly rapid descent to senility.’<sup>90</sup>

Admittedly, Clark had never been fond of Calwell and took considerable glee in Calwell’s 1966 electoral defeat. Clark knew, as did Calwell that the ALP loss in 1966 was the end of Calwell’s parliamentary career. Calwell had informed the ALP that should he fail to lead the Party to victory in 1966 he would not contest the leadership again.<sup>91</sup> When he stepped down in 1967 there was no fanfare, and Calwell who had been a member of parliament for more than two decades, had served as the Minister for Immigration and had been the deputy leader of the ALP under Herbert Evatt before becoming Party leader himself in 1960 was quietly moved to the backbenches.<sup>92</sup> Having already lost elections for the ALP in 1961 and 1963 Calwell knew that 1966 was his last opportunity to become Prime Minister, but the uphill battle he faced in the conscription debate was only worsened by the disunity displayed by the ALP in the lead up to the election. Infighting, particularly between Calwell and his own deputy appeared before the election year, although greatly increased as the election loomed and members of the ALP became vocal over the issues of conscription and the American

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<sup>90</sup> Cable from American Embassy Canberra to Dean Rusk, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1967, Personal Papers, Papers of George W. Ball, Australia, 1/24/64-7/11/66, box 1. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

<sup>91</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.36.

<sup>92</sup> Daly, *From Curtin to Kerr*, ch.12.

Alliance. Disagreement over these issues was fatal for the Party, and demonstrated very clearly the effect of the American Alliance on the election outcome.

Like most Federal Elections, the 1966 poll appeared on the surface to be a contest between the two party leaders, Holt and Calwell. But on the Labor side of politics the Party was far from united, and whilst an ALP victory would have been a party victory, an ALP loss was a Whitlam victory. The different tact Calwell and Whitlam decided to take in arguing that conflict in Vietnam was immoral whilst attempting not to alienate the pro-American Australian public resulted in significant party infighting. This concept was realised early by D.A. Boag, a campaigner for the Country Party held seat of Hume, who in a request for aid by the Liberal Party to retain the seat informed Holt that;

‘Hume has been singled out by the deputy leader of the Labor Party as his particular Campaign, with his Secretary as the Candidate. This promises to be a ‘no holds barred’ campaign with Mr. Whitlam as the real candidate. He has abandoned Labor Party policy to use our policy as his own. It would be no exaggeration to say that he is campaigning for the A.L.P to lose the election but for him to win Hume, as part of his prestige campaign leading to eventual Prime Ministership.’<sup>93</sup>

Boag’s comment was made in early September of 1966, but the clearly public break in the ALP occurred much earlier, and was over an issue completely unrelated to Vietnam or the American Alliance.

Calwell and his deputy were divided before the campaign for the 1966 election began. Despite appearing to have worked as an ideal team during most of their partnership the

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<sup>93</sup> Letter from D.A Boag to Harold Holt, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1966, item number 122, series number M2606, National Archives of Australia.

relationship began to publicly disintegrate in early February of 1966 when the two had traded blows over part of the ALP's domestic policy plans for education, and in the fallout from this argument Whitlam had narrowly avoided expulsion. Whilst not related to Vietnam or the American Alliance, this early disagreement between the two established an environment where it was clear to most Australian's that Calwell and Whitlam did not agree on vital ALP policy matters. The ALP's education policy of the period was formulated on the belief that the State should provide a system of compulsory secular education for all, and if individuals did not wish to use this system then they were entitled to develop a system of independent schools at their own cost.<sup>94</sup> Effectively the policy was aimed at preventing non-government schools from receiving any government funding. In the 1963 election the Menzies government sought to capitalise on the dislike of the policy felt by several 'traditional' ALP voters (particularly Roman Catholics, who had developed a strong system of non-government schools) by pledging a program of state-aid for non-government schools under the school science block program.<sup>95</sup> Under this program Menzies pledged:

'£5M per annum for the provision of building and equipment facilities for science teaching in secondary schools. The amount will be distributed on a schools population basis, and will be available to all secondary schools, Government or independent, without discrimination.'<sup>96</sup>

This pledge was upheld, and as discussed in the previous chapter could have easily become a pivotal issue of the 1966 election. And whilst it did not become an issue in the actual

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<sup>94</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.28.

<sup>95</sup> Menzies, Robert. *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1963*, (Sydney: The Land Printing House, 1963), p.22.

<sup>96</sup> Menzies, *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1963*, p.22.

election, the LCP school science block program did become a major issue for the ALP in the lead up to the election.

In an attempt to ensure that independent schools could not be given government funds, members of the ALP's Federal Executive voted to denounce all forms of State aid on the eighth of February 1966, well before they decided Vietnam would become the issue for the 1966 election.<sup>97</sup> Calwell supported the move, Whitlam did not. Whitlam wrote a letter (which was deliberately made public) to the ALP Secretariat, Cyril Wyndham, in which he lambasted the move and criticised the existing ALP education policy.<sup>98</sup> Calwell responded by publicly supporting the decision of the Federal Executive.<sup>99</sup> In return Whitlam went on national television and declared:

'I can only say we have just got rid of the thirty-six faceless men stigma to be faced with the twelve witless men.'<sup>100</sup>

The Federal Executive, and Calwell, were understandably outraged and convened an emergency meeting in March, with the aim of expelling Whitlam from the Party, having charged him with 'gross disloyalty'.<sup>101</sup> Historian Brian Carroll reports that Calwell was apparently 'gleeful' at the prospect of expelling the 'big bastard' Whitlam, which demonstrates that the animosity between the two men had reached a considerable peak prior to Vietnam becoming the issue of 1966.<sup>102</sup> Whitlam was however not expelled from the

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<sup>97</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.30.

<sup>98</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.32.

<sup>99</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.32.

<sup>100</sup> The faceless men stigma referred to an incident during the 1963 election in which Calwell and Whitlam were photographed waiting outside of a meeting of the ALP's Federal Executive as they were not permitted to attend the meeting nor determine Party policy; Daly, *From Curtin to Kerr*, p.173.

<sup>101</sup> Overacker, *Australian Parties*, p.113.

<sup>102</sup> Carroll, *Whitlam*, p.51.



Party and following an apology in which he affirmed his loyalty to the ALP he informed the Executive that ‘the public will never elect a Labor Government until the party shows greater confidence in its parliamentarians’ (that is to say that the ALP needed to stop informing its elected parliamentarians what they should be doing).<sup>103</sup> Whitlam’s escape from expulsion only served to increase the distrust between he and Calwell in the lead up to the election.

In late April Whitlam, having only just avoided expulsion from the Party, challenged Calwell for the leadership position. Whitlam had publicly accused Calwell of being ‘too old and weak’ to ever lead the ALP to victory in 1965 and clearly his attitude remained unchanged in the lead up to the election.<sup>104</sup> At the urging of the New South Wales (NSW) Labor executive (who shared his views on Calwell’s inability to lead the Party to victory) Whitlam attempted to take Calwell’s job at the ALP Caucus meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1966.<sup>105</sup> Frustration over Whitlam’s early opinion that Australia should be involved in Vietnam in a United Nations capacity (discussed later in this chapter) and Calwell’s assertion that Australia should have no involvement at all, the NSW branch of the ALP put forth a motion that the current ALP leadership should resign and the positions be opened for re-election. Whitlam resigned immediately, Calwell did not. Consequently the matter was put to a vote, defeated 49 to 24 and Whitlam was permitted to retake his position as deputy.<sup>106</sup> This failed attempt to remove Calwell as leader was one of the early signs of the ALP fracturing in 1966, and one which Holt and the LCP would point to as evidence that even at the upper levels of the ALP there was no loyalty. Indeed the Liberal Parties director (J.R. Willoughby) sent a memo, dated May 10 1966, to all federal Liberal parliamentarians informing them that whilst:

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<sup>103</sup> The Australian Labor Party, *Report of the Special Commonwealth Conference*, March 1966, p.56-7.

<sup>104</sup> *The Australian*, 14 January 1965, p.1.

<sup>105</sup> Carroll, *Whitlam*, p.55.

<sup>106</sup> Overacker, *Australian Parties*, p.115.

‘It is certainly true that Mr. Whitlam, had he been promoted, might have been able to build up a more favourable image with the public than Mr. Calwell. But we feel that the decision to retain Mr. Calwell should not be accepted by us with any complacency.’<sup>107</sup>

This memo demonstrated that the level of infighting within the ALP had reached the stage where it was gaining considerable public attention. As the election date loomed and both Calwell and Whitlam became particularly vocal over the issues of conscription and the American Alliance the Party infighting only increased. Disagreement over these issues would prove fatal for the ALP, and demonstrated a clear effect of the American Alliance on the election outcome.

Although Calwell and Whitlam had shared similar views on keeping troops in Vietnam to ensure America would not be abandoned in 1965, Calwell’s opinion on the matter had shifted dramatically by the time of the election.<sup>108</sup> Although he remained a staunch opponent of conscription Calwell had publicly stated in 1965 that ‘the United States must not withdraw and must not be humiliated in Asia’ in response to a comment by Paul Hasluck (Australian External Affairs Minister under Menzies) that an anti-American campaign was being waged by the LCP’s opponents.<sup>109</sup> Calwell clearly saw huge value in the American Alliance and at the start of the American involvement in Vietnam both Calwell and the ALP caucus supported the deployment of Australian advisers.<sup>110</sup> As the conflict intensified and Australia introduced National Service and pledged more troops the ALP still appeared to support the

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<sup>107</sup> Letter from J.R Willoughby to members of the Federal Parliamentary Liberal Party, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Federal Election 1966, item number 122, series number M2606, National Archives of Australia.

<sup>108</sup> Both Calwell and Whitlam had expressed the view that America must not be humiliated in South East Asia, as an American humiliation would serve to remove their influence from the region and increase the likelihood of Chinese aggression in Australia. See Calwell, Arthur. Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 May 1965, p.1103-1105; Carroll, *Whitlam*, p.56

<sup>109</sup> Lavelle, Ashley. ‘Labor and Vietnam: A Reappraisal’, *Labour History*, 90: May 2006, p.121

<sup>110</sup> Hocking, Jenny. *Gough Whitlam, A Moment In History*, Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2009, p.262.

conflict. However, this support was dependent upon the continued absence of conscripts from Vietnam. Calwell himself asserted that ‘sooner or later the dispute in Vietnam must be settled through the councils of the United Nations. If it is necessary to back with a peace force the authority of the United Nations, we would support Australian participation to the hilt.’<sup>111</sup> This statement from Calwell would of course allow for serious ambiguity over the ALP’s intentions for Vietnam. It demonstrated to Australians that whilst they were against armed conflict in Vietnam under the direction of America, they were for armed conflict if the United Nations was.

Whitlam’s support for initial Australian commitment stemmed from his belief (which was shared by many in the Australian public) that America was the ‘only effective counterweight to Chinese [or communist] influence [in Indochina]’.<sup>112</sup> Historian Jenny Hocking provides us with the reasoning for this thinking. The ALP was genuinely concerned about the livelihood of the American Alliance. Completely denouncing American troops serving in Vietnam could embarrass America and harm the alliance.<sup>113</sup> Gough Whitlam himself certainly agreed with this concept, having felt that the biggest problem for the ALP in 1966 was ‘how to oppose the American intervention without opposing America; how to denounce the war without denouncing the US.’<sup>114</sup> Brian Carroll suggests that Calwell’s change in attitude was the final and unfixable divide between he and Whitlam, and their diverging attitudes concerning the war.<sup>115</sup> Carroll’s assertion is based on the switching of Calwell’s stance on the Vietnam War issue; his 1965 declaration that America must not be humiliated was quickly reinvented as a denunciation of the Vietnam War as cruel and unwinnable.<sup>116</sup> Whitlam however did not

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<sup>111</sup> Freudenberg, *Certain Grandeur*, p.53.

<sup>112</sup> Lavelle, ‘Labor and Vietnam’, p.121.

<sup>113</sup> Hocking, *Gough Whitlam*, p.265.

<sup>114</sup> Whitlam, Gough. *The Whitlam Government: 1972-1975*, Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985, p.36.

<sup>115</sup> Carroll, *Whitlam*, p.56.

<sup>116</sup> Carroll, *Whitlam*, p.56.

change his stance and whilst he attempted to steer the election away from the Vietnam issue and towards domestic policy (as evidenced by his feelings on the ALP's independent school funding policy) it would only be a matter of time before he would be required to comment on his stance towards the Australian military commitment in Vietnam.

When Whitlam did finally clarify his stance on Vietnam, Calwell was furious. Whitlam declared that in his opinion, a military victory in Vietnam was achievable. He supported Australia's involvement, and Australian support for America as a result of what he called a 'fraternal feeling for our great allies'.<sup>117</sup> The LCP was once again quick to pick up on the friction caused by Whitlam's stance, and Holt went so far as to outline the issue to LBJ as it stood in August of 1966:

'In the first two weeks of this parliamentary session the Opposition has shown itself to be hopelessly confused and divided on the issues of Vietnam and National Service. Opposition Leader, Calwell, keeps speaking of a 'dirty, cruel, unwinnable war'. But the deputy leader, Whitlam, who has recently returned from Vietnam, has asserted that a military victory may be secured within one or two years.'<sup>118</sup>

It is safe to assume from this correspondence that Whitlam's visit to Vietnam allowed him to solidify his view that the Australian involvement in the conflict remained worthwhile even if the ALP took office. This Vietnam visit, which occurred during the winter recess of 1966, was made by several high-ranking federal members of the ALP, although Calwell, who was initially also attending was forced to remain in Australia (due to his hospitalisation following

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<sup>117</sup> Jordens, Ann Mari. 'Conscription and Dissent, the Genesis of Anti-War Protest', in Gregory Pemberton, eds., *Vietnam Remembered* (Sydney: New Holland Publishers, 2009), p.81.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from Harold Holt to Lyndon Baines Johnson, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Correspondence between the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Holt, and US President, item number 1, series number A7854, document 79, National Archives of Australia.

an assassination attempt). Certainly the visit of LBJ shifted the views of ALP Member of Parliament Jim Cairns who reported that following the visit he understood that immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces would be impractical and inhumane.<sup>119</sup> Whitlam, as evidenced by the above extract clearly still saw value in supporting Australian (and consequently American) military involvement in South-East Asia, and this would allow for a very public ‘fracture’ between he and Calwell in the final weeks before the election. Kim C. Beazley asserts that the issue for Whitlam was that he truly believed that Australia’s interests lay in supporting an American military (and economic) role in the Indochina region.<sup>120</sup> This is certainly a compelling argument, and it is clear to see from statements made to the media (such as his assertion following his Vietnam visit that Australia should stay in Vietnam) that whilst Whitlam was anti-conscription he did feel that an Australian commitment in Vietnam and a continuation of strong ties with America were essential to Australian security. Unfortunately Whitlam’s opinions conflicted with those of Calwell who was resolved to withdraw all service personnel from Vietnam regardless of America’s standpoint.

The views of Cairns were another example of the disunity of the ALP over the issue of conscription, as like Calwell and Whitlam he had his own views on the matter. Cairns was a ‘ranking’ member of the ALP federal parliamentarians, and effectively the leader of the far-left wing of the Party. Consequently he agreed with Calwell’s anti-conscription message and whilst he did support the Party line, Cairns made it very clear that he wanted all troops to come home from Vietnam.<sup>121</sup> The main problem presented by this was that it clearly conflicted with the similar, but different views on troop involvement other ranking ALP members had given to the public. The Liberal Party picked up on this and produced a

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<sup>119</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.135.

<sup>120</sup> Beazley, Kim C. ‘Federal Labor and Commitment’ in King, Peter, ed. *Australia's Vietnam: Australia in the Second Indo-China War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983), p.50-51.

<sup>121</sup> Kuhn, Rick. ‘The Australian left, nationalism and the Vietnam War’, *Labour History*, 72: May 1997, p.167.

pamphlet titled “Mr. Beazley (another ranking member of the ALP), the Liberals and the voters would like to know...”, the body of this pamphlet outlined the problem presented by the three men’s statements:

‘Bring home all national servicemen serving overseas. (Calwell).’

‘Give the national servicemen the free opportunity of withdrawing. (Whitlam).’

‘Bring home all troops from South Vietnam. (Cairns).’<sup>122</sup>

As evidenced by the above statements Cairns was providing nothing other than more confusion for the voters. If ranking members of the opposition could not come together on the single issue upon which they had deliberately centred the election, the public could fairly assume (and be encouraged by the LCP) that, should the ALP win the election, they would be incapable of governing cohesively.

The disunity of the ALP was highly criticised by all other major parties as evidenced by the wording found on the reverse of one of the Liberal Party’s campaign ads, ‘It’s your choice’ (fig. 3, see fig 2 for the front of this ad) highlighted the ALP infighting. In fact The Liberal Party actively encouraged the ALP’s infighting as evidenced by the same memo from the tenth of May in which the Liberal Party director informed Liberal federal parliamentarians:

‘Our attack should be directed not to Mr. Calwell but to what we might now call the Calwell-Whitlam axis. It is demonstrable that Mr. Whitlam had consented to repudiate his so-called Right-Wing beliefs and identify himself with the Left-Wing policies sponsored by Mr Calwell. It should be our aim to show the electorate that the

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<sup>122</sup> The Liberal Party of Australia, ‘Mr. K.S. Beazley, the Liberals and the voters would like to know...’ *The Queensland Liberal*, September 1966.

Parliamentary Labor Party has elected to follow the Left-Wing masters of the ALP. This course would have two advantages. As well as building up our general attack on Left-Wing thinking it may be calculated to embarrass the Right-Wing and perhaps feed the underlying resentments between the factions.<sup>123</sup>

These attacks clearly had the desired effect, as several ALP members (as previously outlined) made conflicting statements about the key issue of conscription.



Fig 3.

Reverse of the Liberal Party's 'It's your choice' ad which emphasised the divisions in the ALP. The Liberal Party of Australia. *It's Your Choice*. Election pamphlet, (Sydney: The Land Printing House, 1966).

<sup>123</sup> Letter from J.R Willoughby to members of the Federal Parliamentary Liberal Party, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Federal Election 1966, item number 122, series number M2606, National Archives of Australia.

ALP disunity over the issues of conscription and Australian involvement in Vietnam was rife, and not just between Calwell and Whitlam. In August of 1966 a Victorian Member of Parliament, Captain Sam Benson, was expelled from the ALP for publicly announcing that he supported the Australian commitment in Vietnam. Benson was a member of the Defend Australia Committee, a non-partisan group which supported the Australian commitment to Vietnam and the use of national service personnel in the conflict.<sup>124</sup> Membership of such a group, which was usually associated more with the LCP and the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), was contrary to the official ALP line released in May of 1966 that as government, they would bring home all conscripts without delay.<sup>125</sup> Benson refused to resign as a member of the Defend Australia Committee and as a result the ALP Federal Executive declared that any member of the Committee (or its Sydney based counterpart, the Defend Australia League) would be expelled from the Party, which Benson promptly was.<sup>126</sup> Benson's eviction from the ALP was however not the end of his political career, he ran as an independent and retained his seat against an ALP endorsed candidate, demonstrating the ongoing popular appeal of both Australian involvement in the conflict in Vietnam and the use of conscripts.<sup>127</sup>

The stance of the ALP on the American Alliance came to a head in October, when the LBJ visit was on Australia's doorstep. Faced with immense public support for the visit Calwell was forced into an awkward position. Edwards suggests that part of the reason for this awkwardness was not just the public support for LBJ but Calwell's American heritage (Calwell's grandfather was American and had immigrated to Australia in 1853).<sup>128</sup> High public support combined with his heritage meant that Calwell had little choice but to publicly express support for American interests in Indochina and for LBJ's visit. In a speech

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<sup>124</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.136.

<sup>125</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1966, p.1.

<sup>126</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.136.

<sup>127</sup> Overacker, *Australian Parties*, p.122.

<sup>128</sup> Calwell's grandfather was an American who had immigrated to Australia in 1853; Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.137.



welcoming LBJ Calwell praised the American President's attempts to obtain some form of peace in Vietnam and called on the North Vietnamese to 'come to the table' for peace talks, at the same time however he managed to avoid mentioning that he wanted to bring the troops home. This said he did manage to anger LBJ by openly alluding to the disagreement in the American Democratic Party over American involvement in Vietnam in his welcome speech.<sup>129</sup>

Calwell's largely welcoming message was publicly contradicted by the ALP's federal president, Senator J.B. Keefe, who openly stated that LBJ's visit was a 'cheap political gimmick' and encouraged Australians to protest during LBJ's trip to demonstrate that 'this country is not in favour of selling the lives and souls of young Australians in Vietnam.'<sup>130</sup> Keefe's comments were dismissed by Calwell and other ranking members of the ALP who were desperate to quell any anti-American and anti-Vietnam protests during the LBJ visit. Jeffery Grey has come to the conclusion that this was to prevent alienation with moderate middle class voters.<sup>131</sup> Churchward however asserts that the desire of Calwell and the ALP to tone down statements by Keefe was due to concerns that ALP sanctioned protests during the visit would provide 'proof' that an ALP government would not honour the American Alliance.<sup>132</sup> Certainly Churchward provides a compelling argument, that the awkward position Calwell was placed in during the visit was clearly fuelled by the need to not appear anti-American during such a popular visit. But the damage Keefe had inflicted by publicly announcing that Australians should protest and treat the visit as a gimmick whilst Calwell said the opposite was significant. An opposition leader being unable to agree with his Party's leader over a central issue related to support of America gave the public the very disturbing

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<sup>129</sup> Beazley, Kim C. 'Federal Labor and the Vietnam Commitment', p.49-50.

<sup>130</sup> Ham, *Vietnam, The Australian War*, p.274.

<sup>131</sup> Grey, Jeffrey. 'Protest and Dissent, Anti-Vietnam War Activism in Australia', Doyle, Jeff; Jeffrey Grey and Peter Pierce, eds. *Australia's Vietnam War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), p.60-61.

<sup>132</sup> Churchward, Lloyd Gordon. *Australia & America 1788-1972*, p.170.

image that if elected Calwell would not have the ability to govern the Party he might form a government with.

Calwell and Whitlam failed to agree on how withdrawal from of troops from Vietnam should occur. Whitlam's final statement of 'clarification' on the issue only provided more confusion between he and Calwell. Whitlam stated that Australian troops would be brought home 'as soon as possible' and further to this stated that:

'after consultation with the American and Vietnamese governments, or after the reconvening of the Geneva conference, or after a resolution by the United Nations, the Labor Government judges that there should still be Australian troops in Vietnam it would send regular troops.'<sup>133</sup>

This 'clarification' of 17 November was rejected by Calwell the following day when he stated that:

'I [Calwell] didn't say that after consultation we would withdraw them. We will not be taking part in a dialogue with the Americans as to whether we should or should not withdraw. Withdrawal is our business and our right. We are not telling America to withdraw her troops, and she's certainly not telling us to withdraw our troops.'<sup>134</sup>

The LCP was able to jump on this particular fallout twice, once on the clear lack of Party loyalty and once on the apparent anti-Americanism in Calwell's statement.

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<sup>133</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, 17 November 1966.

<sup>134</sup> 'War withdrawal 'our business' Calwell asserts', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday November 18, 1966, p.8.

The final spat between Whitlam and Calwell (which was the exact same argument the two men had just been involved in) came just days before the election, on November 22 *The Australian* ran a five word front page headline which effectively rang the death knell for the ALP. ‘Whitlam: Regulars Stay in Vietnam’, the headline and story demonstrated all that was wrong with the ALP in the final few weeks before the 1966 election, the attempts at party unity had failed. Whitlam’s statement was seized upon by the LCP as final proof of their inability to be loyal to each other, a claim which was strengthened only twenty four hours later when the major news outlets ran a story on Calwell’s response, ‘Calwell contradicts Whitlam on troops’ being one such story.<sup>135</sup> This article (again in *The Australian*) went on to say that ‘In a statement presented as an outline of Labor policy, Mr Calwell plainly contradicted comments made by his deputy, Mr Whitlam, in Adelaide on Monday.’<sup>136</sup> Calwell further confused the matter by announcing that an ALP government would raise a Citizens Military Force (CMF) of 140,000.<sup>137</sup> This would serve as the Australian equivalent of the American National Guard (or today’s Australian Army Reserve) and all members would be voluntary. Calwell’s concept was based on the fact that many regular army volunteers were turned away due to medical or educational shortcomings, and by allowing these individuals to make up a reserve force Australia could do away with conscription.<sup>138</sup> This force would be used within Australian territory and could potentially be used in a UN force should the need arise. This CMF was a last minute attempt to show to the pro-conscription public that even though the ALP was not for conscription was for strong Australian security.

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Calwell contradicts Whitlam on troops’, *The Australian*, November 23, 1966, p.1.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Calwell contradicts Whitlam on troops’, *The Australian*, November 23, 1966, p.1.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Calwell plan for C.M.F. of 140,000’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 22, 1966, p.1.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Calwell plan for C.M.F. of 140,000’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 22, 1966, p.1.

This last minute adjustment in ALP defence policy came too late, and the infighting over conscription had done considerable damage. Three days before the election *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran the following headline:

‘On the eve of the election, the Opposition Leader, Mr A. A. Calwell, and his deputy, Mr E. G. Whitlam, have split in a manner unprecedented in the turbulent history of the Labor Party since 1949.’<sup>139</sup>

Calwell was forced to defend his party and stated the next day that ‘I give the lie direct to those who say there is a split within the Labor Party on Vietnam or anything else.’<sup>140</sup> Calwell’s timing in denying a split was poor, election material produced by the LCP (and in some cases the DLP) had already capitalised on the inability of the Party to present a united line on conscription and the use of conscripted troops. This inability was, as with the conscription debate, presented to the public as proof that they would run out on the American Alliance and leave Australia by itself in the ‘fight against communism’, and this cost the ALP the 1966 election. These struggles of the ALP would only be exacerbated by the Presidential visit in October and the onset of the official election campaign in November of 1966

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<sup>139</sup> Fitchett, Ian and Hutchinson, Sam. ‘Leader of A.L.P. split on Vietnam’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 23, 1966 p.1.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Calwell denies split in Labor Party’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 24, 1966, p1.

V  
'All The Way With LBJ'

Following his appointment as Prime Minister in January 1966 Harold Holt received a cable from his American counterpart congratulating him on succeeding Menzies; in response Holt reiterated a 'long-standing' invitation for L.B.J to visit Australia in the hopes that the offer would finally be accepted.<sup>141</sup> It took almost eight months but in early October LBJ finally accepted the invitation to visit Australia, and following an announcement of the impending visit in the Australian Parliament Holt sent the following to the President:

'The only really sour note has come from Senator Keefe, the Federal President of the Labor Party, who charges me with a political motive in pressing you to visit us. This recalled to my mind the comment of a former colleague of mine about one of his critics, that he would find politics in the Lord's Prayer.'<sup>142</sup>

Holt's comical cable and Keefe's comment, demonstrate the most obvious way that the American Alliance affected the election in 1966. On the threshold of the official election campaign period, the first American President ever to visit Australia whilst in office arrived. LBJ created a sensation within Australia, thousands packed the streets to catch a glimpse of the American in scenes which surpassed those of the Royal visit of 1963.<sup>143</sup> LBJ's visit was the main feature of the 1966 campaign, and following LBJ's departure America stayed very

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<sup>141</sup> Cablegram from Harold Holt to Keith Waller, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Correspondence between the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Holt, and US President, item number 1, series number A7854, document number 8, National Archives of Australia.

<sup>142</sup> Cablegram from Harold Holt to Keith Waller, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Correspondence between the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Holt, and US President, item number 1, series number A7854, document number 93, National Archives of Australia.

<sup>143</sup> The 1963 Royal visit was in stark contrast to the Royal visit of 1954. In 1954 Queen Elizabeth II became the first reigning monarch to tour Australia, estimates put 1,000,000 people at Farm Cove (the Queen's arrival location) and a further 200,000 people and 20,000 cars on the queen's route through Sydney city on the night of the arrival alone. In 1963 when Queen Elizabeth toured Australia in preparation of the Canberra jubilee celebrations it was announced that the visit would be considerably more 'informal' and republicanism had gained considerable weight resulting in a very lukewarm reception for the Queen. See *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1954, p.1; *The Bulletin*, 9 February 1963, p.8.

much at the forefront of the election, which is to be expected given the importance placed on Vietnam and conscription. All major political parties made statements regarding Australia's alliances, particularly the American Alliance and the security it could, or could not provide.

Whilst the official campaign period began after LBJ had left Australia, the visit occurred only a month before the election (from October 20<sup>th</sup> through to October 23<sup>rd</sup>) meaning it is perfectly reasonable to include in the campaign period. Certainly at the time sections of the media and the ALP thought the timing of the visit was suspect, and the effect of the visit on voters has been debated by various historians. Paul Williams considers the visit to have been a highlight of the American Alliance, but inconsequential on the election outcome. Williams certainly provides compelling evidence for his argument, having performed a comparative study on how individuals in electorates where LBJ did and did not visit voted. Williams' findings show that there was not a significantly larger swing to the LCP in the states LBJ visited, and in fact the highest swing to the LCP occurred in South Australia which LBJ did not visit.<sup>144</sup> Williams' findings are backed up by historians Overacker and Albinski both of whom agree that the visit did little to boost LCP votes. Overacker certainly attempts to demonstrate the validity of this by pointing out that support for Vietnam, conscription, and Holt's government remained high throughout 1966 (as evidenced by Gallup Polls) and not just in the weeks after LBJ's visit.<sup>145</sup> Albinski feels that it is impossible to establish the weight of the visit on the election outcome, even though Williams and Overacker have attempted to demonstrate the immediate effects.<sup>146</sup> However Albinski does concede that whilst the visit may not have had an immediate effect on the voting patterns of Australians it certainly contributed to the appearance of an ALP split (as discussed in the previous chapter, Calwell gave in to the public support for LBJ and issued a statement in favour of the visit

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<sup>144</sup> Williams, 'Holt, Johnson and the 1966 Federal Election', p.381.

<sup>145</sup> Overacker, *Australian Parties*, p.305.

<sup>146</sup> Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia*, p.66.

whilst the ALP Federal President issued one against it) which did have an effect on the election outcome.<sup>147</sup>

The view that the visit did not affect the election is contested by public commentators such as Ray Aitchison and to a lesser extent historian Paul Ham, as well as by ALP politicians who were in parliament during 1966. Aitchison considered the visit to be a ‘deliberate and brilliant’ piece of electioneering by Holt and is in no doubt that the visit gave Holt and the LCP a considerable electoral advantage.<sup>148</sup> Ham calls the visit a ‘calculated triumph’, and if the visit itself had no effect on the election then he suggests that the spike in media support for a Prime Minister who was able to bring one of the most powerful world leaders to Australia certainly did.<sup>149</sup> The media in particular was overwhelmingly enthusiastic about this visit, and the extent of this enthusiasm is discussed later in this chapter. Serving members of the ALP certainly had no doubts about the intentions of the visit, with views of individuals such as Senator Keefe being loud enough for Holt to report to LBJ prior to his arrival. Fred Daly, another long serving ALP Member of Parliament, stated in his autobiography that:

‘The visit was perfectly timed – almost on the eve of the elections. It was the first time in Australia that such a personality has been used so unscrupulously – and allowed himself to be – for political purposes. Holt was as good as elected the day LBJ departed.’<sup>150</sup>

This view was certainly shared by almost all in the ALP with Senator John Wheeldon asking in Parliament during October if:

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<sup>147</sup> Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia*, p.65.

<sup>148</sup> Aitchison, *From Bob to Bungles & Now to Billy*, p.29.

<sup>149</sup> Ham, *Vietnam, The Australian War*, p.268-270.

<sup>150</sup> Daly, *From Curtin to Kerr*, p.179.

‘the Government's invitation to President Johnson to visit Australia at this time means that there is to be a change of election practice by the Liberal Party, and that in future, instead of members of the British Royal family, American politicians will be invited to this country to support the Liberal Party's election campaigns?’<sup>151</sup>.

Even LBJ and Holt were aware that the timing of the visit appeared suspect, with LBJ stating in an October cable that:

‘I have very much in mind the fact that you will be facing elections in November, and I believe it will be possible to make the visit a friendly and rewarding exchange between allies and friends without any partisan implication.’<sup>152</sup>

The shared ALP view that the visit was nothing more than a shrewd political attempt by Holt to garner more support is certainly understandable, particularly in light of Wheeldon’s quote which points out that in the past the Liberal Party had closely aligned themselves with the British Monarchy in previous elections to their advantage.<sup>153</sup> However the work of historians such as Williams, combined with LBJ’s clear desire to keep the visit apolitical makes the argument that the visit did not affect the election outcome considerably more persuasive.

The effect of the visit considered, LBJ’s trip to Australia did actually serve an official purpose, as it was a predecessor to the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO, discussed later) Manila Conference which occurred during late October. This conference was

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<sup>151</sup> Wheeldon, John. Hansard, Senate, 11 October 1966, p.885.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from Lyndon Baines Johnson to Harold Holt, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1966, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Holt, Correspondence between the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Holt, and US President, item number 1, series number A7854, document number 95, National Archives of Australia.

<sup>153</sup> Such as during the 1963 Federal Election, which occurred seven months after the 1963 Royal visit.



focused on showing a 'united front' by the SEATO allies involved in the defence of South Vietnam. Aitchison, who as previously discussed felt the visit was Holt's 'trump card', concedes that by timing the visit right before the Manila Conference Holt and LBJ were able to engage in 'top level' conferences to ensure that they were agreed on vital matters relating to the Vietnam War prior to Manila.<sup>154</sup> In addition to conferences between Holt and LBJ the trade deals between Australia and America were made behind closed doors during the visit, with Holt gaining agreements on the export of Australian wheat and lamb, such deals were however kept quiet due to fear of what Edwards calls 'blood for dollars' accusations.<sup>155</sup>

The media response to the visit was phenomenal, and as mentioned previously historians such as Ham feel that the visit allowed for a 'spike' in pro-LCP press coverage. Every major newspaper published articles on the Australian-American relationship, examining areas such as defence cooperation, learning exchanges, and in *The Sydney Morning Herald* there was even an explanation of how the American government was voted in and worked.<sup>156</sup> Closer to the date of the visit headlines such as 'A Million Hooray's For L.B.J' began to appear, with stories focusing on parade routes and the issuing of free American and Australian flags for spectators during the visit.<sup>157</sup> There are mixed messages from the Australian media regarding their opinion on the effect of the visit. Certainly there was plenty of noise made about the comings and goings of the visit with coverage of a luncheon in Parliament by *The Australian*, one leg of the visit was televised live over several television stations, and even some focus on the itinerary of LBJ's wife during the visit.<sup>158</sup> In addition LBJ clearly managed to 'seduce' sections of the media, with the *Sydney Morning Herald* stating that '[the] tall, tanned leader

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<sup>154</sup> Aitchison, *From Bob to Bungles & Now to Billy*, p.29.

<sup>155</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.116.

<sup>156</sup> 'President Johnson Souvenir', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 20, 1966.

<sup>157</sup> 'A Million Hoorays for L.B.J.', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 16, 1966, p.1.

<sup>158</sup> 'For LBJ it was lunch among friends', *The Australian*, October 22, 1966, p.4. 'For Lady Bird, sunshine, and a kangaroo called Fred', *The Australian*, October 22, 1966, p.3, Williams 'Holt, Johnson and the 1966 Federal Election', p.367.

shows magnetism, mastery of words'.<sup>159</sup> But very little noise was made by the press about the possibility of Holt using the Presidential visit to his advantage. One of the few instances of the media directly questioning the timing of the visit is found in a cartoon by Aubrey Collette, the political cartoonist for *The Australian* who produced many iconic images on the American Alliance. One such cartoon was published on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1966 (fig 4.), it featured a grinning Holt in a wedding gown being carried over the 'election threshold' by his groom, LBJ. Calwell is pictured throwing 'protest' confetti on the happy couple while ranking members of the Holt administration look on with pride.<sup>160</sup> It would be almost impossible to misinterpret what Collette is implying, that LBJ did affect the popularity of the LCP and consequently the election outcome. What we can gather from the media coverage afforded to the visit is that Ham's conclusion is correct. While LBJ's visit may not have had a direct impact on the election, the clear pro-LBJ stance of the media carried onto a pro-Holt stance. This implied to the Australian public that the American Alliance was considerably stronger in the hands of the LCP, particularly given the friendly way LBJ interacted with Holt in comparison to Calwell (which became considerably more pronounced during the visit when Calwell managed to anger LBJ during his welcome speech).

LBJ most certainly helped increase Holt's public profile and popular appeal as head of the LCP. On repeated occasions during the visit the President would place a hand on Holts shoulder and tell the adoring Australian public, 'look, this is your Prime Minister'.<sup>161</sup> The condescending nature of this comment was not questioned, but it allowed Holt to claim a kind of 'special relationship' with LBJ and gave him the appearance of being LBJ's man in Australia. LBJ even offered Australians a response to Holt's infamous 'Australia will be all

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<sup>159</sup> Robinson, Desmond. 'Tall, tanned leader shows magnetism, mastery of words', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 22, 1966, p.6.

<sup>160</sup> *The Australian*, October 21, 1966 p.12.

<sup>161</sup> Ward, Russel. *A Nation for a Continent, the history of Australia 1901-1975* (Richmond: Heinemann Educational Australia Pty Ltd, 1977), p.364.

the way with LBJ'.<sup>162</sup> LBJ stated during his Canberra leg of the visit that '[he] LBJ is with Australia all the way'.<sup>163</sup> He went on to state that:

'There is not a boy wearing uniform yonder today who does not know that when freedom is at stake, when brave men stand shoulder to shoulder in battle, Australia will go all the way – and America will go all the way – not part of the way, not a third of the way, not three parts of the way but all the way.'<sup>164</sup>

This was a bold statement of support for the Menzies/Holt policies of engagement in Vietnam, which was particularly interesting to Australians given that the best Calwell could muster in response was stating that 'We [the ALP] will do our best to maintain our alliances and to observe our treaties at all times.'<sup>165</sup> It should be noted that LBJ's 'all the way' comment and clear support for the LCP was in response to Calwell's welcome speech. Calwell had angered LBJ by bringing up the divisions over the Vietnam War in both American society and politics (including in LBJ's own Party). Calwell had quoted President Abraham Lincoln, and addition he called upon the views of President J.F. Kennedy, Senators Fulbright, Mansfield, Robert and Edward Kennedy, and twenty four others who shared the same views as the ALP on involvement in Vietnam.<sup>166</sup> By reminding LBJ that politics in his home country were not united on the issue in Vietnam Calwell apparently infuriated LBJ which in turn lead to LBJ's blatant support for Holt over Calwell.

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<sup>162</sup> Holt had uttered this phrase during his July 1966 visit to America, and it was a play on LBJ's slogan for the 1964 Presidential Election. See Ham, *Vietnam the Australian War*, p.264 .

<sup>163</sup> 'LBJ is with Australia all the way', *The Australian*, October 22, 1966, p.1.

<sup>164</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 1966.

<sup>165</sup> 'Calwell quotes Lincoln's Famous Address' *The Australian*, October 22 1966, p.4.

<sup>166</sup> 'Calwell quotes Lincoln's Famous Address' *The Australian*, October 22 1966, p.4



Fig 4.

Collette, Aubrey. 'Wedding of the year', *The Australian*, October 21 1966, p.12.

Holt's election policy speech for the Liberal Party covered all of the expected issues for a sitting government. Domestic issues, such as the continuation of the popular School Science Block program instituted under Menzies (how this program affected the ALP in the lead up to the election is discussed in the previous chapter), a redevelopment of the social service program through a liberalisation of means testing and national development schemes for rural and tourism industries were all covered by Holt before he moved onto issues of foreign policy.<sup>167</sup>

In announcing policy proposals for external relations Holt stressed the Liberal Parties commitment to its alliances, including the American Alliance and SEATO. This second treaty, which is alternately referred to as the Manila Pact, was a collective defence pact signed by Australia, New Zealand, America, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, France and the United Kingdom. South Vietnam was not a member but was offered military protection

<sup>167</sup> Holt, Harold E. '1966 Liberal Party of Australia Election Policy Speech', in McAllister, Ian and Rhonda Moore, eds. *Party Strategy and Change: Australian Political Leaders' Policy Speeches Since 1946* (Kings Gardens: Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd, 1991), p.196-198.

under the treaty due to the strong anti-communist ideals behind the pact.<sup>168</sup> The Liberal Party stressed the importance of honouring the obligations it had to other nations under ANZUS and SEATO, particularly given that South Vietnam was offered military protection under the latter and was ‘threatened’ by the communist North Vietnam. This, along with the ongoing battle to ‘keep communism off Australian shores’ meant that the Liberal Party was in a strong position to rationalise their decisions to introduce conscription and commit forces in Asia. Holt introduced the importance of alliances in the opening of his explanation of Liberal Party foreign policy, informing Australians that:

‘Our foreign policy is based on the beliefs we have about the kind of Australia all of us want to see and about the kind of society we want to build and preserve here...So we have joined with others in paying a price for the freedoms we hope to retain’<sup>169</sup>

He furthered this concept stating that as a government the Liberal Party Government had:

‘...sought, above all things, to keep our country at peace; but to have some assurance that Australia will have strong and reliable friends.’<sup>170</sup>

What Holt and the Liberal Party were stressing was alliance loyalty; Australia should not and could not stand alone in the defence of its region. Alliances, particularly with the Americans, were the answer.

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<sup>168</sup> Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty (Manila Pact), September 8, 1954. Full text accessible at: The Avalon Project, *Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty (Manila Pact), September 8, 1954*, hosted by Yale Law School, <[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/usmu003.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/usmu003.asp)>. Viewed 26 Aug. 2011.

<sup>169</sup> Holt, Harold. *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, (Canberra : Liberal Party of Australia, 1966), p.14.

<sup>170</sup> Holt, *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, p.14.

Why Australia was in (and must stay in) Vietnam and required conscription for this effort was certainly an important question which had to be answered during the election by the Liberal (and Country) Party, was Australia there because America wanted it to be? Or was Australia there to keep America interested in defending the region? America certainly realised why Australia was so keen for American involvement in Asia, Woodard comments that as early as 1965 the American government saw Australian commitment to Vietnam as an attempt to keep American influence in the region.<sup>171</sup> But by early 1966 this argument appears to have carried very little weight, and the concept of staying in Vietnam because America needed Australia to be there is supported by considerably more historians than Woodard's stance. Certainly the introduction of conscripts in the Australian contribution signalled that Australia was capable of building up a sizable defence force and therefore negating the 'need' to have American troops in the region, however the view that Australia no longer desired American influence is incorrect. By 1966 the Australian Government was still overwhelmingly concerned about Chinese aggression, and saw American involvement in the region as a plausible way to keep the aggression in check. It would be more correct to argue that by 1966 Australia was in Vietnam for both reasons. Conscription for the LCP was linked to America as it was national defence. Pemberton argues that the lack of enthusiastic military assistance in Vietnam for America from the other SEATO allies (until late 1966) meant that the pressure on Australia, and therefore Holt, to provide more troops was immense.<sup>172</sup> Jordens agrees with Pemberton, pointing out that Menzies' introduction of conscription occurred almost in secrecy due to the fear that diplomatic repercussions over the inability to provide adequate troop numbers in joint military actions would be greater than the repercussions with the Australian public.<sup>173</sup> Pemberton's argument certainly stems from the

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<sup>171</sup> Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p.273.

<sup>172</sup> Pemberton, *All The Way*, p.306.

<sup>173</sup> Jordens, 'Conscription and Dissent', p.64.

Liberal policy speech of 1966, giving it considerably more credence than Woodard's, with Holt stressing the need for keeping conscripted troops in Vietnam, stating that:

‘Withdrawal of national servicemen from Vietnam, as intended by the Labor Party, would render our task force ineffective and seriously disrupt the Army. It would inevitably mean loss of confidence in Australia by its allies’.<sup>174</sup>

Clearly the image the Liberal Party was presenting to Australia was will (the Liberal Party) we be loyal and more importantly they made it very clear that the Labor Party would not be.

The ALP's election policy speech for 1966, delivered by Calwell, made it very clear from its opening what they felt the election was on:

‘The most important issue in this campaign is Conscription, the conscription of a section of our twenty years old youths, against their wishes and their wills, to kill or be killed in the undeclared, civil war in Vietnam and the threatened extension of conscription to all twenty year olds and other age groups to increase our unwarranted and unnecessary commitment.’<sup>175</sup>

Calwell did not even attempt to open his speech with an explanation of domestic policy, and his previously mentioned emotional approach to the matter of conscription dominated the first few minutes of the policy speech. This was a major problem from Calwell, as he had misread the electorate completely and was effectively ‘preaching to the converted’ by making

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<sup>174</sup> Holt, *Liberal Party of Australia Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, p.16

<sup>175</sup> Calwell, Arthur. *Australian Labor Party Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*. (Canberra: Australian Labor Party, 1966), p.1.

his policy speech a speech on conscription. Albinski certainly agrees with this argument, suggesting that the ‘old Calwellian stress on battling against conscription’ had become an old and tired battle in the minds of Australians, further to this Albinski suggests that the idea of withdrawing troops after they had been committed was an unsavoury idea to many.<sup>176</sup> Both of these arguments are supported by the Gallup Poll data which has been referenced in chapter two, which shows that Australians were in support of conscription, and Vietnam.

Calwell’s policy speech did briefly touch on education funding, schemes aimed at national development, a proposed national referendum to allow an ALP government to take control over prices and interest rates and various proposals aimed at ‘looking out for’ Aboriginals, veterans and workers.<sup>177</sup> But as stated, Calwell was keen to keep the focus of ALP policy on conscription, and rapidly brought his speech back to the matter. Whilst announcing ALP intentions for external relations Calwell announced plans to scrap conscription as it currently stood in favour for the previously discussed CMF and urged Australians to see how ‘immoral’ conscription was. He announced that:

‘there are 600,000 Australian mothers with sons between 15 and 20 years of age, and many of these boys could be sent away to die or be wounded in the long, cruel, dirty war that is Vietnam. I call on those 600,000 mothers and their husbands and their other sons and daughters to tell Mr Holt that the lives of their eligible sons are too precious to be squandered by the man who has pledged to go all the way with L.B.J.’<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Albinski, ‘Vietnam Protest & The Australian Political Process’, p.366.

<sup>177</sup> Calwell, Arthur A. ‘1966 Australian Labor Party Election Policy Speech’ election policy speech McAllister, Ian and Rhonda Moore, eds. *Party Strategy and Change: Australian Political Leaders’ Policy Speeches Since 1946* (Kings Gardens: Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd, 1991), p.85-91.

<sup>178</sup> Calwell, *Australian Labor Party Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, p.4.



Emotion was clearly Calwell's answer to the Liberal's push for loyalty. It had been since his 1965 speech, when he lambasted the decision of the Menzies' Government to commit to the conflict in Vietnam. By appealing to the mothers and fathers whose sons could be drafted and killed Calwell had clearly hoped to negate Holt's claims that ALP plans for withdrawing conscripts were anti-American and anti-alliance.

Election posters produced by the ALP often focused on how conscription could take away a family member. A particularly popular poster titled (see fig 1.) *Conscription will take your son – Sooner or Later*, featured an ominous officer in a stance usually reserved for recruiting posters (such as fig 5.) and was clearly designed to elicit an emotional response. It is almost impossible to find ALP campaign material that does not seek to bring up the conscription issue, however in an odd attempt to dispel the anti-American Alliance label they had been given the ALP did produce a series of pamphlets under the heading of *This President said*.



Fig 5.

Leete, Alfred, 'Your Country Needs You', *London Opinion*, 5 September 1914, cover image.

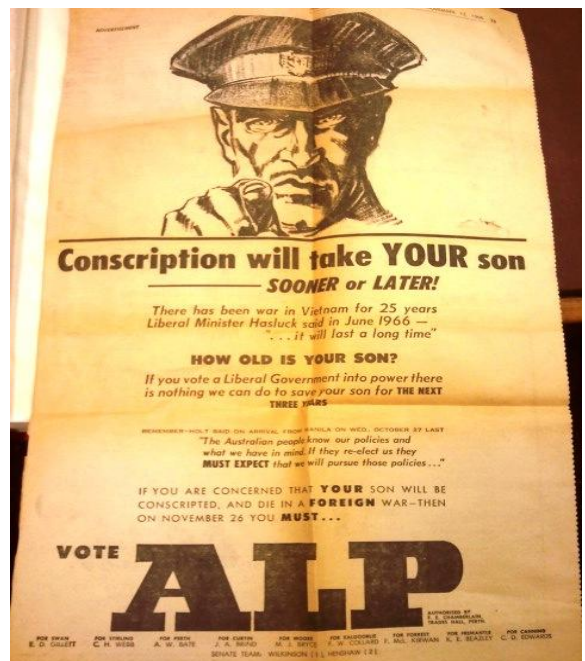


Fig 1.

The Australian Labor Party. 'Conscription will take your son' *The West Australian*, Saturday November 12, 1966, p.15.

Under this heading the ALP quoted LBJ's predecessor, President John Kennedy, who had said that he felt Vietnam was an unwinnable war for America.<sup>179</sup> The ALP utilised this and in an attempt to demonstrate that they were actually for the American Alliance included the following in the *This President Said* campaign:

'The Labor views on Vietnam are supported by opinions expressed by the late President J. F. Kennedy and by other distinguished Americans like his two famous brothers, Senators Robert and Edward Kennedy, and by Senators Fulbright and Mike Mansfield and twenty four other outstanding senators.'<sup>180</sup>

The wording of this pamphlet was taken directly from Calwell's welcome speech to LBJ in October, and served to remind Australians that the American's were just as divided on the issue of Vietnam as the LCP and ALP were. This was a clear example of the ALP fighting against the anti-American label the LCP had given them. And more importantly it demonstrated to Australians there was more than one kind of America. The LCP's election material and Alliance attitudes reveal that they saw America as a nation of military might capable of providing Australia with the defence the LCP craved. Calwell's statements however demonstrated that there was an America outside of this military power, one which shared the views of the ALP on the futility of the Vietnam War. While this attempt at bringing other (that is, non LBJ) American views into play may have helped 'tone down' the anti-American image the LCP had managed to place on the ALP the fact was that the emotional way Calwell appealed to the anti-conscription vote overshadowed it. Slogans such

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<sup>179</sup> The Australian Labor Party, *Vietnam: This President said*, election pamphlet, (Industrial Print, Carlton, 1966), p.2.

<sup>180</sup> *A.L.P News*, The Australian Labor Party, November 15 1966, p.1.

as ‘your vote will decide whether more 20-year-olds are to be sent to war in Vietnam’ failed to capture popularity in an election filled with pro-American Alliance material.<sup>181</sup>

Calwell’s own statements did little to encourage voters that they would do ‘what was needed’ to protect the American Alliance. As early as July of 1966 Calwell went on record on his ideas about Australian commitment under the American Alliance, and in response to Holt’s phrase ‘all the way with LBJ’ stated that:

‘I [Calwell] was never more sickened than when I read the utter nonsense by Mr. Holt the other day – “we’ll go all the way with LBJ.” Who does he think he is fooling? No nation can pledge itself to the complete support of another country whether it is consulted or not. That’s not the spirit of nationalism – it’s unadulterated sycophancy.’<sup>182</sup>

Statements such as this would haunt Calwell during the 1966 campaign and, as discussed in the previous chapter, Calwell’s own deputy would attempt to downplay such concepts. But the result of both Calwell’s statements and ALP attempts to down play them resulted in election material such as that seen in fig 6. This pamphlet, produced by the DLP (which was formed as a result of an ALP split in 1955) is very clear in its wording, and stresses the ‘anti-American and anti-alliance intentions’ of the ALP. Election ads such as this destroyed the credibility of the ALP, as they forced Calwell to issue statements which clearly conflicted with ideas he had presented to the public before the campaign period. Take Calwell’s previously discussed statements during the LBJ visit, which were in clear conflict with the statement above. The uphill battle faced over the conscription debate was only made steeper

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<sup>181</sup> *Re-Elect your Labor member, Jim Fraser for the A.C.T.*, election pamphlet, G.W. Taylor, Federal Capital Press, 1966.

<sup>182</sup> *ALP News*, 11 July 1966, p.1

for the ALP as they failed to push away claims by their rivals that they would damage the American Alliance.

# MAKE AUSTRALIA SECURE

**VOTE**  
**1**  
**D.L.P.**



- the D.L.P. has always fought for stronger defences and closer ties with the United States.
- the D.L.P. stands for dynamic policies to develop Australia and to make us self-reliant.
- the D.L.P. fights for a new deal for: the family man — the serviceman — the young married — the aged and infirm.
- by adding your vote to the half million people already voting D.L.P. you strengthen its voice in the National Parliament.

**VOTE**  
**2**  
**LIBERAL**



- a No. 2 vote for the Liberals instead of a No. 1 is your most effective protest against the Government's smug attitudes.
- this tells the Government that you are fed up with its half-way defence attitudes, its stop-go economy, its failure to build an Australian defence industry, its denial of justice to families and pensioners.
- an increased D.L.P. vote is the most effective way of forcing the government out of its complacency.

**VOTE**  
**LAST\***  
**A.L.P.**



- the fewer No. 1 and No. 2 votes the A.L.P. gets, the quicker it will discard its un-Australian policies.
- this rejects the A.L.P.'s anti-American attitudes and declares support for the U.S. Alliance.
- the A.L.P. attacks our friends, the Americans, and defends our enemies.
- the A.L.P. is unable to govern itself let alone Australia.
- the A.L.P. is not worthy of a place in Australia's National Parliament, even as an Opposition.

unless there is a Communist Candidate

**Move forward with the D.L.P.**  
**The only party which has been right**  
**—and right in time!**

Fig 6.

The Democratic Labor Party. *Think Carefully*, election pamphlet (Potts Point: Braddon Printing Pty Ltd, 1966).

The election campaign of 1966 demonstrated once and for all the ability of the American Alliance to impact upon an election result. The LBJ visit was an absolute success for the LCP; LBJ encouraged and pledged support for LCP policies in Vietnam. Which provided

Australians with welcome reassurance about the decisions of the sitting Government. The campaign itself was populated with pro-Alliance and pro-America messages from all sides of politics. However it was the LCP's strong defensive Alliance message which hit home the hardest. The ALP's pledge to bring home conscripts and end conscription did not sit well in a nation in which fear of Chinese aggression was overwhelmingly strong. The American Alliance combined with continued conscription were the answer to the fears of many Australians, and this was reflected in the LCP victory of 1966.

## VI CONCLUSION

There can be little doubt that the American Alliance and how it was used by the Holt government as a test of loyalty and commitment to Australian security clearly had an impact on the outcome of the 1966 Australian Federal Election. Holt and the LCP were returned to office with a landslide victory, gaining eleven of the twelve seats lost by the ALP.<sup>183</sup> Menzies election result of 1963 had been considered phenomenal with the LCP gaining eleven seats, and giving the coalition seventy-two seats to the ALP's fifty. But Holt's 1966 victory surpassed expectations, and after the election of 1966 the LCP had eighty-two seats to the ALP's forty-one. The American Alliance coloured the conscription debate, featured in the ALP's fracturing and allowed for the first Australian tour of an American President.

Debates surrounding conscription throughout the 1966 election heavily featured the importance of Australia fully committing to any alliance in order to maintain its positive relations with its allies. The LCP made no attempts to hide that the ally in question was the United States, with the leader of the Country Party, John McEwen, having stated on national radio that:

‘To say that we would honour our obligations with the United States and our other allies only if enough volunteers came forward would show Australia as a very uncertain ally.’<sup>184</sup>

Loyalty was key in this statement, as McEwen was clearly informing Australian's that the ALP's pledge to remove not only national service personnel but all serving members of the

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<sup>183</sup> An additional seat was lost by the ALP, with Captain Sam Benson who had been expelled from the Party prior to the election running as an Independent and retaining his seat.

<sup>184</sup> McEwen, John. 16 November 1966, *Vietnam*, A.B.C Radio: National.

Australian defence force would make Australia appear immensely disloyal to the Americans. The DLP took a more blatant route when explaining why conscription for Vietnam was necessary, an election pamphlet titled *Which Way to Freedom* informed Australians that:

‘Since World War II, Australia’s defence and security have depended on American assistance. Reject political parties whose policies weaken this Alliance. The American presence in South-East Asia shields the regional Alliance of free nations, on which our security depends. We cannot expect protection in future if we withdraw from the common struggle now.’<sup>185</sup>

It was a very simple message being offered by the LCP (and the DLP), a vote for them would be a vote for the defence of Australia. And more importantly if Australia was to contribute to its alliances then it must be able to field a significant defence force in shared conflicts. Therefore it was reasonable for the LCP to declare that if Australia was to be loyal conscription must be kept. The ALP however was adamant that conscription was not the answer to maintaining Australia’s defence treaties, telling Australians that it was immoral to conscript young men ‘against their wishes and wills’.<sup>186</sup> However the fact that most Australian’s supported conscription for young men (as evidenced by the poll’s discussed in chapter three) in the first place meant that by arguing against it the ALP had misread the opinions of the majority of Australians of voting age. The LCP successfully associated conscription with Alliance strength, pushing the concept that ending conscription posed high risk to the security of the nation.

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<sup>185</sup> The Democratic Labor Party. *Which Way to Freedom*, election pamphlet, The National Civic Council, Printed by Holland & Newton, Leichhardt.

<sup>186</sup> Calwell, *Australian Labor Party Federal Election Policy Speech 1966*, p.1.

Further to this the LCP was able to successfully play on the visible disunity within the ALP during the election year. Election material told Australians that it was their choice; they could opt for ‘a Holt Government united on this great issue [conscription for Vietnam to support the American Alliance] or a Labor Party confused and divided.’<sup>187</sup> The various differing opinions regarding conscription within the ALP only served to destabilise the party when made public. Calwell and Whitlam in particular confused the Australian public by offering different statements on not only how troop withdrawal would occur, but also which troops specifically would be brought back. Five days out from the election the two were still bickering on the matter, with Whitlam declaring that regulars (non conscripts) would stay in Vietnam while Calwell announced that all service personnel would be withdrawn.<sup>188</sup> The division of the ALP over where they stood on the American Alliance was made very clear during the immensely popular LBJ visit, when Calwell’s own ‘welcoming’ stance was rejected by the ALP’s federal president. The damage done by this was enormous as it demonstrated to the Australian public that the ALP was fracturing at the highest levels. If it was unable to manage the upper levels of the Party then it was reasonable for the public to assume that as a government it would be unable to control its rank-and-file, leading to a situation where everyday government functions were impossible. More importantly if the ALP was unable to control itself then, as the LCP suggested, they would be unable to control Australia’s major alliances.

The LBJ visit itself was a clear indicator of the strong influence that the American Alliance exerted upon the 1966 election. The incredible public support for an American President was in stark contrast to the lacklustre support given to the Royal visit only three years previously. Australians lined the streets to see LBJ, who was so powerful during the visit that very few questioned why was acceptable for him to place a hand on the Prime Ministers shoulder and

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<sup>187</sup> See fig 3.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Whitlam: Regulars Stay in Vietnam’, *The Australian*, November 22, 1966, p.1. ‘Calwell contradicts Whitlam on troops’, *The Australian*, November 23, 1966, p.1.



announce to the crowd, 'look, this is your Prime Minister' on more than one occasion. Even LBJ's arrogant statement of 'I like to come out and look my Prime Ministers over' failed to alienate the Australian public.<sup>189</sup> But what the LCP actually gained out of their use of the American Alliance during the election is questionable. Minor trade deals were certainly made during the LBJ visit and the LCP certainly received some short term advantages but it is clear that in the long term very little was gained. In the short term the LCP gained an election victory by exploiting the strength of the alliance. Harold Holt's profile was lifted by the extra exposure he gained during LBJ's visit. This gave both he and the LCP a modern image over Calwell who, having previously lost two elections, appeared exceedingly old and out of touch. In addition LBJ's vocal support for Australian involvement in Vietnam (whilst at the same time refraining from publicly asking for an increased involvement) gave it considerably more credibility in a population who already largely supported the conflict.

However long term gains for the LCP and their association with the American Alliance are few and far between. LBJ withdrew from the American Presidential race in 1968, and his Party (the Democratic Party) would lose the election to the Republican Party led by Richard Nixon. Nixon had campaigned on policy of 'peace with honour' for Vietnam. A policy that he quickly began to implement, with preliminary steps being made in 1969.<sup>190</sup> In June 1969 Nixon introduced the Guam Doctrine (also known as the Nixon Doctrine), announcing that America would not commit ground troops for the defence of its allies if they were attacked.<sup>191</sup> Nixon further explained this Doctrine in November of 1969, stating the following:

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<sup>189</sup> Pemberton, *All The Way*. p.335.

<sup>190</sup> Nixon, Richard. 8 August 1968, *Acceptance of the Republican Party nomination for President*.

<sup>191</sup> Firth, Stewart. *Australia in International Politics, an introduction to Australian Foreign Policy*, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p.156.

‘First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments. Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security. Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly.’<sup>192</sup>

These words posed a significant dilemma for Australia given the strength Holt had placed on the ANZUS Treaty’s ability to protect. The problem for Australia was that neither ANZUS nor SEATO explicitly stated that America had to commit ground troops in the event of Australia being attacked. The promises of 1966 that a commitment in Vietnam would ensure protection under the American Alliance were tremendously damaged by the Guam Doctrine. In addition to this blow the British government’s decision to begin integrating with the European Economic Community and withdraw militarily from East of Suez meant that Australia was in an increasingly fragile environment.<sup>193</sup> More disturbing for Holt’s successor, Prime Minister John Gorton was that under the Doctrine America began to withdraw troops from Vietnam without consulting the Australian Government. Immediately following his June 1969 announcement of the Guam Doctrine Nixon announced that 25,000 American troops would be withdrawn from the conflict in Vietnam.<sup>194</sup> The move took the Gorton Government completely by surprise, as did a further announcement that 35,000 more troops would be withdrawn in September of 1969.<sup>195</sup> Desperate for information on Nixon’s long term withdrawal plans so that any Australian withdrawals would be the result of joint

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<sup>192</sup> President Nixon's Speech on "Vietnamization," November 3, 1969, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969, pp. 901-909.

<sup>193</sup> Frankel, Joseph. *British Foreign Policy, 1945-1973* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.236-240.

<sup>194</sup> Curthoys, Ann. ‘Mobilising Dissent, The Later Stages of Protest’, in Pemberton, Gregory, eds. *Vietnam Remembered* (Sydney: New Holland Publishers Pty Ltd, 2009), p.138-163, p.151.

<sup>195</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.237-238.

Australian-American planning Gorton rang Nixon on December 15 of 1969. Gorton, expecting an invitation to Washington to facilitate conferences on joint withdrawal plans, was informed that should Australia wish to make a troop withdrawal announcement then they should, no joint planning would be necessary.<sup>196</sup> The following day Nixon announced a third American withdrawal of 50,000 troops. Unable to extract firm plans for further American withdrawals, and in an attempt to ease the increasing anti-war sentiment in Australia, Gorton announced that an Australian battalion would be brought home by April 1970.<sup>197</sup> An Australian visit by Nixon's Vice-President Spiro Agnew in January 1970 offered even less assurances for the value of the LCP's promotion of the American Alliance as the future of Australian security. Following questions on whether America would let South Vietnam fall to communism Agnew reported that:

'he [Agnew] could understand Australia's desire to get precise reactions but he could not say more than that response would be determined at the particular time.'<sup>198</sup>

In a disturbingly short amount of time the assurances Holt gave the Australian public about the value of fighting in Vietnam to keep American Alliance strong were gone.

Further to this Gorton's successor William McMahon was left completely in the dark when America, again under Nixon, in 1971 broke the cold war ice on relations with China, the very nation the LCP was terrified of in the 'battle against communism'. One of the most iconic images of 1966 was the LCP's *It's your choice* pamphlet (fig 2 and 3) which featured an image of a 'red push' towards Australia, the bulk of the push presented in this ad is clearly coming from China. But in 1972 Nixon went to China, at the time America still recognised

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<sup>196</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.240.

<sup>197</sup> Curthoys, 'Mobilising Dissent, The Later Stages of Protest', p.153.

<sup>198</sup> Edwards, *A Nation at War*, p.242.

the government of the Republic of China, based in Taiwan, as the true Chinese government and still would until 1979. However the visit presented Nixon with an opportunity for:

‘reducing the chance in the immediate future of a confrontation between the United States and the PRC in Asia, such as we [America] had in Korea, and such as we had indirectly in Vietnam.’<sup>199</sup>

As evidenced by the above statement, Nixon clearly saw a future in forging a relationship with China. As with the American troop withdrawals the announcement on July 15 1971 that Nixon would be visiting China the following year took the LCP government by complete surprise.<sup>200</sup> In this instance the surprise was compounded by the fact that for the LCP had spent the previous week hurling abuse at Whitlam for leading a Labor delegation on a China visit in early July. McMahon himself had stated that:

‘I find it incredible that at a time when Australian soldiers are still engaged in Vietnam, the Leader of the Labor Party is becoming a spokesman for those against whom we are fighting.’<sup>201</sup>

Nixon’s announcement that he would go to China not only made the LCP appear out of touch, but made it very clear that there was minimal communication occurring between he and the Australian Prime Minister. The American Alliance which had appeared in October 1966 to be one of great intimacy instead was shown to have clear limits and liabilities. The Guam Doctrine had shattered the belief that American military would defend Australia and

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<sup>199</sup> Nixon, Richard. 26 January 1972, *Nixon’s trip to China*, Conversation Number 656-10, excerpt number 1. Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

<sup>200</sup> Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p.210.

<sup>201</sup> Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur*, p.210.

Nixon's announcement of his China visit signalled that America was moving on from its fear of communism.

This thesis has demonstrated that the American Alliance clearly impacted upon the 1966 Australian Federal Election. 1966 was the high point in Australian-American relations; indeed the majority of the election was run on the need to protect the strength of the American Alliance. When the ALP decided to make the election about conscription, the LCP said that a failure to increase the size of the defence force would demonstrate a lack of commitment to her allies. When the ALP criticised Holt for stating that Australia was 'all the way with LBJ' the LCP was able to point out that LBJ had declared that 'Australia will go all the way – and America will go all the way.' When Calwell declared conscription to be immoral the LCP was able to point to the polls that indicated that Australians were for it. The integrity of the ALP was called into question when it was unable to present the Australian public with a united front. Above all the LBJ visit and LBJ's clear support for the LCP allowed Holt to promote his Party as the Party who kept the American Alliance safe. But with the release of the Guam Doctrine in 1969 Australians were left wondering why they had been loyal to an Alliance which never formally offered them any protection. Australians faced the uncomfortable dilemma that their entire Cold War policy – the desire to keep the Americans engaged in South East Asia, was on the point of collapse. The exploitation of the value of the American Alliance may have won Harold Holt his election in 1966, but following the election when the glamour of the relationship began to fade it was clear that the Alliance offered Australia and Australians very little.

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