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*Primary Risks and Primary Responsibilities in the Pacific:
The Problem of Japan and the Changing Role of Australia
in the British Commonwealth, 1945-1952*

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Preface

Professor Meaney visited the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines during the winter months of 1999 and conducted research on the position of Japan in the formulation of Australian policy towards the British Commonwealth and the United States. This paper represents the fruits of his research.

Professor Meaney is the author of many articles in this field and has published the following books:

The Search for Security in the Pacific (Sydney, 1996)

Under New Heavens (Melbourne, 1989)

Tears and Phobias: E.L. Piesse and the Problem of Japan, 1909-39 (Canberra, 1996)

Australia and Japan through 100 Years: Towards a New Vision (East Roseville, 1999)

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PRIMARY RISKS AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PACIFIC¹: THE PROBLEM OF JAPAN AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF AUSTRALIA IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, 1945-1952.

Neville Meaney

Sometimes it is worthwhile to explicate the obvious for it is often found when this is done that there is more to the matter than meets the eye. And something of that nature can perhaps be said for this subject.

In the remaking of the international order at the end of World War II Australia's overriding concern was Japan and its future position in the Pacific. Indeed this consideration affected nearly all the major aspects of Australia's postwar defence and foreign policy, including what was perhaps the most important of these, namely its changing relation to Britain and the British Commonwealth. It is the purpose of this paper to show the nature of this Japanese process at work in the changing relationship by examining the issues of consultation over surrender terms, representation on the bodies dealing with the occupation, the future of American bases in the Pacific, the making of the Japanese peace treaty, the coming of the Cold War in Europe and the creation of the ANZUS pact.²

There is a long history to Japan's influence on Australia's relations with Britain and the British Empire / Commonwealth. From the beginning of the twentieth century Australia's character as a nation state had been much affected by its proximity to an Asia which was seen as alien and a threat to its survival, and Japan, above all, was seen to embody this 'Yellow Peril'. While Australians' cultural identity - they defined themselves as belonging to the white British 'race' - pressed them towards seeking close co-operation, even a kind of integration, with the Mother Country and Empire, nevertheless the British government's failure to appreciate their Asian anxieties caused them to question Britain's reliability and, as a result, to create a Pacific policy of their own. This can be seen first at the time of Federation in the movement

for a White Australia which was intended to preserve the British character of the country and was aimed most immediately at the Japanese. Since Britain was at the very time negotiating an alliance with Japan this racial exclusion policy proved to be an embarrassment and it was only adopted over British protests. Likewise after the Russo-Japanese war Australia had, in defiance of all British advice, come to believe that Japan's dominance of the Western Pacific presaged not simply a migratory but also a military invasion. Since Britain preoccupied with the German naval challenge in the North Sea had withdrawn all its capital ships from the Pacific and had left its East Asian interests to be cared for by its Japanese ally the Australian authorities who had no confidence in the alliance introduced compulsory military training, began to acquire a navy and to look to the United States for succour. Australia would have preferred, both for sentimental and strategic reasons, to be protected by a British Empire fleet in the Pacific to which it and the other Dominions contributed but, given British priorities, this solution to its Japan problem was not available.³

During World War I, even as Australia enthusiastically supported the British cause and raised over 350,000 men to fight in Europe, it remained apprehensive about Japan. Japan's declaration of war on Germany did nothing to reassure Australians. Though Japan had entered the war on the Allies side it made only a very limited contribution to the European theatre. The Japanese seizure of German territory in China and the North Pacific combined with their demands on China to accept a client status and their pressure on Australia to end at least formal discrimination against Japanese citizens fueled suspicions. Moreover there was a degree of uncertainty about what Japan might do if the Central Powers gained the upper hand in Europe. Consequently both those Australians supporting and those opposing the introduction of conscription for the Western Front used the argument of the menace of Japan to bolster their respective cases. In the midst of the war both naval and military intelligence concentrated their energies on studying the Japanese danger. The Director of Military Intelligence, with Japan in mind, concluded that 'there seems to be a blight over British policy in the East

- Some British representatives are not in sympathy with our interests,' and as a result an Australian 'Foreign Office'⁴, the Pacific Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, was established.

The prime minister, William Morris Hughes, summed up this war experience, when he told his British counterpart shortly after the cessation of hostilities that Australia was 'profoundly distrustful of Japan'.⁵ Indeed Hughes was for this very reason unrelenting in his demand that Australia should have a say in the peacemaking. During the early years of the war Britain had promised the Dominions that they would be consulted about the peace and in 1917 it established the Imperial War Cabinet made up of the leaders of the Dominions and the Mother Country which was ostensibly to determine through collective agreement the Empire's defence and foreign policy. In the event Hughes felt betrayed when the British Prime Minister, ignoring all previous commitments to the Dominions, negotiated a German armistice with the other allied leaders and accepted what amounted to general peace terms based on President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points. When he learnt of what had happened Hughes protested vehemently both in public⁶ and private. He regarded the failure to consult the Dominions as 'a breach of the plain declaration which had been made to them'.⁷ The Imperial War Cabinet had become nothing more than a 'farce and a sham'.⁸ He urged that at the subsequent Paris Peace Conference Australia should, along with the other Dominions, both have a seat on the British Empire's Delegation and thereby participate in the deliberations of the Great Powers and also be represented at plenary meetings in its own right. Hughes was the only Dominion leader to complain about the lack of consultation over the armistice and though the Canadian Prime Minister also called for Dominion representation at the Paris Peace Conference he did so to achieve recognition for national status rather than to ensure the protection of distinct national interests.

Hughes' intemperate outburst so alarmed the British Government that, fearing for the future of the Empire, they not only acceded to these novel

demands for representation but also went out of their way to assist Australia in accomplishing its anti-Japanese aims at the conference. The British themselves were not opposed to Japan's desire to include a racial equality clause in the League of Nations Covenant and yet, despite the fact that Australia was the only nation left at the end of the negotiations over the clause still objecting to it, they deferred to Australia's wishes and helped to sink it.⁹ Japan's role as a catalyst in bringing about changes in Australia's relations with Britain and the Empire at the end of World War I would appear to be a precursor for the more far reaching changes which were produced out of World War II. While, however, the parallels between the two seem quite remarkable, nevertheless there are significant differences in the circumstances out of which these changes arose and in the ultimate consequences flowing from them.

Australia's disappointment at Britain's behaviour over the 1918 armistice did not result in disillusionment with the Empire. Australia, like New Zealand, only grudgingly went along with the new definitions of the British Commonwealth - embodied in the Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster - which at the insistence of the Canadians, South Africans and the Irish stressed national autonomy at the expense of imperial unity. In contrast to the Canadians, South Africans and Irish, the Pacific Dominions refrained from appointing their own diplomats and entering into treaties which they had negotiated for themselves. Following the British Empire's victory in the First World War and Japan's conciliatory attitude in the Pacific, Australia, along with New Zealand, was during the 1920s happy to co-operate with an imperial defence policy based on Singapore and a British foreign policy arrived at after consultation. In both respects, however, Australia conceded the leading role to Britain. It left it to the British to fund and build the Singapore naval base and, in general, sat quietly by while Britain handled international affairs.

In the next decade, however, with the rise of Japanese imperialism in Asia and German aggression in Europe, Australians became troubled once again

that the British Commonwealth might be drawn into a war on two fronts and that the British Government might be compelled to neglect its commitments in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁰ By the end of 1938 the Australian Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, was 'profoundly depressed by the state of the world' and had worked himself 'into a kind of desperate anxiety about the defence of Australia against Japan', and his government was 'tending' to act upon the assumption that 'in the event of war they can expect no help from the UK'.¹¹ Some five months later his successor, R.G. Menzies, in the light of these developments accepted reluctantly the necessity of Australia breaking further the unity of the Empire and he announced his government's intention of accrediting its own diplomatic representatives to the major countries in the Pacific. Still putting the issue in British Commonwealth terms he explained the decision by declaring that since Australia, because of its geographical position, had to assume on behalf of the Empire the 'primary risks and responsibilities' in the Pacific it had to have the dominant say in shaping British Commonwealth policy in the region.¹²

The Pacific War brought to the surface quite dramatically the inadequacies of Australia's previous ideas about dependence on Britain and the British Commonwealth. Japan's rapid conquest of Southeast Asia which carried with it the prospect of imminent invasion stirred the nation to the quick. What Menzies had adumbrated the Labor governments which held office during and after the Pacific War adopted fully, and they redesigned Australia's relationship with Britain and the British Commonwealth in the light of the war experience. In constructing their postwar defence and foreign policy they, however, did not reject the special ties to Britain and the Commonwealth but rather sought to fashion them anew to ensure that consultation was effective and that Australia should assume the leading role for the Commonwealth in the Pacific. The hard lesson that the war had taught was that Britain if left to act for the Commonwealth would, naturally enough, when pressed subordinate Australia's interests to its own. As Dr H.V. Evatt, the Minister for External Affairs, put it in a letter to Curtin at the time of the 1944 British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, 'Where the primary

responsibility is with a Dominion and not with the United Kingdom, the Dominion concerned should be as fully assured of proper support from the United Kingdom as the United Kingdom is of Dominion support in its own relations in Europe and special spheres such as the Near and Middle East'.¹³ Thus, driven by a fear of a Japanese military resurgence, the Australian Government in dealing with post-war Japan and all the issues associated with the occupation and the peace strove to apply this revised conception of the British Commonwealth.

Consultation and Representation

By the time of the Japanese surrender in August 1945 the Australian government, especially through the advocacy of Evatt, had adopted the essence of this new approach to Britain and the Commonwealth. Evatt, like the government and their advisers, was acutely conscious that the Singapore base policy had failed the country, that Britain had not been able to send a fleet to meet the Japanese onslaught, that Britain in conjunction with America had agreed on a Europe-first strategy regardless of its possible consequences for Australia and that Britain with America and China at the Cairo Conference in November 1943 had without a word to Australia decided peace terms for the Pacific. From this time Evatt, whose own political ambitions were merged with those of Australia the nation state, set out on a course, a course supported by his ministerial colleagues, aimed at bringing the British to heel and making them accept the Australasian Dominions' right to priority in Pacific policy.

To express Australian sense of outrage Evatt met unilateralism with unilateralism. In January 1944 without either consulting or informing the British he organised a conference with New Zealand in Canberra at which the two Dominions laid down their principles for the peacemaking. Though the British High Commissioner had sounded the Australian Prime Minister and the Department of External Affairs about the conference he was unable beforehand to discover its true purpose.¹⁴ The ANZAC pact, a bi-lateral Commonwealth agreement which excluded the British, though it was

intended primarily as a rebuke to the Americans, nevertheless also had a message for the British, a message which was to be repeated again and again in the years following the end of hostilities. Under the ANZAC pact the two governments claimed a right to be 'represented at the highest level' on all bodies set up to decide the terms of the armistices and also to take part in the making of the peace, including the planning of a world organisation for collective security. Moreover, illustrating their main concern about the post-war world, they agreed that a regional zone of defence stretching from the 'the arc of islands North and Northeast of Australia, to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands' should be established and they looked forward to working with Britain in taking prime responsibility for policing this zone.¹⁵

And they had some success or rather seeming success. During the British Commonwealth meeting of ministers in April 1945, prior to the San Francisco Conference which was to establish the United Nations Organisation, Evatt reported to Curtin that the British Government had promised to do their utmost 'to support the Australian and New Zealand claim to participate as principals in the armistice arrangements with Japan'.¹⁶ This Australian agitation was not so much motivated by a desire to stress its autonomy as by a determination to safeguard the interests of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific. Australia considered itself the guardian of British civilisation in the Pacific. As Curtin had explained at the 1944 Prime Ministers' Conference, Australia, in contemplating the post-war world, had reservations about the efficacy of a new League of Nations and wanted to cultivate closer bonds, especially in defence, with Britain and the British Commonwealth as a basis for national security.¹⁷

The Australian leaders were then duly shocked when at the Potsdam Conference on 26 July the Americans, the British and the Chinese, without any prior notice, publicly announced the capitulation terms which they had offered to Japan. Once more the Australians had learnt of the Great Powers' decision through the press. As a result the Australians rejected a British

invitation to send a service representative to be 'attached' to their delegation at the surrender ceremony - symbolically making the Australian role a function of that of the British - and instead organised through the Americans to be represented in their own right. Bypassing the British the Australian Government informed the United States that Australia should sign the surrender document in its own right. Furthermore, they offered to provide an occupation force of their own which would be 'subordinate only to the Supreme Command'. And finally they demanded that Australia be accepted as a full member of the Council of Foreign Ministers on 'all matters affecting or concerning the Pacific and Far east'.¹⁸

For the Australians this was a replay of 1918 and, like Hughes, they were greatly incensed. They protested to the new Labour Government in London. Evatt in a message to the Dominions Secretary on 9 August asserted that the British explanation for their behaviour - which pleaded time and circumstance - was unacceptable. Prime Minister David Lloyd George at the end of World War I had given more 'effective recognition of the Dominions' in the peacemaking. The British showed an 'indifference ... to what should now be the fully recognised status and position of Australia and other Dominions....Full consultation on an equal footing is the only basis of complete confidence and co-operation.... our desire is to work in the closest harmony with you but the events of 1942 in the Pacific have produced a deep impression in this Country and it is quite impossible to expect Australia to have these matters [the armistice and peace terms] cleared through London instead of having a right to participate as a principal in the planning of the Peace Settlement'.¹⁹

The Prime Minister, J.B. Chifley, the Defence Minister, J.A. Beasley, as well as Evatt made public statements reproving the British. Evatt, a great admirer of Billy Hughes, was the most outspoken. In a press statement he complained that on the British part there was 'Still a deplorable tendency ...to relegate Australia to subordinate status and either not consult it at all or to

consult it in a perfunctory way and not on a footing of equality.’ And he flung in their face the accumulated grievances, from learning of the Potsdam terms for a Japanese armistice from the press to being excluded from the Council of Foreign Ministers and being asked to accept a subordinate place in the formal act of surrender. To add insult to injury he sent a personal note to the British Dominions Secretary referring him to his message of 9 August, ‘to which I received no reply’, and pointing out that his own public comments ‘followed upon your own public statement yesterday.’ Australia was not to be ignored. The coming to office of a Labour Government in Britain raised the Australians’ expectations of better treatment - apart from party considerations the new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had been Dominions Secretary in the Coalition War Government - but it did not, however, moderate the language they used in arguing their case.²⁰

The British resented the accusatory tone of the Australian outbursts and this led to a rather testy exchange between the prime ministers. Though the Dominions Office had to admit the substance of the Australian charges, namely that ‘in the matter of the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Ultimatum we failed to live up to our principles of inter-imperial consultation and information on major issues of foreign policy,’ nevertheless they would not suffer quietly this public chastisement. The British authorities thought Evatt ‘impertinent’, using a word which indicated an offence given by an inferior to a superior. They were ‘much disturbed’ by the Australian criticisms. After taking counsel with Addison and Bevin, Attlee wrote to Chifley. He pleaded that, despite their earnest desire that Australia should be ‘fully consulted in all matters relating to the Pacific Settlement and ...participate fully as a principal in International bodies set up to discuss these matters’, the ‘strains and stresses of war’ had prevented them from consulting Australia ‘in advance as completely as we should have wished.’ He contested Evatt’s account of Britain’s attitude to Australia’s independent representation at the Japanese surrender but said that ‘in the interest of good relations’ the British government would refrain from entering into a public controversy, and he hoped that in the future the Australians would exercise the same restraint.

Chifley was in no way abashed or appeased by Attlee's words. He replied 'with equal frankness' that the statements of Evatt, Beasley and himself represented the views of the Australian Government which considered it 'vital' that Australia be accepted as a party principal to the peace settlements, especially on 'all aspects affecting the Pacific and the Far East.' He was pleased that the British Government had agreed to support Australia's claims for membership of the Council of Foreign Ministers which had been established at Potsdam to draft the terms of the peace, and he announced that he was sending Evatt to London to join in the negotiations. Chifley expressed the wish that the British secure for Evatt 'a voice in the Council's deliberations' and invite him to take part in their Cabinet meetings when questions affecting the peace settlement were under discussion.²¹

In this mood the Australians did not look kindly upon a British invitation to contribute to a British Commonwealth Force for the occupation of Japan. Rather, in line with the position they had already taken with the Americans, they insisted that Australia should have an identity of its own in the occupation and that its forces should be responsible directly to the American General Douglas MacArthur who was Supreme Commander Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP). Even when the British offered to allow an Australian to have command of the force they still at first refused to join in a Commonwealth contingent. Once in England Evatt, however, came to see merit in the revised proposal and he urged Chifley to reconsider. Since Australia would appoint the commander and have executive authority over the Commonwealth force, concessions which the British were willing to make, then by assuming this role Australia would demonstrate its 'leadership in Pacific affairs and Pacific settlement.' The Australian Government were won over. They reversed themselves and accepted participation on these terms. The Australians contributed the largest number of servicemen to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), which, in addition to the Australians, included British, New Zealand and Indian detachments. The original rejection had not

been on narrow nationalist grounds. Chifley in July had been willing to contribute troops to a joint British Commonwealth force which was being planned for the invasion of Japan. Furthermore in explaining Australia's refusal to be part of a British-led occupation force he reaffirmed John Curtin's wish to 'further the cause of British Commonwealth in the Pacific'.²² The assertion of separateness was a response to the British failure to honour their pledge that Australia would have a voice in the armistice and surrender. It was a means of underscoring the Australians conviction that they should assume the leadership of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific region.

This was the first major Commonwealth military undertaking which was commanded by a Dominion officer. For the purpose a new command structure was instituted. The Australian commander was responsible to the participating Commonwealth governments through their Joint Chiefs of Staff in Melbourne. The JCOSA comprised the Australian Chiefs of Staff of the three services together with representatives of the British and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and the Commander-in-chief of the Indian military forces. This rather cumbersome body did not last. Between 1947 and 1949, as the Indians and then the British and the New Zealanders withdrew their contingents - the hard-pressed British gave a greater importance to Europe and the Middle East - the Australians with the consent of Britain and New Zealand took the opportunity to assume direct control of the rump BCOF. In 1948 the JCOSA was abolished and the Australian Chiefs of Staff took over the responsibility for the force. To maintain the appearance of a British Commonwealth occupation force a British and New Zealand service representative was attached to the Australian Chiefs of Staff.²³ This first experiment in a Dominion-led joint Commonwealth operation was not particularly successful. The different strategic priorities and interests as well as some friction between the various components tended to undermine the original desire to express through the BCOF a common international identity. Australian efforts to make the Commonwealth serve its Pacific purposes failed at its first attempt.

The next most significant consultation and representation question was how the policy for the occupation was to be determined. The Australians' aim was to achieve membership of all advisory bodies established for this purpose, to have a say in defining their function and to prevent the United States from having a veto power in their proceedings which, if permitted, would enable it to act unilaterally in managing postwar Japan. On 29 August the United States Government had sent to General MacArthur their 'Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan' which laid down objectives and guidelines for the treatment of the defeated country. In this the Americans had stated that they would make every effort by consultation through advisory bodies to establish policies for the conduct of the occupation which would 'satisfy the principal allied powers', but if the allied powers failed to agree then 'the policies of the United States will govern'.²⁴

Evatt's first task in pursuing these goals in London was to gain access to the Council of Foreign Ministers which had before it the issue of how the policies for occupied Japan were to be decided. With the assistance of the British, who were now anxious to repair Commonwealth relations, Evatt was drawn into these discussions. The Americans were anxious that there should not be a control council in Japan similar to the one set up for the administration of occupied Germany on which the four great allied powers had a right of veto. Instead they wanted the establishment of a Far East Advisory Committee (FEAC) in Washington, and they had urged Britain to back their plan 'if only to forestall Soviet pressure for a four Power Control Council in Japan which would be embarrassing' to them. The British agreed and Evatt too went along on the understanding that all the countries who had been active belligerents in the Pacific War should be members of the Commission and that the question of a Control Council in Tokyo should be postponed until after the Commission had met.²⁵ Evatt had a preference for a control council on the spot which could exercise direct supervision over the occupation.²⁶

On this basis the eleven member Commission duly convened in October and set about defining the objectives and principles which should govern the occupation. Evatt was made chairman of the Commission's Basic Policies and Objectives Committee. Because of differences between the Great Powers the Commission had not been given terms of reference and Evatt hoped that his committee would itself define the Commission's powers and functions. Taking the American Post-Surrender Policy as his guide he set about devising a document which laid down the ends to be sought in the occupation. He was opposed to giving the Americans a right of veto on matters of policy. The most he would concede in this direction was a vague, undefined 'reserve authority' for SCAP. He was intent on trying to ensure that Australia would have an equal voice in the running of the occupation. The FEAC, in general, seemed well disposed to the committee's report and at the beginning of December the Commission members approved the report for reference to their respective governments.²⁷

Yet by this time the Great Powers had made the Commission's work irrelevant. The Soviet Union which wanted a control council for Japan along the lines of that established in Germany with a right of veto had refused to take its seat on the FEAC, and the Americans, desirous of having Soviet Union co-operation in the post-war settlement, had begun to reconsider the whole scheme of policy-making for postwar Japan. At the end of October they were contemplating setting up alongside the FEAC a four power council in Tokyo which would be 'consulting' and 'advisory' to SCAP. Evatt, alerted to this through the press, even as he was working on the FEAC policy and objectives, asked the United States Secretary of State, James Byrnes, not to agree to such a council unless Australia was a member of it. He insisted that Australia should be accepted as the representative of the British Commonwealth on Pacific matters and properly pointed out that Australia's contribution to the Pacific war far exceeded that of the Soviet Union.²⁸ Australia's interposition, like the FEAC itself, was ignored. In December at the Moscow conference of the American, British and Russian Foreign Ministers a

deal was done and the lesser belligerents were presented with a *fait accompli*, a compromise arrangement about which they had had no say.

In Australian eyes this was a further act of British perfidy. Evatt was again highly indignant. The British though they had known about the American proposal from 26 November did not inform the Dominions about it until 7 December, that is on the eve of a public announcement of the Great Powers' Foreign Ministers' conference. The conference was to consider the 'Terms of reference of the Allied Commission for Japan and the Far Eastern Commission'. Since these matters 'obviously affect directly the Pacific and Japanese settlement' Evatt maintained that Australia had a right to participate in its deliberations. Cabling home from Washington Evatt took the view that on Far East and Pacific affairs 'there should be no decisions or even international discussions on such matters unless Australia fully participates in such discussions.' Indeed, it was his view, in accordance with his established position, that Britain should be asked to press for Australian representation at the conference or, failing that, that Britain should not consent to any decision on any topic that concerned Australia.²⁹

Despite Australian wishes the three Great Powers, without any reference back to the other interested parties, agreed at Moscow on the membership and functions of both a Far East Commission (FEC) located in Washington, which would replace the FEAC, and an Allied Council which was to sit in Tokyo. As a result of horse-trading between the Americans and the Russians a complex compromise was reached. While the FEC, made up of all the nations that had taken an active part in the Pacific War, was 'to formulate policies, principles and standards' for occupied Japan, no decision would be binding unless all four Great Power members (the three Moscow Conference powers plus China) voted for it. In the absence of an FEC policy the Americans were, however, permitted to issue 'interim directives' to SCAP which, in effect, meant that the United States by vetoing any FEC measure of which they did not approve would still be able to keep control of policy-

making. In return for Russian co-operation over the FEC, the United States accepted a four member Great Power Council in Japan. The Americans had insisted that the word 'control' should be omitted from its title and that it have only a consultative and advisory role. Bevin had consented to this because he said that it was impossible to persuade the Russians and the Americans either to give up their veto on the FEC or to admit Australia as an additional member of the Allied Council. He did not want to jeopardise a chance of securing Russian co-operation in the Far East settlement. To appease the Australians the British Cabinet, because of 'Australia's interest in the area', invited Canberra to nominate an Australian to represent Britain and the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council.³⁰

The Australians were very vexed with what had been done, with the fact that the Great Powers had ignored the work of the FEAC, arbitrarily dictated a structure for the management of the occupation and given themselves a veto right on the FEC, and in response to the American invitation to join the FEC on the terms set down by the Moscow Conference, they voiced their displeasure. Since they were 'strongly opposed' to the veto power they informed the Americans that they were going to give the matter 'further consideration', hinting thereby that they might be unwilling to accept membership on these terms. Two weeks later Evatt expanded on their objections. Further consideration had deepened their apprehension about the injustice and unreasonableness of the veto power. The FEAC after full consultation with all its members had arrived at a statement of basic policy. The Australian Government was 'anxious to be assured that full consideration will be given to the decisions already made' by the FEAC. They believed that all nations who were to be members of the FEC should have 'an opportunity to discuss the terms of reference including the veto power at the next meeting of the Commission.' Australia resented the fact that the Great Power veto made Australia's status 'in some ways inferior'. As a result of 'its sustained and decisive contribution to victory against Japan' it was entitled to be 'regarded as a party principal in all Pacific affairs.' Australia considered that its future relationship with the United States should be based 'on the principle

of full and active partnership' and that the existence of the veto was 'quite inconsistent with such a relationship'.³¹ Australia, despite these reservations, had no choice in the matter and had to accept membership of the FEC on the conditions laid down at the Moscow meeting.

The Australians did not object to the limited functions of the Allied Council. Perhaps since the Australians were representing the British Commonwealth on the Council and thus were raised, at least symbolically, to the dignity of a great power they were willing to accept what the Moscow Conference had decreed. Though initially the British had proposed that the Australians should choose their nominee after consultation with London, Wellington and New Delhi, they in the event did not take soundings in the other capitals before selecting Professor Macmahon Ball, a Melbourne University political scientist, for the post. This Australian action caused some fluttering in the dovecotes of Whitehall. The Foreign Office thought Macmahon a quite unsuitable appointment. They had reservations of a personal nature about the man. While Australian Political Liaison Officer with the Allied Command in the Dutch East Indies he had had some acerbic exchanges with his British counterpart, Esler Dening, whom the British were thinking of sending to Tokyo as their political representative to SCAP. They objected to Ball even more on the grounds that he was not 'a really first-class man of influence and wide experience of international affairs and of negotiation' who could 'regard himself as equally representing the United Kingdom, New Zealand and India.' Their preference was for Keith Officer who, besides holding a number of senior diplomatic posts, had been the Australian Liaison Officer in the Cabinet Office in London. When informal inquiries indicated that Evatt was not disposed to change his mind, Bevin and Addison took the matter to Attlee. Addison told Attlee that since this was 'a joint appointment...we are entitled to insist on our interest being represented by someone in whom we have confidence.' Yet though the Prime Minister appealed directly to Chifley the Australians would not budge and the British felt obliged to defer to Canberra's wishes.³²

The British never reconciled themselves to Ball's appointment and throughout the whole period in which he filled the post they bombarded the Australian Government with criticisms of his performance, hoping to secure his recall. Ball saw his role as primarily representing Australian interests. He strove to ensure that Japan was disarmed and democratised so that it could not again menace Australia, and in the process he occasionally dared to question SCAP's dictatorial regime and to challenge MacArthur's contemptuous treatment of the Allied Council. He even proposed to act as a mediator, doing 'whatever possible to reconcile American and Russian points of view.' For the British, who were anxious to obtain American support against the Soviets in Western Europe and the Middle East, Ball's inclination to challenge MacArthur's authority was most troublesome. The Australian government itself was not happy that Ball should cause problems with the Americans. Chifley on his way home from London, during a brief stay in Tokyo in May 1946, told Ball that 'in view of our association with MacArthur and his friendliness to us, we should not give the impression that we are "ganging up" with his enemies in America or with the Russians.' Likewise Evatt assured the British that the Australian government did not wish Ball to be a mediator but rather to do all he could 'to support MacArthur who has responsibility for execution of policy in Japan.'³³ Yet, though the Australian government seemed to sympathise with the British, they did little to curb Ball and make him toe MacArthur's line. As a result British doubts were never set to rest.

Evatt had proudly proclaimed in his foreign affairs statement to parliament in March 1946 that 'The appointment of an Australian on Australian nomination to represent not only Australia but also other Governments of the British Commonwealth, including the United Kingdom itself, is a development of great importance....an entirely new concept of British Commonwealth relations is now emerging. This concept tends to reconcile full Dominion autonomy with full British co-operation.... This is evidence that machinery of co-operation has now reached a stage where a common policy can be carried through a chosen Dominion instrumentality in an area or in relation to a subject matter which is of primary concern to that Dominion'.³⁴ This episode

was not, however, an auspicious beginning for the new experiment in British Commonwealth relations.

Joint bases with the Americans and a Defence Arrangement for the Pacific.

The Pacific War had brought home to the Australians the inadequacies of a London-centred Imperial defence and foreign policy and caused them to seek a more comprehensive and dependable security arrangement and one in which they would have a major say. The Singapore strategy had failed them. A British Fleet had not been sent to head off the downward thrust of the Japanese. The British base itself had proved to be indefensible. It was on the periphery of the direct line of attack against Australia and was not backed up by a friendly hinterland which could provide assured supply lines and logistical support. Recognising this Evatt had declared as early as 1943 that Australia at the end of the war would seek to acquire 'a screen of bases' under its own or joint control in the island chains to the north and northwest of the continent. These bases were to be located in the Dutch East Indies, Portuguese Timor, French New Caledonia as well as in Australian mandated territory and the British Solomon islands. All the European Empires had collapsed before the might of the Japanese army and navy. It was imperative that Australia should have a reliable forward defence which would sit athwart the Japanese path to the South Pacific.³⁵ Australia and New Zealand in the ANZAC Agreement committed themselves to establishing 'a regional zone of defence comprising the South West and South Pacific' which was to be based on Australia and New Zealand and stretch through 'the arc of islands North and Northeast of Australia, to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.' In explaining their objective to the British, the Australians, taking their cue from the American-British-Russian Moscow Declaration of December 1943 in which it was suggested that individual United Nations would in the postwar era assume responsibility for policing specific areas of the globe, asserted their right to take responsibility for policing Portuguese Timor, Australian New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and to share the policing of the Netherland

East Indies and the New Hebrides. And they looked forward to completing their regional zone of defence through an agreement reached with the governments which had territories in the region, namely Britain, United States, Netherlands, France and Portugal.³⁶ Indeed Evatt was determined not to let Australian security rest simply on global collective security under the United Nations and had backed the inclusion of Article 52 in the UN Charter which provided for 'regional defence arrangements'. The Australians were unwilling to leave the initiative on the Southwest and South Pacific to the Great Powers which had shown an almost total indifference to the Pacific Dominions' concerns.

Though the Australasians were unable to persuade Britain and the United States to enter into negotiations over a defence agreement they did not abandon the plan, and consequently when the Americans at the end of the Pacific War claimed permanent rights in the bases which they had built on British Commonwealth territories, the Australians tried to link discussions over the joint use of the South Pacific bases to this scheme for a broad defence arrangement and to commit the British to supporting such a strategy. As they put it to the British, since the security of the Commonwealth in the Pacific depended on an agreement with America, London should join in a common front with the Pacific Dominions to achieve this goal. And on this issue the British seemed willing to let Australia call the shots. Evatt made it plain in his talks with the American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, that 'leadership by your country is the basis of the Pacific settlement and within that leadership we think that the real partnership [is] with countries like Australia and New Zealand and applied(sic) responsibility by the weaker partners'.³⁷

American Secretary of State James Byrnes had suggested to Bevin during the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in September that the British assist the United States to retain the use of many of the bases which they had built and used during the war, and on 7 November he presented the British with a comprehensive list of such bases in British Commonwealth

territories. Eight of these were in the South Pacific; Britain had administration rights in six, New Zealand in one, Upolu which was in its mandated territory of Western Samoa and Australia one, Manus in the Admiralty islands which was part of its New Guinea League of Nations mandate. Manus was by far the most important of these bases. The island harbour was very large and had natural protection. The Americans had spent, according to their estimates, almost \$150,000,000 on naval and air force installations and fortifications, which was more than they had spent altogether on all the others.³⁸ On 22 November Addison informed Chifley of these American overtures and warned him that the Americans were intending to approach Australia and New Zealand on the same matter. A few weeks later he sent Canberra Britain's preliminary thoughts about the proposal. The British saw that it was 'clearly to our advantage' to use the opportunity 'to associate the United States to the maximum extent in the defence of British Commonwealth territory' and to secure reciprocal rights to joint use of American bases. The government, troubled that any premature action might 'prejudice' the establishment of the United Nations, however, deemed it prudent to do nothing until after the formation of the Security Council. They urged that the British Commonwealth countries should keep in step in dealing with the American proposal.³⁹

The Australians' response was at one with the position they had staked out for themselves in the ANZAC Agreement. Evatt, who had been alerted to the American ambitions while in the United States in November, had declared in an address to the National Press Club in Washington that Australia would be willing to grant America the use of Manus base in return for America assuming responsibility for Australian security.⁴⁰ The Australian Government also held that there were 'long term advantages in having strong joint British Commonwealth - United States bases in the Pacific' but emphasised that 'such bases must be related to an overall plan in which their role should be clearly defined.' They had been aware since 1943 of American claims to keep Manus at the end of the war. Indeed in the ANZAC Agreement they had addressed just this issue when they stated that it was 'a recognised principle of international practice that the construction and use in time of war of

military, naval or air installations in any territory under the sovereignty or control of another power, does not, in itself, afford any basis for territorial claims or rights of sovereignty or control after the conclusion of hostilities.' Thus they told the British that they were opposed to the handing over of either sovereignty or control of any British Commonwealth territory to the Americans and expected that Britain would refuse to hold any conversations with the United States about the Pacific unless they and the New Zealanders were 'represented at all stages of the the talks'.⁴¹

Having been warned of the Pacific Dominions' strong feelings, Bevin and Addison called a meeting of the Dominions' representatives with Byrnes in London on 22 January 1946, and it was decided to form a joint commission to be made up of military and political representatives of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and America to discuss the United States proposal to acquire base rights in Pacific islands under British Commonwealth control.⁴² The British Government would seem to have accepted the Australian demand that nothing should be done without the active participation of the Pacific Dominions and that the British Commonwealth should reach a common standpoint on the American proposals. When informed of what had been agreed in London the Australian Government found the terms of reference for the Joint Commission to be inadequate. They reaffirmed their established policy and recommended that the Commission's task should be 'To examine and report upon i) Future defence arrangements in the Pacific Zone affecting the joint interests of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and new Zealand; ii) The future status and use of Pacific Bases, including those established or used during the war by any of the... four nations.' Australia also intimated that it would prefer the Commission to meet in Australia rather than the United States.⁴³ Evatt believed that Japan was 'still a menace,' and he cabled the Australian representatives in London that 'We would never be forgiven if arrangements for Pacific bases were made except in conjunction with the overall arrangements for mutual defence'.⁴⁴

The Australian wish to broaden the scope of the talks posed great difficulties for the British. The base talks were of great importance to them. In the first place they wanted to maintain the close wartime collaboration in global defence policy with the United States, and in the second they were concerned to avoid anything likely to harm the prospects of the British loan which was having a hard passage through Congress at the time. To meet the problem Attlee summoned a British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting for April, 'the particular subject which I have in mind as one on which we should take Counsel together ...[being] that of the situation in the Pacific'.⁴⁵ In the meanwhile the British and the New Zealanders, knowing that the Americans would reject any attempt to widen the Commission's terms of reference, tried to persuade the Australians not to boycott its discussions. The British accepted that the base question could 'only be fully considered and finally settled as part of a general picture, namely, future arrangements in the Pacific'. Since, however, it seemed that any such agreement would require Security Council approval, talks aimed at this end were premature and even perhaps counterproductive. Moreover it was pointed out that the talks were to be merely 'informal and exploratory': they would not commit the parties. Thus it would be an unnecessary affront to the Americans to refuse to take part in the Joint Commission. But nothing could shake the Australians' resolve. The Australian Government was mindful of how in the recent war the British, Dutch and American bases had fallen before the Japanese southward advance. They needed 'to provide for the safety of the country' and therefore remained adamant that they would not join in the talks unless they covered Pacific security.⁴⁶ They requested the British not to enter into any discussions with the Americans until after the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference had had an opportunity to consider the matter and arrive at 'a common British Commonwealth course'.⁴⁷

Despite Australian objections the British and New Zealanders took part in the Washington meeting. At the end of these discussions the Dominions Office informed the Australians of what they had learnt of the Americans' position. The United States wanted to conduct bi-lateral negotiations with each of the

British Commonwealth countries. The Americans dismissed British arguments that any deals over air and naval bases made before the establishment of the Security Council and without its blessing would undermine the United Nations Organisation. They claimed that the Russians would not wait for provocations and would take their own security measures as and when they thought fit. The American officials had also 'begged' the British not to raise the reciprocity issue, saying that it did not 'strictly arise in view of the fact that we established no wartime bases in American-controlled territory and they seem to wish us to be content with the belief that we should get these rights if an emergency actually arose'.⁴⁸

The Americans were not behindhand in opening negotiations with the Australians; they had given more attention to Manus than to any other island. In their Memorandum of 14 March they provided two draft agreements covering the proposed conditions for American joint use of the bases and an outline of a United Nations trusteeship for the Admiralty Islands which would permit the Americans to use the naval and air stations in the islands. Under the proposed agreement Australia would have responsibility for the cost of maintaining the bases and the Americans reserved the right at their discretion to take full control of them.⁴⁹ On 8 April the Australian Cabinet adopted a memorandum by the Prime Minister which embodied the principles to govern the Australian reply. They agreed that it would be 'to our advantage to associate the United States in the maintenance of security in the Southwest Pacific' and approved American use of Manus as part of a wider reciprocal defence arrangement. Evatt argued in the debate that any attempt to include Holland or France in the arrangement, as had been suggested in the ANZAC Pact, should be avoided. It 'would raise more directly the question of Russian participation' and thus be an embarrassment to the Americans. His solution was that Australia should just seek a tripartite alliance with New Zealand and the United States.⁵⁰ The American Charge d'Affaires in Canberra, John R. Minter, reported to the State Department that Evatt wanted a tripartite defence arrangement similar to that which Canada had with the United States. He told Washington that this was 'Evatt's pet plan for keeping United

States and Australia in closest association'. It seemed as though the Australians, in order to achieve their security agreement with the United States, might well be willing to exclude Britain from the arrangement.⁵¹ The Commonwealth analogy they had in mind was Canada's bi-lateral relationship with the United States.

Yet, even as the Australians were contemplating a separate deal with the Americans, the British, heeding Australia's earlier appeals, were becoming ever more committed to the idea that the Commonwealth should approach the Americans with a united front. Bevin cautioned the British Ambassador in Washington against proceeding any further with the Americans. It was, he said, 'of cardinal importance that the British Commonwealth countries concerned should act in full consultation and agreement with one another during the actual period of negotiation.' After the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference they would 'be able to take a definite line'.⁵² By the time of the Conference the British Government, with the concurrence of the Chiefs of Staff, had decided to support the original Australian proposal for a four power meeting and their proposal for a regional defence arrangement. For the British then the Prime Ministers' Conference was a critical occasion in the evolution of the Commonwealth in the Pacific.

At the opening meeting on 20 April Chifley set out very clearly the rationale for Australia's approach to Pacific defence. He remarked that

Australia had been in a very difficult position in 1942-43. They had recognised then that the British Commonwealth must use the greater part of its resources to preserve the United Kingdom...and that in those circumstances they could not expect that much material assistance could be given towards the defence of Australia and New Zealand. They wished, however, to do their best to ensure that such a situation should not arise again in the future. It was possible that Japan might again become capable of aggression in the Pacific; and the security of Australia and New Zealand might be threatened from other quarters. They were anxious, therefore, that properly co-ordinated arrangements should be made in advance so that the future security of Australia and New Zealand should be assured.

Again on 23 April when the question of the United States bases was discussed Chifley, in introducing his Memorandum of 8 April, repeated the same lesson to be learnt from the Pacific War, and declared that in the future Australia and New Zealand 'must themselves make a larger contribution towards the defence of the British Commonwealth' and that this could best be done in the Pacific. Ignoring Evatt's preferred tripartite plan he hoped that 'it would be possible to devise a common scheme of defence for this area after discussion, in the first instance, between the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, and thereafter with the United States Government'. In accordance with the prescriptions of the Memorandum, which had looked to a defence in depth centred on three lines of bases - 'Advanced', 'Intermediate' and 'Rear' - from the southernmost tip of the Japanese main islands to the immediate north and northwest of the Australian coast, Chifley added that 'at a later stage' it might be possible to bring France, Portugal and the Netherlands into the scheme. In this respect Chifley

stressed the importance of securing facilities for British Commonwealth bases in the Netherland East Indies... 'If an independent Indonesian republic were created, it would become even more important that we should secure appropriate military facilities in such places as Batavia, Sourabaya and Koepang. This was in the outer ring of any defence scheme for the South-West Pacific and was almost as important for that purpose as New Guinea'.

This was an up-dated version of the original ANZAC pact plan. Furthermore, if such a scheme were adopted, he believed that it should be controlled through the defence organisation in Australia. From this he concluded that joint use of bases should only be conceded to the United States in return for its acceptance of defence obligations in this security arrangement. American claims to sovereignty or exclusive rights in British Commonwealth territory should be resisted. Evatt added that they also sought reciprocal base rights so that all the countries involved in the defence scheme would be able 'in case of need to use each other's bases'.⁵³ Though they did not explicitly make the point nevertheless it would appear that the Australians, having

experienced the isolationism and unilateralism of the Americans, were determined to bind the United States to Australia in so complete a way that a threat to Australia perforce became a threat to America. And indeed even as Evatt was insisting on British Commonwealth solidarity in dealing with the Americans he was repeating to the American Charge d'Affaires in London what he had told Minter in Canberra, namely his preference for a tripartite scheme based on the model of the Canada-United States Joint Defence Board. In explanation he pointed out that Australia and New Zealand represented the Commonwealth in the Pacific, 'as Australia is now doing in Japan'.⁵⁴

Shortly before the first meeting of the Prime Ministers' Conference, Byrnes had requested Bevin to hasten the process of negotiation on the Pacific bases; he more than hinted that it would be a great help to the Truman Administration in persuading Congress to pass the British Loan bill. Thus the British Government was under some pressure to resolve the matter. But they were caught between two stools. On the one hand they wanted to placate the Americans while on the other they wished to keep the unity of the Commonwealth, especially for defence purposes. Following the first two meetings with the Australians and New Zealanders the British proposed to the Conference that Byrnes be invited to meet with the Commonwealth leaders for a wide-ranging discussion of the bases problem. For the Australians, however, this was not good enough. They counter-proposed that Byrnes should be given a clear statement indicating that the three Commonwealth countries favoured a regional security arrangement for the South Pacific and Southwest Pacific and that the question of base use should be discussed in that framework. Though both the British and New Zealand leaders agreed with the Australian objective they doubted whether it would be 'good tactics' to present the Americans with such a plan since, apart from other considerations, they would for domestic political reasons have great difficulty in accepting the idea of a general defence scheme. The Australians stood their ground, and the British and New Zealanders, in the interests of maintaining Commonwealth unity, gave way. Bevin was instructed to put the

Australian conditions to Byrnes as representing the view of all three Commonwealth countries.⁵⁵ The British accepted that the Australians, because they bore the prime risks, had the prime responsibility for the British Commonwealth in the Pacific.

Byrnes rejected these terms out of hand. He told Bevin that it would be 'quite impossible' to involve the United States in any form of regional defence arrangement in the Southwest Pacific. American defence authorities 'no longer see any likelihood of Japan coming back as the future enemy.' His interest in the Pacific bases was driven by the need to appease Congress and make it more amenable to approving the British loan. The United States was not keenly concerned about Manus Island nor did they wish to keep forces there. The United States navy only wanted to use the base for minor repairs. He concluded on this point that if the Commonwealth countries could not meet American wishes for the use of the bases 'the matter would have to be dropped (or, as he put it, "we must kiss it goodbye")'. To try to find some way of serving Byrnes' purpose Bevin urged the British Government to cede Tarawa in the Gilbert and Ellice Island, where the United States marines had fought a great battle against the Japanese. But the British Cabinet was unmoved by his plea. They argued that, in addition to particular objections, 'proposals for the cession of British territory ought only to be considered as part of some general scheme for common defence'. When this was reported to the Prime Ministers Conference the Australians and New Zealanders welcomed the decision.⁵⁶

Nevertheless Attlee was quite worried by Byrnes' blank refusal to contemplate the possibility of a Southwest Pacific defence arrangement. It seemed that if the Commonwealth countries insisted on this condition they might well kill any chance of keeping the Americans interested in co-operative action in the region. At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting on 6 May Attlee elaborated on this difficulty and intimated that 'it would be necessary to some extent to meet Mr Byrnes's desire to limit the scope of the

discussions.' Evatt, speaking in the place of Chifley who had had to return home, would not, however, make any concessions. He thought Byrnes' claim that the United States had no defence interest in the area was not credible. If the Americans wanted rights to the base they should be willing to assume obligations. He said that he had discussed the matter with Chifley and they were agreed that the Commonwealth Governments should 'act together' and 'hold to the general principle that rights should be granted only on the basis of reciprocal obligations.' He did not believe that this was Byrnes' last word. The Australians were not wedded to any particular forms. The Canadian-American mutual defence arrangement would be an acceptable model. The Commonwealth should not close the door but take up Byrnes' offer to speak to himself and the New Zealand External Affairs Minister in Washington. But by this time the British had grown a little weary of Australian intransigence. Australia was not to have matters all its own way. Its absolute veto on any other course of action was modified. And with Evatt reserving his position the meeting agreed to tell the Americans that 'while desirous of agreeing to arrangements which would be satisfactory to the United States and themselves' the Commonwealth Governments 'must have regard to their common interests in the South Pacific'.⁵⁷

Bevin was incensed by the attitude of his colleagues, and so returned to the fray. He needed some gesture to help in securing not only the American loan but also American aid in the Middle East. There was 'no immediate possibility of Byrnes entering four-party talks about the southern Pacific'. Rather he believed that Byrnes was 'getting the feeling that we stonewall on everything and this is creating a good deal of impatience.' The time had come 'to make some move favourable to the Americans', and he asked Cabinet to reconsider his Tarawa proposal, even in place of cession giving the Americans a lease in perpetuity. But yet again his proposal was turned down. Attlee, acutely aware that Australia and New Zealand were opposed to handing over any territory to the Americans without a quid pro quo, replied that the Tarawa question could only be considered 'as part of general arrangement in which Australia and New Zealand were fully associated'.⁵⁸

Frustrated by the Pacific Dominions' attitude Bevin reported to Cabinet that Byrnes was disappointed with the British Commonwealth countries' response. Since the Americans were not willing to enter into talks on the terms laid down by the Commonwealth governments it seemed best that 'this question be allowed to lapse'.⁵⁹ Bevin, however, did not want the question to lapse. The base negotiations offered a means of binding the United States closer to the British Commonwealth and making the Americans more amenable to other British objectives, financial as well as strategic. When the American officials subsequently inquired about the prospects of an agreement, Bevin was anxious to ensure that 'discussions should not be regarded as broken down'. He was happy that Evatt and Nash should meet Byrnes in Washington for any such discussions, no matter how unlikely they might be to succeed, would still 'help to keep the negotiations alive'.⁶⁰

Chifley when reporting to parliament on the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference repeated the statement on Australian defence policy which he had made in London, namely that Australia's contribution to British Commonwealth defence could best be made in the Pacific and that the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand should join in a common scheme of defence which could be extended first to include the United States and then other countries in the region. Why he should have put forward this tripartite British Commonwealth scheme as a nucleus for the wider arrangement is not clear. Nothing in London had given any indication that that was how the British, the New Zealanders or Evatt envisaged a Pacific defence plan emerging. All seemed to accept that American membership from the beginning was essential. It is also uncertain whether Chifley in making this statement was aware of the breakdown in base negotiations which had happened after his departure. Evatt's only communication on the subject had been upbeat. He had told Chifley that after talking to Byrnes it was evident that 'our attitude at London was right; the door to negotiations has not been closed and that despite all difficulties, satisfactory arrangements may result'. He said that Byrnes wished to take up the matter in Washington 'in accordance with an agreed note he received from Bevin' following the Commonwealth Prime Ministers meetings on the subject.⁶¹ This may well

have misled Chifley about the great gap which existed between what Australia desired and what America was willing to do.

While Chifley stressed the British Commonwealth connection Evatt's priority was the United States security guarantee. During Evatt's talks at every level in Washington this was the exclusive aim of his diplomacy. But at every level he found that the Americans ruled out the possibility of any kind of regional defence arrangement. In the face of President Truman's rejection of any kind of treaty, Evatt retreated to 'an informal statement of policy' which would make 'it clear that the defence of Australia and New Zealand was involved and not merely the defence of particular bases'. This too failed to elicit a positive response. In his desperate endeavour to rescue something from the talks he proposed at a meeting with State Department officials and representatives of the Navy and Army Departments that the United States might be given the right to use Manus and other Australian port facilities in return for Australian services having the right to use United States bases in the North Pacific such as Truk or Guam. Such an agreement, Evatt informed Chifley, would 'appear clearly as a mutual defence arrangement of a practical kind, showing to the world that the countries concerned, using common facilities in time of peace, would almost certain to be working together in time of war'. Even this kind of limited tie would have then the desired result of binding the United States to the defence of Australia. All of these negotiations had proceeded without a word to the British. Chifley in principle approved, with some qualifications, the new direction that Evatt's negotiations had taken. The Prime Minister said that an informal statement of policy, if it were secured, should be supplemented by staff conversations between the representatives of the armed forces of both countries and the preparation of a contingency plan. Such staff talks had taken place prior to the outbreak of the Pacific War and it was sensible that the same co-operation should be part of any postwar defence arrangement no matter how informal. Furthermore Chifley pointed out to Evatt that any agreement about mutual access to bases would have to include the United Kingdom and New Zealand since 'a British Commonwealth plan for co-operation in Defence in the Pacific' would

necessarily require that these facilities be available to all three nations. Chifley, in contrast to Evatt, never lost sight of the idea that the desired Pacific defence arrangement should be between the British Commonwealth, including Britain, and the United States.

Evatt, however, was left with little choice. The 'informal statement of policy' was not an option. All that he could salvage from the grand scheme for a defence arrangement for the Pacific was the possibility of reciprocal use of bases, and in his final round of talks with the State Department and service officials on 30 June he focused all his efforts on this. As he put it to Chifley in justification for the tactic, 'The essential feature of our approach to the problem has been to associate the use of Manus with other bases and territories in the South West Pacific Region and to see that if United States gets the use of facilities they will be required in return to give us definite and tangible benefits of a Defence character'. The precise bases to be included in the plan were to be determined in subsequent discussions though he again mentioned Guam and Manus as possible equivalents. He claimed that his alternative reciprocal base plan 'could properly be regarded as a practical arrangement' which could 'also lead to assumption of definite obligations at a later period'. It might even prove to be more satisfactory than the original scheme in that the alternative plan would be 'a visible manifestation of long-term Defence association for mutual benefit'. As almost an afterthought he admitted Chifley's contention that 'the United Kingdom and New Zealand would have to participate in the plan'.

Two weeks later he was able to report that after a further conference with Byrnes the Americans had now accepted in principle the reciprocal use of bases, and in exchange for access to Manus would offer Australia facilities 'at some place, or places, to be determined'. Evatt had suggested Guam. He then pronounced this to be a great victory. Britain and New Zealand as well as Australia would benefit from the deal; 'Australia's self-respect as well as her vital interests in British Commonwealth would be assisted by the new

proposal'. The reciprocal exchange would be 'a crushing answer to those in Australia who would give away control or use of Australia territories without getting anything in return.' He claimed that Australia was 'one of the leading nations outside of the major powers themselves' and that the United States was 'treating us in that way'. But this was a puff. He had misled Chifley about the Americans' attitude to reciprocity. They had ruled out the possibility of giving the Australians rights in Guam or indeed any other of their bases in the North Pacific. All that they would be willing to entertain was to allow Australian use of Eastern Samoa or Canton Island, if they could acquire the latter from the British - small facilities in the central or eastern Pacific far away from the forward lines of defence which the Australian Government had identified as the barrier against future threat. The American interest in Manus was political not strategic; they wished to show the American taxpayers and Congress that they had gained some long term rights in exchange for the great wartime investment. Japan which was 'flat on her face' was no longer considered a potential enemy against which they needed to protect themselves.⁶² It took a long leap of a self-serving imagination to believe that such a modest exchange, even if it could be negotiated - the great question of cost had not been touched on - might result in a defence arrangement of the type which Evatt and the Australian Government, without considering the American side of the equation, had blithely hoped they could achieve. The Australian government was by this time under attack in the press and parliament over Manus, it being asserted that the Labor ministers might by failing to reach an agreement with the United States over Manus cause the Americans to withdraw from the South Pacific. Thus the cabinet was cheered by Evatt's news and approved in principle his latest scheme⁶³

Evatt let the matter lie dormant until after the Australian elections in September. He then approached the American Ambassador in Canberra about commencing negotiations over mutual use of Manus and 'at least a token right for mutual use of facilities in at least one American base'. The State Department rejected again any possibility of allowing Australia the right to use Guam and offered access to facilities only at Pago Pago in Eastern

Samoa and at Canton. Moreover as they had indicated in their earlier draft agreement for Manus they expected Australia to accept financial responsibility for the upkeep of that base. Early in 1947 Australia seemed to accept the essence of the American proposal and suggested that Australian and American representatives should 'examine the arrangements in detail'. Evatt at a meeting of Council of Defence ministers gave a positive account of the American proposal. He explained that the Americans did not wish to become 'entangled with us' in a regional security arrangement or to give Australia reciprocal rights in any of their North Pacific bases. They would only give Australia reciprocal rights in Pago Pago and Canton and would not contribute to the upkeep of Manus. But he argued that, even though the offer 'did not go as far as we would have liked, and was, perhaps, of doubtful practical value for Australian defence, nevertheless it was a recognition of United States willingness to make an arrangement on the principle of reciprocity and it represented an initial step in the direction of co-operation with the United States in the Pacific, which it was Australia's aim to foster'. He admitted that 'The existence of a United States screen of islands north of the Equator was, of course, an important factor in our security'. He was 'inclined to favour' the American offer.⁶⁴

At the ensuing Council of Defence meeting, though the base issue as such was not discussed, the Prime Minister noted that the 'system of Empire Co-operation is now greatly weakened'. It was evident that Britain had lost much of its former power and potential. It had handed over to the Americans responsibility for meeting the Soviet challenge in the Eastern Mediterranean. Its position in the Middle East was under threat. India appeared 'to be on the way out'. Canada and South Africa were 'non-co-operative'. Only Britain, Australia and New Zealand believed in Empire unity and were willing to co-operate in a plan for the common security. Australia had to formulate its defence policy in the light of these considerations. And the Council endorsed Chifley's conclusion that, while world collective security was a long term hope, 'In the meantime, reliance must be placed on co-operation in Empire Defence and the development of regional security in the Pacific with the

United States'.⁶⁵ The United States had to be allied to the British Commonwealth in order to attain a satisfactory basis for national security.

The Americans, however, had begun to lose interest in Manus. Following the Congressional elections the political issue had faded away. Simultaneously Russia had appeared as the new enemy and Western Europe and the Near East had become the critical areas of instability and danger. On reassessing their strategic needs the Americans had decided that Manus was no longer important. Consequently after carrying away almost everything that was movable from Manus they returned the base to Australia. Evatt was deeply frustrated by American intransigence. In June 1947 Australia Admiral Louis E. Denfield presented a note to the Australian Government which seemed to settle the matter once and for all. The Americans announced that they were 'withdrawing' their request for use of Manus, stating that among other reasons it was 'of slight strategic interest to the United States in view of the base facilities available to the United States in the former Japanese mandated islands and in the Philippines'. Evatt was greatly disappointed and, despite the clear American position, told the American Ambassador that Australia and the United States should have a regional agreement similar to that which the United States had with Canada or with the South American countries in the recently signed Rio Pact.⁶⁶

Fear of Japan had driven the Australians to seek to bind themselves to America so that they would be able to have the same degree of security in peace against an attack from the north as they had enjoyed during the Pacific War. The latter protection had been unanticipated and had come about through adventitious events. By committing America to a regional defence arrangement they wanted America to act as a shield against any further threats arising out of Asia, specifically Japan. In approaching the British they, along with the New Zealanders, had insisted that their views on American claims to islands and bases should prevail, and the British, for the good of the Commonwealth, had acquiesced in the Australian negotiating terms which

were designed to achieve these ends. But Australian hopes were dashed when the Americans made it clear that they were not interested in any such arrangement and they evaporated altogether when the Americans in mid-1947 lost all interest in South Pacific bases. As a result the British Commonwealth was left without a policy for the defence of its interests in East Asia and the Pacific. The Australians still thought of themselves as taking part in a co-operative British Commonwealth defence, but when it came to the point they found it difficult to give meaning to this concept without the co-operation of the Americans.

The Making of a Japanese Peace Treaty.

As the Allies' defeat of Japan drew near both the Australian and British Governments had independently formulated principles for the remaking of Japan. The Australians, even before the end of the Pacific War, had told the British that they feared a resurgence of Japanese militarism and supported a 'stern' occupation policy. In particular they wanted the Emperor system destroyed. As they told London 'the visible dethronement' of that system was 'a primary means of shaking the faith of the Japanese in the heavenly character of the Emperor'. They maintained that 'Unless the system goes the Japanese will remain unchanged and the recrudescence of aggression will only be postponed to a later generation'. Both governments, without informing the other, submitted their ideas on what the Australians called 'The Future of Japan' to the Americans. While the British only sought demilitarisation and external controls - having little faith in cultural engineering - the Australians demanded a root and branch policy which, beginning with the abolition of the sacred emperor, would involve 'radical changes in Japan's social, political and economic pattern'. Only by this means could they effect the 'Elimination of Japanese militarism and its constant threat to Pacific security'.⁶⁷

Even though Australia represented the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council in Tokyo and was a member of the FEC in Washington, Evatt

remained unhappy with the way in which the Americans dominated the occupation. He disliked SCAP's unilateral actions, including MacArthur's devising of a new constitution, and also the Great Powers' right of veto in the FEC which allowed the American government by default a very free hand in making occupation policy. He recognised that American policy was by a piecemeal process creating the terms of a peace settlement. To head this off he began to urge on the British the need for an early Peace Conference where Australia could have some influence on the outcome. In April 1946 during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting Hector McNeill, the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, recorded that Evatt, speaking to him of the necessity of holding an early peace conference, had 'returned to his old subject with much greater warmth'.⁶⁸

During 1946 Evatt became ever more convinced of the desirability of reaching a formal peace settlement and of ensuring that Australia was a party principal in the making of the peace. The Great Powers in drawing up European peace terms had ignored the lesser Allies. He fought hard to persuade them to allow a conference of all the Allies who had taken part in the European war to review the terms, and with the support of the British whom he lobbied on behalf of a broad-based conference he had his way. It was only reluctantly conceded and the conference could only by a two thirds vote recommend revisions. The Soviet Union was of all the Great Powers the most resistant to permitting the small belligerents a voice. Evatt in pursuing his objective crossed swords with the Soviet representatives. In writing to Ball about the attitude he should take in dealing with the American-Soviet disputes on the Allied Council Evatt said that as a result of his dealings with the Soviet Union he was 'satisfied that they are conducting an offensive of nerves against Western countries'. The Soviets at international conferences had adopted 'tactics well-known in Communist circles of standard obstruction, sabotage and determination to win by resorting to weapons of fatigue and almost open intimidation'.⁶⁹ But for him the European peace conference was a very disappointing experience. On the question of the disposal of the Italian colonies in North Africa, he had wanted the decision left in the hands of the

belligerents, including the small powers. He fought bitterly against a majority view that it should be left to the Great Powers and if they failed to agree referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations. He saw this as setting a dangerous precedent for the settlement with Japan. He was fearful that if this was accepted, it might 'create disastrous precedence (sic) to Pacific settlement'. Though there had been much consultation among the British Commonwealth countries about the matter, Evatt was 'disgusted' at the lack of support from the British and the other Dominions. Their attitude represented 'appeasement of Russia and forgetfulness of Australia's maximum war effort'. He insisted that Australia would 'not submit to similar action in relation to the Pacific settlement as our life as a nation may be affected'.⁷⁰

Evatt had lost all patience with the Americans. They had rejected his regional defence plans, had ignored his protests against the Japanese undertaking an Antarctic whaling expedition and, in general, were bypassing the FEC in their administration of occupied Japan. He wished to halt the proliferation of ad hoc decisions which were preempting the work of the peace conference. In October he had told the British that Australia was opposed to the FEC discussing the disposal of the Japanese fleet, saying that it should be left for the peace conference.⁷¹ The British were surprised at this since it seemed that if the FEC did not act it might be left wholly in the hands of the United States. But Evatt had arrived at the conclusion that the FEC was acting in collusion with the Americans in agreeing to deal with issues that rightly belonged to the overall peace settlement.⁷²

In early 1947 Evatt publicly called for the summoning of a peace conference. Perhaps he was encouraged to take this action by President Truman's State of the Union Address in which he said that the time had arrived 'to get on with the peace settlements' and by MacArthur's message to the American Congress that the basic tasks of the occupation had been completed.⁷³ In a parliamentary speech on Australia's foreign relations the External Affairs Minister broached the question. He stressed once again that Australia's

overriding concern was protection against a resurgent Japanese militarism. 'First and foremost', he said 'in Australian policy in regard to the future of Japan we place security.' It was Australia's core aim that 'Japan must never again be permitted to develop the means of waging aggressive war'. There had been a 'distinct tendency [and the tone suggested a regrettable tendency] to settle matters piecemeal or on a temporary basis'. It was his considered opinion that 'the time is rapidly approaching when the FEC's work should be vested in a Pacific Peace Conference which could deal with the problems of the settlement with Japan as a whole'. The Conference should be composed of the Pacific nations that 'waged active war' against Japan and no power should have a right to veto the decisions of the conference. Furthermore he indicated that the signing of a peace treaty would not mean that the Allies would no longer exercise some supervision over Japan. It would not necessarily follow that the making of peace would bring about the withdrawal of Allied forces from Japan.⁷⁴

A few weeks later MacArthur, who was aware of Evatt's speech, came out publicly in favour of an early peace settlement. He claimed that the 'aims of the occupation certainly have been accomplished'. The demilitarisation had been completed and the democratisation was 'approaching completion'. Only the problems of economic reconstruction remained to be solved. This could not be done by the occupation. Japan needed a peace treaty to enable it to resume trade and take full economic responsibility for itself. The American State Department responded positively to MacArthur's proposal and set about drawing up plans for a peace conference.⁷⁵

For Australia, Britain and the British Commonwealth as a whole it seemed that the critical hour for the making of peace with Japan had arrived; both Australia and Britain were concerned that the United States might present them with a *fait accompli*. But for Australia above all the Japanese peace was the major issue of the postwar era. Thus Evatt from the outset had as his aim the calling of a British Commonwealth Conference in Australia which would at the end submit its 'agreed views' to Washington. He wished to emphasise

again that the Pacific Dominions were the party principals for the Commonwealth in the Pacific. In opposing a British proposal to hold a conference in London, he argued that Australia and New Zealand were 'the British Commonwealth countries most vitally affected by Japanese Settlement' and that 'in the circumstances, our special interest in Pacific should be recognised'. It was essential that the conference be held in Australia. As Evatt explained to J.A. Beasley, the Australian High Commissioner in London, it was important to ensure that the British did not 'monopolise the initiative in relation to this matter, in dealing with Washington' since Australia had 'to bear the burden of these moves.' He recalled the British failure to consult with Australia both during the war and in the postwar period about their Asian and the Pacific policies and he complained about their indifference to Australian interests. In particular he noted Britain's decisions to withdraw from India and Burma and its consideration of similar actions in Ceylon and Malaya. Australia was left 'without any adequate defence arrangements...which...seems to follow a pattern.' And he cited Britain's committing the United States to a 'Beat Hitler First' strategy when Australian forces were fighting in the Middle East. He concluded that Britain 'which cannot have a primary interest everywhere, should actively support Australian leadership in relation to Commonwealth interest in the Pacific'. Aware of its own weakness and sensitive to Australia's concerns the Attlee government, following the precedent set in the appointment of the Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council gave in to the Australians and it was agreed that a conference should be held in Canberra at the end of August.⁷⁶

In March Evatt established a Preparatory Committee for the Pacific Settlement under the chairmanship of Sir Frederic Eggleston. For Australia, as Evatt told Parliament, the most important consideration was the need to ensure effective supervision of Japan after the signing of the peace, and it was to this question that the Committee gave a great deal of its attention. In a draft outline of a treaty drawn up by the Committee, Evatt reported to Cabinet in May that 'special stress had been laid on the setting up of a body to be

known as the Supervisory Commission for Japan'. This body made up of representatives of the FEC powers would have 'special machinery of control and inspection' for the purpose of overseeing 'the implementation of the terms of the Peace Treaty'. It was envisaged that small garrisons supplied by the members of the Commission would replace the occupation forces. Again in June after the British Commonwealth and the United States had accepted the need for an early peace Evatt repeated this warning: 'It is plain that the future control and supervision of Japan will be the most important question for the peace conference to decide. By no means should Japan be permitted to imitate the example of Germany after World War One and emerge as a menace to the security of the Pacific and Southeast Asia'. Evatt did allow for the possibility that the Japanese people could be transformed into 'a peaceful democratic state', but only 'provided always' that there was 'adequate control' and the processes of social, economic and political reform continued.⁷⁷ He hoped that the British Commonwealth conference could be persuaded to support the inclusion of strict control measures in the treaty.

The British, however, were alert to Evatt's intent and made it clear that the Conference's purpose would be merely 'to exchange views'. They stated that 'the object of the Canberra Conference *would not* in our view...be to aim at the production of any agreed British Commonwealth draft for the Japanese treaty'. The Americans by this time had changed their mind on the nature of a desirable peace. Not only were they anxious to encourage the Japanese to revive their economy and so relieve America of the cost of the occupation but also they wished to win Japan over to the side of the West in the emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union. Major-General John H. Hilldring, the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas, in June wrote to MacArthur that the United States did 'not any longer...concern itself with whether or not we shall have a punitive peace. That is a closed issue.' The government was 'able henceforth to devote themselves to discussion and decision as to how the constructive philosophy shall be devised and described'. The British were very sensitive to American wishes, depending so much upon them for economic assistance as well as strategic support in Europe and the Middle

East. They had conceded the Far East to the Americans. In their view one of the chief aims of the Canberra Conference would be to prepare the Commonwealth countries for subsequent 'informal' talks with the Americans.⁷⁸

Evatt was not easily dissuaded from persisting in his course. On 8 July before heading off to Japan to consult with MacArthur about SCAP's progress in reforming Japan and to seek his support for Australia's peace terms, Evatt held a meeting of his chief advisers to discuss Australia's tactics in working towards a Japanese peace treaty. The verbatim record of the meeting is a most remarkable document, firstly because of its very existence - Evatt was averse normally to having records made of his informal discussions - and secondly because of what it reveals about Evatt's political character as well as his view of the peacemaking and the role the British Commonwealth countries and the Canberra Conference should play in achieving Australia's objectives. Turning to Eggleston at the outset he declared that on his return from Japan he would want to talk to the new Advisory Committee which had superseded the Preparatory Committee, and he hoped that the Committee would prove to be 'an anti-Japanese Committee and not an appeasing committee'. Evatt was critical of America's design 'to build up Japan against Russia.' According to Eggleston if this were to happen 'a reading of history shows that she may go with Russia'.

Evatt was adamant that it should not be the members of the FEC as such who should participate in the peace-making but only those nations who had actively fought against the enemy. And in this respect he was as hostile to the participation of other Commonwealth countries as he was to the non-Commonwealth countries. All of them, he believed, had either betrayed Australia or were indifferent to its Pacific concerns. He could not appreciate any other nation's perspective and was narrowly focused on achieving his own objectives.

Dr. Evatt: Why should Canada for instance be in the Peace Settlement? They will, I think, follow the U.S. in a crisis or will sit on the fence. They will sign anything.

Mr. Forsyth: They were cautious but acted in their interests.

Dr. Evatt: South Africa should not be in the Peace Settlement....

Mr.Forsyth: Shouldn't the criterion be active participation in the war against Japan?

Dr.Evatt: Then we should cut out France and the Netherlands.

Mr.Forsyth: That would limit to the Big Five.

Dr. Evatt: I don't mind the Big Five if Australia is one of them.

Mr. Forsyth: What about New Zealand?

Dr.Evatt: The same thing applies. Mr Curtin was horrified when New Zealand did not give a division in the Pacific war.

It was Australia's policy to have unanimity as the rule for deciding the terms of peace at the eventual conference, which in effect would give all members of the conference, including Australia, a right of veto. When Dr John Burton, the new Secretary of the External Affairs Department, urged that Australia 'should make sure that the United Kingdom and other British Commonwealth countries don't go back on voting arrangements made at the Canberra Conference', Evatt answered that even Britain could not be relied upon for 'U.K. policy is to give concessions in the Pacific for similar ones in Europe'. The United States' sensitivities were also brushed aside. When Eggleston remarked that the 'U.S. objects to blocs' Evatt defiantly declared, 'Be damned! They do it themselves'. Evatt advocated a policy of sheer expediency in approaching the question of who should decide the peace with Japan. Since he had blamed the Great Powers and their vetoes for the failure of the peace negotiations and the breakdown in the United Nations, it was rather ironic that he was willing himself to countenance a Great Power peace for Japan provided that Australia was accepted as one of the Great Powers.⁷⁹

In Japan Evatt wanted to discuss with MacArthur not only the reforms made by the occupation but also the 'vital question' of post-peace treaty controls and with it Australian security. As so often was the case with Evatt when face

to face with the leaders of Australia's Great Power allies his defiant posture dissolved in the presence of the international statesman and after his talks with SCAP he praised publicly the commander's achievement in practically completing the physical disarmament and demilitarisation of Japan and expressed the belief that there was a 'substantial area of agreement' with the United States authorities in Japan on peace terms. There are no Australian minutes or other detailed records of Evatt's discussions with MacArthur but the American and British political liaison officers sent their respective governments similar accounts of what had transpired. The American reported that Evatt's attitude had been 'cordial and friendly in every way' and the British representative stated that Dr Evatt spoke to him 'with the voice of MacArthur' and that it appeared from what he said that Evatt had 'evidently found almost complete common ground with the Commander on the questions at issue.' He had told the Americans that as to the peace he was 'completely optimistic that basic American and British Commonwealth policies were identical'.

In addressing, however, the problem of supervising and enforcing the peace Evatt linked the issue of controls to that of establishing a Pacific defence arrangement and so obtaining the United States security guarantee which had eluded him in the negotiations over the Pacific bases. He confided to the head of the British Liaison Mission that 'the most important consideration...was for the United States to retain her interest in strategical questions affecting the defence of Japan after the treaty had been signed'. It was his view that 'The defence of Japan must be so arranged as to be able to meet any contingencies which might arise either because of internal moves in Japan herself or aggression from outside'. The chief of the American Diplomatic Section of SCAP reported to Washington that Evatt's plan for post-peace supervision included a council of ambassadors from the FEC nations who, under the chairmanship of the American representative, 'would consult together under a regional security pact for the Far East'.⁸⁰ Evatt wrote to Chifley that not only was there 'a complete over-all understanding' with MacArthur on peace conference procedures, peace terms and post peace

controls but also there was an accord between MacArthur's views on the peace and Australia's desire for protection against 'aggression from the North'.⁸¹

The 'Outline Notes' which Evatt put together after his return from Japan provided the basis for discussion at the Canberra Conference. Despite the British, Canadian and New Zealand wishes that nothing should be done to fuel American fears of a Commonwealth bloc, Lord Addison, the leader of the British delegation, reiterating that 'we must confine ourselves simply to an exchange of views', it was clear that Evatt still wanted to establish a common position which could be used at the peace conference to advance Australia's aims. And on many issues the British Commonwealth representatives did share a common mind, a common mind that reflected for the most part Australian objectives. As the final communique declared, while each nation preserved its freedom of action, the conference had 'revealed a wide harmony of views among the British Commonwealth Nations'. Evatt argued successfully, against a British case for majority voting, that two-thirds majorities should be required to determine substantive issues at the peace conference; not only was it the procedure adopted by the United Nations and favoured by the United States but also because through this means Commonwealth countries at the conference would have an effective veto over the peace settlement. The Conference accepted that in accord with the Cairo, Yalta and Potsdam Great Power decisions Japan's territory should be limited to its four main islands, and no one dissented from the Australian view that the remaining island groups to the south, the Ryukyus, the Bonins and the Volcanoes, should be left under the control of the United States. Likewise the Commonwealth representatives supported the principles of permanent demilitarisation and disarmament, forbidding atomic research and development and an aircraft industry and limiting the size of commercial ships to the needs of coastal trade. While acknowledging that Japan must be left free to rebuild its economy so as to become self-sufficient they also thought that it should be prevented from recreating a war potential, and this was to be achieved by placing limits on major industries and restricting imports of

raw materials. The conference, moreover, favoured the Australian proposal that Japan should protect and extend the political and economic reforms which SCAP had instituted, though the members differed over how this should be accomplished.⁸²

Australia suffered the greatest setback over the issue of enforcing the peace. Evatt, following the Provisional Agenda notes that he had distributed to all delegates, set out three alternatives, all of which contemplated the use of Allied forces, if necessary, to compel Japan's compliance with the terms of the peace. The first allowed for the continuation of the military occupation until a Supervisory Commission should decide that Japan had shown itself to be trustworthy. The second envisaged the stationing of small garrisons at designated points around Japan, garrisons which could be reinforced if need be from bases on the surrounding islands and the third, assuming the withdrawal of all occupying forces, looked to the treaty to give the Supervisory Commission the right to keep garrisons on the adjacent islands which could be called upon in order to maintain order in Japan or to deal with violations of the peace terms. The British, Canadian and Indian representatives raised the many difficulties associated with these schemes for possible post-peace treaty military intervention; Addison suggested control of emigration or economic sanctions might be a better way of handling infractions of the treaty terms. All were opposed to the continuation of the occupation and recognised the difficulties of the Supervisory Commission having the executive authority when in practice it would be the United States that would supply the bulk of any force that might be used for enforcement purposes. Evatt himself by that stage in the Conference's proceedings had realised that nothing could be decided on this matter without American co-operation and so he declared that he was 'most emphatically of the opinion that we cannot advance very far without discussion with the United States'. He had learnt as in the case of the Pacific bases and security proposals that the Commonwealth could not act alone, that it depended at the end of the day on United States willingness to participate in such schemes. In the desultory exchanges that ensued Evatt made it plain that he supported some

form of Pacific security that could be used against the revival of Japanese militarism. Drawing on his talks with MacArthur he admitted that the existing large scale military occupation was no longer feasible. However it was his hope that a small force of possibly battalion size would remain as a symbol of the Supervisory Commission's authority and that a reserve force would be stationed in the nearby islands. He did not wish the United States to use its position to take exclusive control; it 'would be a very bad thing for the Pacific as a whole'. Countries like Australia and New Zealand would be placed at a disadvantage. In his final contribution to the topic Evatt raised once again the 'important question of regional arrangement in the Pacific'. It was his hope that somehow in association with the peace treaty that there should be 'an undertaking against aggression in the Pacific'.⁸³

This Commonwealth Conference, the first to be held in the Pacific, was conducted in a most amicable manner. The British representatives who were apprehensive at the outset reported favourably on the outcome. The atmosphere was 'outstandingly friendly' and Dr. Evatt was 'tactful and considerate', indeed 'sweet reasonableness itself'. Perhaps since he had succeeded in having the conference held in Australia and was as a result elected chairman his vanity had been appeased and he went out of his way to be conciliatory. But even more as the British noted - and it was a characteristic which they applauded since this was largely what underlay their apprehensions - Evatt was 'throughout conscious of United States interests and policies and was particularly anxious to do nothing to run counter to them'. He had indicated that on 'some important points' no effective discussion could take place in the absence of America.⁸⁴ In some ways the Canberra Conference was like the Imperial Conference of 1921 which until America was brought into the discussion could not reach a common policy on the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In this case, however, in contrast to the earlier conference, Australia was almost as convinced as Canada that they had to wait upon the Americans' pleasure.

Evatt on the very day that the conference ended sent an ingratiating cable to American Secretary of State George Marshall which summarised the proceedings in a manner which showed how the Commonwealth countries had deferred to the United States and how he himself had insisted on peace terms acceptable to the United States. As he wrote

The broad result of the Conference is to confirm the initiative of the United States and of General MacArthur in moving towards an early settlement with Japan, which initiative has been supported throughout by myself....

Australia has pressed the view that the chain of islands between Japan and Formosa should be in the sovereignty or exclusive control of the United States....

He praised General MacArthur's 'outstanding work' in the field of demilitarisation and disarmament, and maintained that after the peace the Supervisory Commission should be able to help the Japanese to carry on the work of democratisation, the framework for which had been established by SCAP. On the matter of the occupation and future control of Japan he had strongly urged that the United States should be first consulted; 'Accordingly , there has been no attempt to reach any decision on occupation or control, still less any attempt to bind each other as a group in any direction'. Finally he declared that Australia had 'always recognised the leadership of the United States in the Pacific', that Australia was second only to the United States in prosecuting the War in the Pacific and that if the United States after the signing of the peace treaty desired to keep forces in bases close to the Japanese main islands 'Australia would probably continue its share in obligations under American command'. It was a plea to America to treat Australia as a close friend in working out the ultimate peace terms. It was in essence an appeal to America to support Australia's claims to be regarded as a 'party principal' in the peacemaking and peace enforcing.⁸⁵

The euphoria of the Commonwealth conference quickly dissipated as it became increasingly evident in the latter months of the year that there was little chance of an early peace. Russia objected to the American proposal

that a peace conference made up of all the FEC nations should negotiate the peace terms. It wanted the matter to be left in the hands of the Council of Foreign Ministers. China too was unhappy with the proposal that the conference should make its decisions on the basis of a two-third majority. It demanded that the veto rights which the great powers exercised in the FEC should also apply at the peace conference. The Americans had committed themselves to the FEC membership formula and the two third vote primarily for the purpose of overcoming the Russian veto power which had contributed to the difficulties that they had encountered in the FEC. By this time tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union had reached a serious stage and all international issues not only European ones were being increasingly assessed from that particular perspective. From the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March Russian-American relations had rapidly deteriorated. The American national security establishment had come to believe that not only was it impossible to obtain an agreement for the settlement of the German question in Europe but also that the Soviet Union was bent on world domination. Thus in Washington it was increasingly believed that a disarmed Japan might well become an easy prey for the Soviet Union and so their doubts had grown about the wisdom of holding a peace conference which would weaken America's influence over Japan. Using therefore the Russian and the Chinese objections as pretexts they procrastinated over calling a conference.

Evatt was much vexed by the Russian and Chinese difficulties. He saw the chance of an early peace slipping away. More immediately he feared that the Americans might in order to achieve a treaty surrender to the recalcitrant Great Powers and as a result Australia would be denied its place at the peace table. As soon as these problems surfaced he emphasized yet again Australians' contribution to the Pacific War and the promises made to Australia, and he pressed the Americans to 'take definitive action' to call the peace conference. Since the Russians and Chinese persisted with their demands Evatt became alarmed that the Great Powers might, as they had done in the European settlement, take it upon themselves to decide the terms of the Japanese peace treaty or at the least insist on retaining the veto

power. He was adamant that the British were 'absolutely bound' by the Canberra conference to consult Australia before agreeing to any such arrangements. He was determined that Australia 'must at all costs maintain our position'. But that position was not total opposition to the veto but rather that Australia should exercise the right of veto for the British Commonwealth. If Australia agreed to 'a modified veto', then he asserted that 'It should be on the footing that Australia represent the British Commonwealth as at Tokyo'. When, however, the Americans inquired of the British where they stood on this matter they denied that Australia had made such representations and assured the United States that even if it did they would be rejected.⁸⁶

The Cold War, the Japanese Peace Treaty and Pacific Security.

By the end of 1947 the tensions between the Western great powers and the Soviet Union had hardened into a Cold War. The Americans and British adopted a global policy of confrontation aimed at containing the Soviet threat. They had little expectation of reaching a diplomatic settlement with Russia on any of the major post-war international issues, including Germany and Japan. Thus at the London conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers in December 1947, Marshall and Bevin had not made any serious effort to engage their Soviet counterpart in discussions on these problems. Rather they had consulted with each other on how best to meet the Soviet menace to Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East and East Asia. They had tentatively agreed to co-operate in building up their defences to resist Communist expansion, the Americans making a secret commitment to support the British in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, the British undertaking to initiate a Western European union and both promising to enter into talks about the security of East Asia.

Against this background, however, the Americans, British and Australians took up different stands on the desirability of a Japanese peace treaty. The Americans abandoned the idea of an early peace. Economic considerations were subsumed by strategic ones. They wanted to ensure that Russia would

not be able to take advantage of a weak Japan. American policymakers, ignoring the limits which had been laid down by the FEC, set about restoring Japan's industrial capacity and encouraging its de facto reentry into the international community. While keeping their military forces in Japan they hoped through this 'reverse' economic policy to integrate Japan into the Western camp. The British for their part though they were loth to challenge the Americans openly nevertheless favoured the calling of an early Peace Conference with or without Russian participation. In order to meet the security problem they thought that the Japanese peace treaty should be accompanied by a Japanese-American defence treaty and the Americans, British, Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians should enter into a mutual pact or agreement for the defence of the whole region.

On the Australian side, however, there was great resentment at America's unilateral change of course. Australia saw itself as only second in importance to America in the Pacific settlement. From the World War II experience it was convinced that it was the most vulnerable of the Western powers to a threat from the region, particularly a revival of Japanese militarism. The Labor government had little sympathy for the American and British anxieties about Soviet actions in Europe. They saw these preoccupations as distracting attention from the Pacific and providing a pretext for putting off the summoning of a peace conference. Since the Americans and British had failed to make any progress Evatt considered approaching the Soviet union to see if he could break the impasse. Acting on the assumption that if the Soviet Union was reassured about its post-Yalta territorial gains in Northeast Asia it might well be willing to drop its opposition to a broad based peace conference and so force America's hand, Burton on behalf of Evatt instructed Australia's minister in Moscow to sound out the Russians accordingly - but without any success.⁸⁷ The American attitude was deeply frustrating and there seemed no way around the problem.

Thus though Chifley endorsed the secret Anglo-American understanding about the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East - perhaps because it had direct strategic implications for Australia - he refused, on the advice of Burton and Evatt, to back a British plan for a Western union aimed at containing Russia in Europe. Indeed Australia was the only 'old Dominion' to oppose the British proposal. The Australian reply to the British, which was drafted by Burton, was couched in the language of liberal internationalism. It asserted that an anti-Soviet pact would be contrary to the principles of the United Nations. If agreed to it would amount to a return to power politics which had been the major cause of earlier wars. Such a scheme represented a return to a diplomacy based on strategy and expediency rather than justice. By ganging up on the Soviet Union the West would only confirm Russian suspicions and consolidate the polarisation which was endangering world peace. But throughout this extensive critique the Australians laid the blame for this unfortunate state of affairs on the United States. Britain might be taking the initiative but it was implied that they were acting at the instance of the Americans. It was suggested that the British Labour government was acting under economic duress and following the Americans in this anti-Soviet crusade. The Americans because of their support for the arms industry and failure to provide economic aid for the war-torn countries had contributed greatly to world tensions. They had little feeling for Britain's plight. They were willing to pour capital into the revival of the economies of the former enemies, Japan, Germany and Italy, rather than to help Britain which had borne the heat and burden of the Western cause in World War II. The Australian response hinted that if the British pursued this American-devised plan they might well be left as had been the case in the early years of World War II to carry the full cost of a future conflict.

Why did Australia stand apart and reject this British proposal? They had accepted the Mediterranean and Middle East understanding which was equally aimed at the Soviet Union. Why did they believe that the principles underlying the United Nations were being broken when Britain, America, the other Dominions, France and the small Western European countries agreed

that such a union was necessary to defend these same principles against a new imperialist aggressor? Why did they shift the blame for the British proposal onto the Americans when it was clear that the British for their own reasons had taken the initiative? The answer would seem to be that they feared that the British plan was based on the assumption that Anglo-American differences with the Soviets were irreconcilable and that therefore their energies would be devoted to the European crisis at the expense of the Asia Pacific region. And as at the time of the making of the ANZAC Pact their hostility was directed primarily at the Americans. Without the co-operation of the Americans the Australians could not achieve their Pacific objectives and since the end of the war the Americans had rebuffed all their overtures. The Americans had refused to go along with Australia's scheme for Pacific bases or a Pacific defence arrangement, they had procrastinated over the calling of a peace conference and they had acted unilaterally in deciding occupation policy even to the point where they were willing to assist rebuilding Japan's industrial infrastructure. Britain and America were once again pursuing a 'Europe first' policy. Australia was again beginning to feel itself 'alone in the Pacific'. And so at the conclusion of Australia's reply to Britain, after the condemnation of the violations of liberal internationalist principles, Chifley told Attlee that Australia's 'interests were very much bound up in the Pacific area: in the event of European conflict, our whole manpower might well have to be diverted to the protection of our position and interests in this area'. Australia's position was precarious for 'there is no Government in the Southeast Asia or Pacific areas which is stable: every Government can be prevailed upon to adopt a policy hostile to us if it so suited powers engaged in a European conflict'.⁸⁸ One might well wonder whether this last enigmatic comment might be a reference to Communist influence upon the national independence movements in Asia or to a revitalised Japan which might be encouraged by the Soviet Union to take the opportunity to revenge itself on Australia.

A few months later in a report to parliament on foreign affairs Evatt, while praising American aid to Europe under the Marshall plan and the formation of the Western Union as 'a contribution to the stability and economic welfare

of Europe', nevertheless deplored the growth of 'fears and suspicions' between Russia and America which had stultified all efforts to achieve a peace treaty and caused the Americans to rebuild Japan's industry beyond the previously agreed limits. Japan was 'itself an illustration of the general world situation.' The recent State and Army Department missions to Japan had produced reports favouring 'the restoration of industries which might enable Japan to rearm for war'. The Americans saw Japan as a resource which 'might be used as an instrument in a future struggle between the United States of America and the Soviet Union'. He questioned the wisdom of such a policy for though Japan might be rebuilt as an arsenal for one purpose, namely to assist the West against Russia, 'it might ultimately be used according to the wishes of the Japanese leaders and turned in the direction of the South Pacific to the detriment of this country'. It would be an 'evil day for Australia if Japan is given capacity to rearm'.⁸⁹

This protest at America's global role, especially its attitude towards Japan, was but a mild and, for public purposes, diplomatic expression of the anger which Evatt felt. On the day after delivering this speech he unburdened himself to the British High Commissioner in Canberra and elaborated in detail on his distrust of America's global policy, especially as it affected Japan, Palestine and Trieste. If the British record is accurate - and there is no reason to doubt it - Evatt inveighed against the United States using the crudest kind of populist socialist language. It was the wildness of a frustrated ego which had fused the pursuit of his nation's interests with his own self-righteous vanity. American policy, he declared, was 'revealed as mercenary and opposed to any system of democracy as we understood it'. The Americans were 'more concerned about their own financial interests than the peace of the world'. Their actions had in the main been 'dominated by vested interests which took the form of anti-communism which could not be distinguished from anti-socialism', and he gave as an example the United States 'supplying Japan with many millions of dollars of raw cotton to build up their textile industry which would mean American machinery and replacements'.

America's policy towards rebuilding Japan's economy was intended to make that country 'a bulwark against communism'.

In this same conversation Evatt expressed understanding for Britain's position. He had 'a high admiration for the way the Government and people of the United Kingdom were facing their great trials'. It was because of Britain's great sacrifices in the war that it found itself obliged to seek aid from the United States. The crippling conditions placed on the American loans were the result of 'American suspicions of a Labour Government in Britain'. The United States was 'anti-Labour in outlook and conduct'. He projected again a ludicrous image of the British Labour Government which served his own emotional needs. In contrast to his sweeping denunciation of the British at the Departmental meeting preceding the Canberra Conference he now saw them as the wartime heroes who because of their unhappy economic circumstances had had to bow before American demands. He proposed to the High Commissioner that 'the three Labour Governments of the British Commonwealth should devise a common policy and form some kind of social democratic nucleus which could act as a midway power between United States individualism and Soviet communism and so secure the peace of the world'. The High Commissioner noted that 'Dr. Evatt has been changing his attitude towards the United Kingdom and veering from his earlier attitude of closer co-operation with the United States'. He could not help but wonder after listening to Evatt whether the latter was not beginning to realise that 'putting all one's money on the United Nations is a risky policy and that greater reliance should be placed in a strong Commonwealth', though, if this were the case, from the account of the talk, he would have had to be thinking of a Commonwealth composed only of Britain, Australia and New Zealand.⁹⁰

The British too were concerned about the Americans' failure to consult them about East Asian policy, particularly their policy towards Japan and the calling of a peace conference. Unlike the Australians, however, they were troubled not so much by the anti-Soviet character of America's change of course as by

the seeming unwillingness to consult them and take their assessment of the East Asian situation into account. In particular they considered that 'prolonged occupation will only cause dissatisfaction amongst the Japanese and make them unwilling to pull their proper weight' and that 'failure on the part of the Western Powers to conclude a treaty [with Japan] is likely to have an adverse reaction upon their position in the Asiatic area'. Following his talks with Marshall in London Bevin had been thwarted in his desire to take the matter further because of American and British doubts about Australian ability to guarantee the confidentiality of secret talks and documents. The British accepted that they could not proceed without the co-operation of Australia and New Zealand. Very conscious of Australia's sensitivities about Asia and the Pacific the British knew that proceeding without the Dominions' participation would be to court a serious breach in Commonwealth relations. Moreover the Dominions were important for both British Asian and global policy.⁹¹

By April it was clear that Australia had little sympathy for the Anglo-American strategy aimed at containing the Soviet Union in Europe and that it was very unhappy with America's high-handed actions over Japan. Therefore at Bevin's suggestion the British government decided to send Esler Dening, Assistant Under Secretary of State for Far East Asian Affairs, as an envoy to the Pacific to consult directly with Australia, New Zealand and Canada and to explain at first hand the reasons for their new approach to the Soviet Union and to seek the 'old Dominions' consent to joining in secret talks with the United States about a common East Asian policy. Bevin, despite the fact that the Australian security issue had not been resolved, had become 'seriously concerned' at the delay in commencing the talks with the Americans about East Asia. Until the British had exchanged views with the Americans it was 'impossible to determine our Far East policy'. In addition it was possible that unless the talks were held soon, 'particularly in regard to Japan, the Americans may make up their minds without us'. Attlee, having agreed to this, sent messages to the prime ministers of the three Dominions informing them of the proposed mission by Dening and urging the utmost secrecy in dealing with the visit.⁹²

In his instructions it was suggested that he should tell the three Dominion governments that London hoped that the proposed talks with the Americans would lead to 'a common policy' on East Asia. While 'at the least it might result in a clarification of policy' it was also possible that they might open the way 'towards the summoning of a Japanese peace conference and ... to some kind of regional security arrangements'. More specifically on the Japan question it was acknowledged that Britain and the other Commonwealth countries had 'an important stake in the Japanese settlement' and that 'there would be considerable and justifiable resentment were the U.S. to take unilateral action in her dealings with Japan'. The British believed that the United States was mistaken in its wish to delay the peace conference and that the failure to act would work against the objective of persuading the Japanese to support the West. From the British point of view the American security aims could be achieved at the time of the signing of the peace treaty

by the conclusion, either of a bilateral agreement between the United States and Japan which would give the former the necessary bases in the Japanese islands, or of some kind of a regional security pact (this on the assumption that the Soviet Union would not subscribe to the treaty and would not therefore be in a position to participate in such a pact).

From the experience of the Canberra Conference it was thought that 'there should be no great difficulty in obtaining Commonwealth agreement in a Peace Treaty which would adequately meet U.S. requirements'.⁹³

Dening arrived in Australia in the first week of May 1948 just as events in Europe were reaching a critical stage. Following the communist coup in Czechoslovakia, Britain and America pressed ahead with their plans for Western union, integrating the economies of their German occupation zones, supporting anti-Communist political forces in France and Italy and beginning talks for some form of mutual guarantee against aggression. On the eve of Dening's arrival the British High Commissioner had relayed to Chifley and Evatt a message from Attlee which set out British plans for a 'Conference of Atlantic Powers' under which the American President might provide support

for countries subject to an armed attack. For Burton this plan coming as it did on the heels of a series of anti-Soviet measures only served to intensify his hostility to these Anglo-American initiatives. In his eyes the proposal was 'preposterous', especially in its claim that the Western Union was being formed in accordance with the self-defence Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. He maintained, as he had in Chifley's reply to Attlee in January when the British Government had first mooted these ideas, that such a scheme was based 'on the assumption that Russia has an aggressive intent', and that the Western alliance would 'bring about just the set of circumstances that the proposal purports to avoid'. What was contemplated was not containment but 'encirclement'. In a memorandum to Evatt his anger knew no bounds: 'the U.S.-U.K. effrontery goes to the length of suggesting that there are no dangers in this area and that the only danger to security is in Europe and, by implication, our fears regarding United States policy in Japan are unjustified'. It was useless to counter this 'fatal policy' with another cable to London. The British took no notice of Australian objections 'otherwise they would not have the effrontery after past replies to communicate a message of this nature to you and the Prime Minister'. He opined that they 'obviously hope, by ignoring responses, the time will come when this or another government will be persuaded to go along with them'.⁹⁴ Watching the march of events, Chifley, however, was already willing 'to go along with them' and Evatt found himself in something of a quandary.

In Canberra Dening encountered the full range of these responses. The British representatives' reports of these talks, which took place from 5 - 7 May illustrate this quite well. On the first morning Dening accompanied by the High Commissioner had met with Chifley and Evatt. Though Dening was ostensibly an emissary sent by Attlee to speak to Chifley, Chifley in accepting the British Prime Minister's invitation to receive Dening had insisted that he would want Evatt to be present 'when we are discussing any matters affecting the European(sic) position'. In an effort to wean the Australians from their objections to Western union and to set the scene for the East Asian issues Dening opened by 'communicating foreign secretary's views about the European situation'. Chifley interrupted at various points and made

comments which 'showed considerable insight' and 'in general' he 'showed himself to be both sympathetic and understanding as regards our position and our aims in Europe'. He had 'no illusions about Soviet aims'. Dening was comforted by Chifley's response which 'broadly speaking...agreed with the actions we have taken in regard to the Marshall Plan and the Western Union'.

When Dening turned to the question of secret talks with the Americans about East Asia both Chifley and Evatt had protested that secret talks were not in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations. But after Dening had explained that the result of these talks might be 'a regional security pact in the Pacific' in conformity with the United Nations both Chifley and Evatt 'changed their view and admitted that they had been trying for the past 2 years to get the United States to commit themselves to some kind of regional security arrangement'. Chifley then 'agreed to talks on the basis put forward by Dening', and he thought them a matter of 'urgency in view of the indications that the United States might take unilateral action over Japan'. The following day Dening had a meeting with Evatt, Burton and other officers of the Department of External Affairs. After Evatt was called away to attend to his parliamentary duties, Burton 'launched into an attack on American policy the world over'. If anything Burton's anti-American outlook had hardened since January. He asserted that 'there were a number of subjects on which Australia and the U.S. could never agree'. He blamed the American attitude towards Russia for 'vitiating the whole world atmosphere and preventing the settlement of any problems, including the Japanese problem'. Evatt nevertheless approved Australian participation in the talks in principle; they 'might do good and could do no harm'. On the matter of the Japanese peace Dening considered that there was no 'wide divergence' between the British and Australians but that while the British 'hope to steer American policy in the right direction by diplomacy, the present Evatt-Burton inclination would seem to be to accomplish it by an openly provocative attitude'. He found the departmental position to be 'depressing to a degree' since 'Appeasement of the Soviet Union seemed to be their main aim'. Though Chifley in a further interview reaffirmed Australian willingness to join in secret talks with the Americans,

Dening was near despair over the Departmental state of mind. As the Evatt-Burton attitude to the Americans was 'common talk in Canberra' he feared that Washington must be aware of it and therefore most unlikely to enter into five power talks when Australia was one of these powers.⁹⁵ This was the sorry story which was relayed to London.

Dening's suspicions were confirmed by his subsequent talks in Washington. Apart from the fact that the Americans were approaching a presidential election, the State Departmental officials with whom he exchanged views were absolutely opposed to entering into talks on East Asia with the Australian Government. At the opening meeting the Under-Secretary of State, Robert A. Lovett, 'expressed particular doubts about Australia'. He asked Dening whether it was possible to rely on Australian security to which Dening had merely replied that he hoped so. Lovett was unhappy with Evatt's public criticism of American policy and declared that 'if Australia wanted the United States to stand as a bulwark between her and possible aggression from the north, he found these statements hard to reconcile with such a view'. Dening did his best to present Australia's attitude in a sympathetic light, Though he had to admit that, while Chifley's attitude to the Soviet question was sound, Evatt and the Department of External Affairs held 'somewhat unrealistic' views about 'Communist designs and methods'. When they broached the subject of a Japanese peace treaty, Dening agreed with the Americans that Japan after its total defeat and demilitarisation no longer constituted a threat to peace in Asia or the Pacific and attributed Australian and New Zealand apprehensions about the United States new course in lifting the limits on Japan industrial redevelopment to their not having recovered 'from the shock of the war'. At the end he had to accept that the Americans would neither agree to an early peace treaty - their objections as the British acknowledged were at bottom 'strategic' - nor to five power talks. They would consent to bilateral talks with the British and even admit the Canadians to the 'inner circle'. Relations between Australia and America, however, were so 'bad' that Dening 'saw little prospect of their improving until there is a change of heart on the part of Dr. Evatt and the Australian External Affairs Department'. At the

end he judged that the Americans were 'most unlikely to confide anything of importance to the Australians until they are satisfied that Australian security is what it should be'.⁹⁶

Even before he learnt of the American reaction the British Foreign Secretary had been greatly disconcerted by the reports from Australia. At a meeting with Attlee and Philip Noel-Baker, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Bevin told his colleagues of Dening's mixed reception in Canberra. Because of the Australian and to a lesser extent the New Zealand governments' failure to understand British policies in Europe and Asia he had sent Dening to explain to them on the spot the rationale for Britain's advocacy of Western union and to persuade them to join in talks with the Americans on East Asia. While Chifley's response had been satisfactory, in Evatt and Burton Dening had 'come up against a brick wall'. The tensions with the Soviet Union were reaching a critical point and the formation of an Atlantic Pact 'would be a greater guarantee for security than any European union without America support'. It was 'vital to have Commonwealth understanding and support of our policy'. In particular, aiming his remarks at the Australians, he thought it important to persuade the Commonwealth countries 'to back the United Kingdom Government and understand that such a regional pact was in accord with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter'. Bevin seemed to regret that it had come about that Britain's relations with the United States were closer than those with members of the Commonwealth. He therefore urged that a Consultative Council should be formed 'to co-ordinate the affairs of the Commonwealth'. It would parallel that set up 'to keep close contact between the countries of the Western Union' and would have 'its economic and political sides'.

Appreciating the reasons for Australian recalcitrance Bevin said that Britain should insist on a peace treaty with Japan. He recognised that the Australian Government were 'suspicious of General MacArthur's policy in Japan and naturally did not wish to see that country made as sturdy and as truculent as

it was before this last war in order to serve as a bulwark for the Americans against Soviet Russia'. On the other hand if Russia refused to take its place at the peace table 'it would be so much to the good'. Presumably he expected that a Japanese peace made by the Western powers alone would help to consolidate the position of the West in East Asia. Summing up the grave problem which postwar events had posed for the Commonwealth, Bevin declared that 'if the Commonwealth was to serve as an independent and a strong unit amongst the world's chief Powers' then it would need to be given 'energetic treatment'. Attlee and Noel-Baker agreed that Bevin's idea for a 'Consultative Council' should be pursued and it was suggested that a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference should be held as soon as possible for the purpose of achieving this objective. And ten days later Attlee invited all the Commonwealth prime ministers to an early conference. There were, he wrote, three questions 'of the greatest importance' on which 'full consultation is essential' and urgently required, namely developments in Germany, an early Japanese peace conference and the implications of Western Union, and these were the questions, it should be noted, that were the most contentious in the Anglo-Australian dispute about the postwar world.⁹⁷

In their weakened state the British clung to the dream of a united Empire as expressed in both World Wars in order to bolster their claim to be a world power. Yet not only had the Commonwealth's character been altered significantly by the admission of the Asian members who unlike the 'old Dominions' did not share the British heritage and harboured colonial resentments but also by the divisive issues of strategy and sovereignty which had troubled the 'old Dominions' in the interwar years and which now returned in an even more acute form. As the British were to discover the Commonwealth could never play its World War role again. Britain had to reconcile itself to the fact that ties both with the United States, ties which bound them in a subordinate manner, and to a lesser extent with its Western European allies were more intimate and vital than those with the Commonwealth. Though Australia with New Zealand had been the most

'loyal' Dominions and had only reluctantly acceded to the fissiparous reforms to Commonwealth relations which Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State had initiated in the 1920s and 1930s, it nevertheless found the gap between its own and Britain's strategic priorities to be so great that it had difficulty in finding common ground with Britain about the Cold War and its meaning for Europe. The long-held desire to share a common defence and foreign policy with the Mother country, to construct a unified front, a British race front, in dealing with the world, crumbled before these inexorable forces. Both Britain and Australia had trouble in acknowledging that the postwar forces pushing them apart were not short term considerations but the culmination of longterm trends which were transforming the Commonwealth. Indeed the potency of the British race idea was such - indeed more so in Australia than Britain - that it was to take a further generation before the two nations could cease to define their role in the world in these terms and begin to contemplate new ways of understanding themselves and their futures.⁹⁸

Australia was one of a minority of the Commonwealth countries which accepted Attlee's invitation to an early conference. Even then Chifley made it clear that he could only come for a brief time in early July and that he only wanted to discuss economic issues; if foreign affairs issues were to be on the agenda then they might be left to Evatt who would visit London after he had returned to Australia.⁹⁹ The British might surmise that Chifley and Evatt held different views of the world and Australia's role in the world but plainly Chifley did not. This rather indifferent response to Attlee's urgent appeal was a symptom of the problem which lay at the heart of the emerging Commonwealth. The other members of the Commonwealth - New Zealand might be seen as an exception - no longer accepted Britain's leadership in world affairs, they did not see their differences over the Soviet intentions in Europe as creating a Commonwealth crisis and they were not willing at such short notice to set aside pressing domestic political commitments in order to go to London to exchange views.¹⁰⁰

The British nevertheless were pleased that Chifley was willing to come and they prepared well for his visit. He was invited to attend a British Cabinet meeting, a symbol of the old intimacy which was not extended to the Americans or the new Asian members of the Commonwealth. While the British constructed a program which was in accord with his wishes to concentrate on economic affairs, they also made opportunities for brief discussions of security, defence and foreign policy matters, including in the latter the American attitude towards the Japanese peace treaty. Meeting with Chifley on this question Bevin repeated Dening's message that Britain wanted an early Japanese peace treaty and desired to engage in talks with the Americans to this end. The United States because of their suspicions of Soviet aims were reluctant to consider an early treaty and seemed bent on building up the Japanese economy. It was also encouraging the Western European nations who were benefitting from the Marshall Plan to extend the most-favoured-nation trade principle to Japan. The British wondered whether the American unwillingness to consider an early peace might stir resentment in Japan and they considered that the whole question of the revision of the limits to be placed on Japanese industry should be a matter for discussion in the FEC. Chifley's response was vague; while he 'appreciated the United States desire to preserve Japan from falling into the Communist orbit' he felt it was 'more rather than less likely' to happen if the economic restraints on Japan were not to some degree lifted so it could 'provide her people with a reasonable standard of living'. He approved the British idea that they should enter into talks with the Americans as soon as possible.¹⁰¹

The British, despite the European tensions which by this time had erupted into the confrontation over Berlin, nevertheless were still much exercised by the problem of Japan and America's seeming determination to take unto itself the sole responsibility for deciding policy. The Dening visit to Washington had not been reassuring. As a result after Chifley's return home the British sent all Commonwealth governments their analysis of America's proposals to lift the limits on Japan's industrial development in order to make its economy self-supporting by 1953. The British pointed out that the envisaged expansion of

steel and shipbuilding would conflict with previous standards set for ensuring security. Looking for a common policy in dealing with the Americans they asked the Commonwealth Governments for their views both on the issue of limits and also on how best to approach the Americans, that is whether to press the established security requirements and risk the Americans ignoring the Commonwealth or to try to persuade the Americans that they could achieve their ends with lower levels of economic development. To the three 'old Dominions' they sent additionally an appraisal of the political and strategic considerations underpinning the Americans' 'new course'. As Denning had explained to the prime ministers, the United States policy, that is its opposition to a peace treaty and its support for building up Japan's economy, was governed by fear of the Soviet Union. Though the British Government advised by their Chiefs of Staff believed that there was justification for America's concerns about the Soviet Union they did not agree with the American answer to the problem. It was 'of great importance' that the Americans should be persuaded to agree to an early peace treaty accompanied by a Japanese-American defence treaty which would guarantee security and to accept somewhat lower levels for industrial rehabilitation than the 'unnecessary and dangerous' levels which the American missions to Japan had recommended.

The Australians, responding to this political assessment, reasserted Evatt's view that the Americans were 'obsessed' about the Soviet Union 'to the exclusion of other considerations' and that as a result of their plans for rebuilding Japan they were likely 'in the long run to defeat their own ends'. They would be not only 'unnecessarily provoking Soviet Russia' but also restoring Japan to 'a position of power and assertiveness' which would lead that country to throw off American influence and so make it 'dangerous to all of us'. In essence, though they indicated some reservations about the efficacy of 'persuasion', the Australians agreed with the British that it would be desirable for the Americans to enter into an early peace settlement which was accompanied by a bilateral treaty which would give the Americans base rights in Japan. This offered 'the best assurance of security in the Pacific'.

And the Australians also agreed with the British that if the Americans adopted this course then they might well be willing to fix Japan's economic development at levels which would make Japan 'self-sufficient but not dangerous'.¹⁰² From this it would appear that Australia and Britain were of one mind in their attitude to America's plans for the future of Japan, that Japan instead of drawing them apart was in fact bringing them together.

Having been forced to give up the idea of holding an urgent Commonwealth prime ministers' meeting in late June the British then began to make plans for a meeting in October which would accomplish the same ends. Whitehall prepared elaborately for the occasion. The agenda was to cover international relations, especially the problem of the Soviet Union, the prospect of Commonwealth political and defence co-operation with Western Europe and the United States, the 'Japanese problem in the Pacific', the development of the economic resources of the Commonwealth and machinery for improving Commonwealth consultation. Driven by Britain's role at the centre of the gathering world crisis, the agenda was more ambitious than that of any preceding Prime Ministers' Conference. The Foreign Office's concerns about Australia's and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand's failure to appreciate fully Britain's view of the world situation and the Soviet threat to Western Europe were shared by the Defence Department. As with foreign policy so with defence there was closer co-operation with the United States than with the Commonwealth countries. This seemed unnatural. In a paper approved by the Chiefs of Staff which set out the problem it was noted that

'No joint meetings take place. No joint military plans have been created. No plans of co-ordinated or complementary development of Commonwealth Armed Forces has been evolved. No Plan has been agreed on "who should do what and when" in an emergency'.

And the paper continued

Military co-operation with America, with whom no treaty exists nor certainty that she will enter any war with us from the start, is almost complete. Under the present world circumstances, economic and defence factors have led to the creation of the Western Union, out of which has come the Western Union Military Committee detailed to organise Western Union defence. We are thus allied with a number of

foreign powers whose military and moral values will have to be fortified immenley (sic) before we draw practical advantages; whereas with the Dominions-thriving, solvent, and virile countries allied to us by kinship and Crown-no agreement or body exists to even co-ordinate Commonwealth activities including defence.¹⁰³

Clearly the Chiefs of Staff were thinking only of the 'old Dominions' and the role they had played in World War I and II. They seemed unaware of the great gulf in geo-political interests which separated Australia and New Zealand from Britain, a gulf which the Commonwealth from its own resources could not bridge in World War II and as had been discovered in World War II could only be dealt with satisfactorily through American co-operation.

Sir Norman Brook, the Secretary to the Cabinet, in endorsing the Chiefs of Staff's views, summarised the substance of their complaint for a meeting of the relevant British ministers on 28 July. Since the end of the war 'no progress has been made towards the effective co-ordination of Commonwealth defence policy'. On defence matters he repeated what had already been said for foreign policy, namely that there was 'closer co-operation today between the United Kingdom and the United States than there is between the United Kingdom and the other self-governing parts of the Commonwealth'. The problem was that, unlike the relationship with America, there had been 'no continuity of political discussion about the aims and objectives of defence policy'. There had not been any 'politico-military discussions' with the Commonwealth countries similar to those which had been held with the Americans in Washington the previous October. The answer in the minds of the officials from all departments was that what was required was better machinery for consulting with the Commonwealth governments. They should be informed not simply about those questions of defence and foreign policy which directly affected them but more generally about the great global issues into which their own particular concerns had to fit. It was suggested that there should be more frequent prime ministers' meetings- at intervals of no more than three years- and that in between there should be meetings of 'Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers and Finance

Ministers' and the meetings of these latter ministers need not be inclusive but where occasion warranted be based on geographical or other criteria. The meetings might be held in capital cities other than London. How it was expected that this would bring the Dominions' relationship to be on a par with that of the United States is unclear. Brook accepted, as he had to, that these meetings were simply for exchange of views and did not look towards framing a common policy which would bind the members of the Commonwealth. Why should more information or discussion be likely to produce the almost identical world view which the British and the Americans shared? Since Canada was a member of the Atlantic Consultative Council and the newly independent Asian members could not be expected to see eye to eye with those who were kith and kin this British problem about the lack of co-operation and co-ordination was directed at Australia and New Zealand, and primarily Australia. It was not strictly true that there had been no politico-military discussions with Australia. Evatt and Chifley had attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1946. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had met with the Australian Cabinet and its defence advisers in 1947. The Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and officials of the Foreign Office had visited Canberra for the Conference on the Japan peace settlement. Dening had had extensive talks about Europe and East Asia with Chifley and the Department of the External Affairs. At bottom the issue was not one of knowledge and understanding but of different geopolitical preoccupations. Nothing that Brook had recommended was likely to be able to overcome this conflict of national interests. Nevertheless the British ministers agreed that Brook's recommendations should be placed before the Commonwealth Conference.¹⁰⁴

When the Conference met the British ministers in introducing the topics made great efforts to convince the assembled prime ministers of the need to take action to protect Western Europe and the Middle East from Soviet aggression and subversion. The tense stand-off over Berlin provided a grave backdrop for the discussion. Bevin gave an account of the Soviet actions since the end of World War II which had led to the failure of collective security under the United Nations, the overthrow of elected governments in Eastern Europe and

the impasse in dealing with a German peace. He explained that British policy was 'to promote the security and stability of Western Europe' by creating 'a material force' in conjunction with the United States and Canada which could 'halt ...further communist infiltration and totalitarian aggression'. Bringing all the threads together at the end of the Conference Attlee and the Defence Minister, A.V.Alexander, commended to the assembled leaders a special briefing paper on 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspects' which encapsulated the British Government's ideas on how the Commonwealth should fit into its global strategy. This session was the high point of the Conference in that it was intended to associate the Commonwealth with Britain in its worldwide partnership with the United States in the struggle to contain the Soviet Union. The paper with its appendix by the Chiefs of Staff on 'Commonwealth Defence Co-operation' was a blueprint pointing the way to this end. It stated, following on from Bevin's earlier account of British foreign policy, that 'the Soviet policy and aims are a threat to all free nations, who are in danger of being subjugated one by one'. The Soviet Union was conducting aggressive activities on a global scale.

'The Soviet Union and its satellites now form a solid political and economic *bloc* extending from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. From behind these secure entrenchments the Soviet Government are exerting constantly increasing pressure which threatens the whole fabric of civilisation, religious, political, cultural and material, as we know it. In some countries the danger is still latent, but in France, Trieste, Italy, Greece, Burma, Malaya and China the conflicting forces are at grips with one another'.

To meet this international emergency the British Government had sought to join with the United States, the Western European and Commonwealth countries for the purpose of 'organising all possible deterrent forces'. The British Government had reached a political understanding on these questions with the United States and the Western European countries and as a result they were engaged in military planning with these countries for the common protection. They thought it desirable that 'corresponding planning should take place within the Commonwealth'. For this purpose it was necessary that

If... an adequate defence system is to be built up , which will enable the countries of the Commonwealth to live in security and exercise their rightful influence in world affairs and will lessen their dependence on any outside source, an essential preliminary will be the requisite degree of political agreement between the respective Commonwealth Governments on basic objectives of policy.

For the British the central task of this conference was to convince the leaders of the Commonwealth that they should reach such an agreement so that the defence planning could proceed. Attlee in opening the discussion on this topic showed some sensitivity to the diverse regional interests of the member nations. He recognised that 'defence co-operation must in the first instance be on a regional basis' since 'Commonwealth countries had their special interest in their own areas, and it was logical that they should be primarily concerned with those interests'. But the way that 'the interests of the different areas interacted had been brought out in earlier discussions and there was need to ensure co-ordination between the defence policies of the different regions'. The British Government was anxious to extend to the Commonwealth the same system of co-operation in defence which they had already established with the United States and Western Europe. This, he assured the Conference, would 'not mean subordination, but a free partnership for mutual help'.

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers were, even if in different ways, agreed that the world was confronted by a Communist menace. There was, however, a great difference in their responses to the British appeal for common defence planning. All had some form of reservation about what was proposed. Despite the Chiefs of Staff's doubts about whether the newly independent South Asian members should be invited to these defence talks, Attlee had insisted that they share equally in all sessions. Pandit Nehru for India while accepting that there was a Communist menace saw no urgency in organising common defence since it appeared that Russia would not be prepared for war for at least eight to ten years. In the meantime the Commonwealth should bend all its efforts to preventing that eventuality. India

would protect its region from external aggression and to that extent was willing to co-operate with other Commonwealth members. He evinced no interest in taking part in a wider defence of the Commonwealth. Pakistan's Prime Minister on the other hand declared that he accepted completely the British Government's assessment of the Communist menace and if all other Commonwealth Governments were of one mind he would be willing to join in talks aimed at the security of 'the Commonwealth as a whole'. Of the 'old Dominions' South Africa and Canada made it clear that they were only interested in their respective African and Atlantic regions. The Canadian Prime Minister did not think that agreement on defence policy and general strategy by all the Commonwealth Governments was a necessary prerequisite for regional planning. He rejected any suggestion that Canada's consultations over the defence of the North Atlantic region should be interrupted in order to undertake 'a general study of Commonwealth defence problems'. He was quite content that the exchange of views and information should be carried on through the existing channels. Even the New Zealand Prime Minister who came closest to endorsing the British vision of a common co-ordinated defence scheme for the Commonwealth could not help asking whether it might not be possible for 'the Commonwealth and the United States together to declare their intention of defending world peace against aggressors'. That is, if the Pacific Dominions could receive an American assurance against aggression in their region they would feel freer to contribute to a mutually supportive Commonwealth scheme.¹⁰⁵

Australia, like all the other Commonwealth countries, accepted that the Soviet Union's actions represented a threat to world peace. Evatt who was standing in for Chifley at the Commonwealth Conference had become much clearer about the Soviet Union's responsibility for world tensions. During Chifley's visit to Britain both Bevin and Attlee had complained about Evatt, and Chifley reported to Attlee that before Evatt had left for overseas he had spoken to him and asked him to be 'as helpful as possible'. Whether this was the reason for Evatt's rather more co-operative attitude it is difficult to say. It may well be that domestic and foreign developments were more important. In

Australia the Chifley Government was having to contend with increasing industrial militancy from communist-led unions which threatened the economic well-being of the country. Moreover Evatt arrived in London in the midst of the Berlin crisis and he was very troubled by the eruption of Communist insurgency movements in Malaya and Indonesia. Thus not only did he support Australia sending arms and troops to help the British put down the Communists in Malaya but he also expressed a general sympathy for the British resistance to the Soviet Union's aggressive stance in Europe. In talking to officials of the Foreign Office before the Conference he did not offer any criticism of American policy, expressed understanding of the need 'for integration between Western Union countries, especially on economic and strategic lines' and 'appeared to think that a drawing together of the Commonwealth and the United States accompanied by a measure of progress along the lines of the Western Union was the right formula'.¹⁰⁶

During the Prime Ministers Conference Evatt in responding to Bevin's *tour d'horizons* expressed sympathy with all that the British and Americans had done to resist Soviet pressures. He said that 'Soviet expansion could not be permitted to continue'. He seemed to argue that the present difficulties which had so weakened the United Nations and produced the East-West divisions derived from the veto in the Security Council and the claims of the Great Powers to determine the peace, and in this 'the United States Government had shared its responsibility with the Soviet Union'. But then he proceeded to praise the formation of the Western Union under Section 51 of the United Nations Charter and to praise the Americans for taking a firm attitude to the Soviet Union which had finally called a halt to its 'expansionist activities' at Berlin. Australian airmen were taking part in the airlift, 'and this in itself indicated what would be Australia's attitude if the crisis should further deteriorate'. He, however, appeared not to accept the ideological determinism of Bevin and still held out hope for a change in Soviet policy, but the Western powers would have to be assured that any agreement entered into with the Russians would be kept.

At the meeting dealing with defence co-operation he was equally affirmative. Attlee had cabled a copy of the briefing paper to Chifley and he had sent Evatt some initial reactions to the document. He told Evatt that the Western Union plan which united the Western European countries with the United States in a regional defence plan was 'in principle in accordance with the Australian Government's views with regard to the Pacific region', suggesting by this language that it was exactly what Australia itself desired for its region. Likewise he concluded that

Insofar as Australia is concerned , the development of corresponding British Commonwealth planning to that proposed between United Kingdom, United States and Western European countries, would also require the linking of Australian and British Commonwealth plans with those of the United States in the Pacific, to cope with the Soviet threat in the Pacific.¹⁰⁷

Thus Evatt declared at the meeting that the Australian Government was 'in general agreement' with the views and proposals contained in the briefing paper. He 'did not dissent from the view that in military planning the assumption must be that the enemy would be the Soviet Union'. The 'democratic Powers' had a responsibility to 'maintain a firm and united front against further Soviet pressure'. It followed that prudence required the Commonwealth to ensure its defence was in an 'adequate state of preparation'. In Australia's view 'it was not sufficient for Commonwealth Governments to consider defence problems on a regional basis'. It was certain that 'If war came it would not be a regional war; and consultation on defence matters should take place on the Commonwealth as well as a regional basis'.¹⁰⁸

At the Commonwealth Conference Japan appeared only as a very minor issue. Bevin in dealing with Japan had pointed out that the United States was no longer considering Japan as a potential enemy but rather as a potential ally against Russia and as a consequence was inclined to abandon all controls over Japanese industry and to press for the extension of the most-

favoured-nation principle. He had urged that in the light of these developments the Commonwealth should 'take counsel together' on what should be done. Evatt, taking his cue from Bevin's lead, aired once again his grievance that the movement towards making peace, of which the Canberra Conference had been a part, had been frustrated by the growth of Soviet-American hostility. From the Pacific Dominions' perspective the American tendency to treat Japan as a possible ally in a future war with the Soviet Union had to be approached with 'special caution'. Such a step called for 'a nice judgment of Japan's future policy', and Evatt had doubts about Japan's change of heart. Australia while it did not have a rigid view about the level of Japan's industrial development nevertheless remained convinced that Japan 'must not be allowed to establish a dangerous war potential'. The Americans seemed to believe that they could alone determine Japan's future and Evatt urged that the Commonwealth should resist such an assumption. But the other members of the conference expressed little or no interest in the matter.¹⁰⁹

This was the last Prime Ministers' conference to evince to any degree a sense of common purpose. Never again would a conference meet with even an expectation that they might be able to achieve a common outlook on global strategy. Even though all the Commonwealth leaders had expressed general agreement with Britain's view of the the world crisis and a few had seemed to allow that the idea of defence planning for mutual help had some merit hardly anything was done to give effect to this British conception of a co-operative Commonwealth working side by side with the Western Union and the United States. Equally the plans for improved machinery for consultation insofar as they were implemented did nothing to overcome the geo-political and geo-cultural differences which stood in the way of Commonwealth unity. In the immediate aftermath of the conference the British Government pressed on the Australians and New Zealanders, as the most enthusiastic supporters of Commonwealth defence co-operation, the need to proceed quickly with regional and global planning. While the Australian Government evinced some interest in pursuing regional planning

they were most reluctant to contemplate anything beyond this without, as Chifley informed Attlee, 'something more concrete than the statement of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff...that "we consider that the threat in the Pacific can be adequately matched by American naval and air strength"'.¹¹⁰ The Australians, as they had made clear in devising their plans for postwar defence against Japan, saw that in the final analysis their security in the Pacific depended on American guarantees. Lacking American assurances, they were not willing to participate in Commonwealth planning for mutual military support and assistance—which the British understood to mean the deployment of Australian forces for the defence of the Middle East.

Likewise Commonwealth or more specifically Anglo-Australian co-operation in working towards a Japanese peace treaty was impeded by the Americans. The Canberra Conference meant nothing in the face of American obduracy. Though the British and the Australians might have disliked American high-handedness and shared to a large degree—the British were not as preoccupied with Pacific security—common aims for the peace, nevertheless they could do nothing until the Americans decided the time was ripe to proceed. Japan had been sucked into the whirlpool of the Cold War and since the United States had military control of Japan and was the superpower in the Western alliance Japan's future lay in its hands. During 1949 and 1950 the British consulted with the Australians and other members of the Commonwealth about the terms for a peace treaty. But these discussions lacked direction and conviction. Australia, both under the Labor Government and its successor Coalition Government, reiterated its fears of Japan and complained of American indifference to its concerns. The Australian representative at the Commonwealth Working Party on the Japanese Peace Treaty in May 1950 declared

Japan must be left with no loophole for the resurgence of militarism. Thus though ...Japan must have a self-supporting economy, it was also necessary to insist that her capacity for making and supporting war was not reerected.

The problem of the Japanese Peace treaty had to be considered against the background of world affairs and the attitude of the United

States of America must of necessity be of significance....[American] policy towards Japan was becoming more and more unilateral and... Japan was sliding into a state of peace without the Commonwealth Governments having any say in the matter.

Australia wanted to see Japan as a member of the comity of Free Nations- but before this could happen Japan must show that she could and would adhere to democratic ways. The security of Australia must be the starting point of the Australian Delegation's approach to this problem.

Australia regarded the possibility of Russian expansion as a grave danger ; ...equally Australia saw a grave danger in the revival of Japanese military power.¹¹¹

But the Commonwealth even if it could act as one had no way of influencing the peace with Japan to achieve Australian objectives. The Australians had no choice but to bide their time. And when at last the Americans did decide to begin the process of peacemaking, the Australians acted alone, or more accurately with New Zealand, to seek an American security alliance in return for accepting a 'soft' Japanese peace. The Menzies Coalition Government had obtained what Chifley and Evatt had long sought not because they were superior diplomats but because the Americans after the outbreak of the Korean War had embraced a policy of worldwide containment of Communism through the creation of alliances along the East Asian archipelagoes from Japan in the north to Australia and New Zealand in the south. For all Australian leaders this was the best and safest solution to the general problem of security in the Pacific, including the problem of Japan.¹¹² Though Britain in its depleted state at the end of World War II had attempted to give a new lease of life to the Commonwealth in the Pacific by acceding to Australian claims to be recognised as having the 'prime risks and responsibilities' in the region, most notably on the question of Japan, and therefore the right to leadership of the Commonwealth in their own domain, nevertheless despite the continuing strength of cultural identity with the 'Mother country' the Australians were not satisfied with this gesture - and indeed the British themselves were not too pleased with the result.

The problem of Australian security in the Pacific highlighted by the appearance of Japan's armed might on the very coasts of the country in World War II could no longer have a Commonwealth solution - if ever that had in practice been feasible. Indeed the Anzus Pact was a fitting Australian answer to Nato. Britain and Canada had joined with the United States to protect British regional interests in Europe: Australia and New Zealand did not belong. Under the Anzus Pact Australia and New Zealand joined with the United States for the purpose of defending their regional interests and Britain, much to its chagrin, was excluded. Britain still purported to be the centre of the Commonwealth and to be a global power encompassing East Asia and the Pacific as well as Europe and the Middle East. But this was a fiction and the Australians and New Zealanders were forced, despite themselves, to recognise it as such. The period 1945-1948 was a period of great turmoil in Commonwealth relations. New experiments were tried in many directions, including the Pacific. Britain tried to rally the organisation through co-ordination and co-operation to meet the Soviet challenge in Europe and the Middle East, but the diversity of interests of the member nations, even of Australia and New Zealand which remained proudly British in their sense of cultural identity, was such that this grand vision of Britain as a world power leading the Commonwealth in association with the United States and Western Europe was quickly shown to be an illusion.

Endnotes

¹ Prime Minister R.G. Menzies in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1939.

² No previous study has looked directly at this question. Roger Dingman's paper on 'The View from Down Under: Australia and Japan, 1945-1952', which was published in Thomas W. Burkman's *The Occupation of Japan: The International Context* (Norfolk, Virginia, 1984) while it offers a good account of Australia's view of the occupation and the peacemaking, especially from 1946-1947, only touches in passing on the implications for Australia's relationship to Britain and the British Commonwealth. Peter Bates' *Japan and the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, 1946- 1952* (London, 1993) sees Australia's role in the BCOF as representing ' a coming of age, a recognition of Australia's independence' rather than part of Australia's aim, motivated primarily by fear of Japan, to reconstruct its relationship to Britain inside the British Commonwealth. David McIntyre's *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policy-Making, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945-1955* , (Christchurch, 1995) which deals extensively with Anglo-Australian and Anglo-New Zealand negotiations as the South Pacific Dominions strive to achieve a security arrangement with the United States tends to assume the Japanese motivation behind these efforts. Norman Harper's *Great and Powerful Friend: A Study of Australian American relations between 1900 and 1975*(St Lucia, 1987) in Part 3, "'High Noon": 1941-1949', gives quite extensive treatment to the problem of Japan but appropriately for the book's purpose concentrates on the implications for Australia's relations with the United States. Richard Rosecrance's early work, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan, 1945-1951* (Melbourne, 1962), especially chapter 5, which was based on published sources, shows very clearly that Australia's fear of Japan led to a desire for a security treaty with the United States even at the cost of excluding Britain, but it takes the matter no further. Likewise the more general treatments of Australia's international relations in this period, such as Christopher Waters' *The Empire Fractures: Anglo-Australian Conflict in the 1940s* (Melbourne, 1995), especially pp.73-80 and 87-97 and David Lee's *Search for Security : The Political Economy of Australia's Postwar Foreign and Defence Policy* (Sydney, 1995), though they are focused on Australia's relationship with Britain, give very little attention to Japan's central role in shaping that relationship. Roger Buckley's *Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan, 1945-1952* (Cambridge, U.K., 1982) notes that 'British readjustment to the need for greater Australian consultation was to remain a major theme of British diplomacy throughout the occupation'(p.22), but since this is not directly germane to his study he does not pursue the theme.

³ Neville Meaney, *Search for Security in the Pacific* (Sydney, 1976).

⁴ Report, 'The Far Eastern Question: Recent Developments and their Significance for Australia', E.L.Piessse, Director of Military Intelligence, to Colonel J.G.Legge, Chief of the General Staff, 22 October 1918, AA A2219 Vol. IA item DMI180/13.

⁵ Letter, Hughes to David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, 4 November 1918, House of Lords, Library, Lloyd George Papers, Box 38, folder 5.

⁶ ‘For Hughes’ public protests see *Times* (London), 8,9 and 16 November 1918.

⁷ Draft Minutes of Imperial War Cabinet Meeting (36A), 6 November 1918, PRO CAB23/44A.

⁸ Cable, Hughes to W.A.Watt, Australian acting Prime Minister, 13 November 1918, AA CP360/8, B1/2. Hughes repeated his charge that he had made against the British Prime Minister in the Imperial War Cabinet when he told Watt that Lloyd George’s action had been a ‘painful and serious breach of faith.’ It was intolerable that ‘we who have fought for four years as equals are treated like lackeys.’ What rankled especially was that Japan had been present at the meeting which had decided the armistice terms.

⁹ Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London, 1998), especially chapter 5, ‘Australia Overwhelms the British Empire Delegation’.

¹⁰ For a partial account of the debate on this question, see Neville Meaney, *Fears and Phobias: E.L. Piessé and the Problem of Japan, 1909-1939* (Canberra, 1996), especially chapter 3.

¹¹ Letter, Geoffrey Whiskard, United Kingdom High Commissioner, Canberra to Sir Edward Harding, Permanent Head, Dominion Office, London, 28 November 1939, PRO CAB21/2527.

¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1939.

¹³ Cable, Evatt to Curtin, 12 May 1944, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, 1937-1949* (hereinafter *DAFP*), VII (1944), 289.

¹⁴ Letter, Sir Ronald Cross, United Kingdom High Commissioner, Canberra to ‘Bobbity’, Lord Cranborne, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 27 January 1944, PRO DO121/51.

¹⁵ Agreement Between Australia and New Zealand, 21 January 1944 and cable, Curtin and Peter Fraser, New Zealand Prime Minister, to Cranborne, 25 January 1944, *DAFP*, VII (1944), 69-70 and 84.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII (1945), 129.

¹⁷ Meeting of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 9 and 15 May 1944, PRO DO35/1854 and AA A6712; see also *DAFP*, VII (1944), 305-319.

¹⁸ Memorandum, Australian Legation (Washington) to State Department, undated, but left at the State Department on 13 August 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter *FRUS*), VI, 650-662.

¹⁹ Cable, Evatt for Lord Addison, British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 9 August 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 301-303 and PRO DO35/1953.

It would seem that Australian dissatisfaction with the British Government's failure to consult them over the surrender terms was justified. The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, had told Cabinet on 14 August that he had communicated to the United States Britain's view 'on the instrument of surrender and had informed the Dominions.' Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 21(45), 14 August 1945, PRO CAB128/1.

²⁰ For public remarks see Chifley, 'Australia should be regarded not as a subsidiary but as a principal Pacific Power' in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1945 and Evatt in *Age*, 25 August, 1945; for cable, Evatt to Addison, 25 August 1945 and copy of full press statement see PRO DO35/1953; cable, Evatt to Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, 27 July 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 280;.

²¹ Cables, Attlee to Chifley, 25 August 1945 and Chifley to Attlee, 27 August 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 368-9 and 371-2. For Dominion Office comments and British discussions of their responses, see PRO DO35/1953 and 35/1980 and also FO800/443/45/56.

In fact both governments were guilty of acting unilaterally in approaching the Americans about occupation structures and policy. The British without either informing or consulting the Dominions had sent an *aide memoire* to the State Department recommending that SCAP should be assisted by a five nation council which would guide him, 'more particularly in political, economic, and financial matters.' Likewise the Australians had without any reference to London or Wellington given the Americans a statement expressing their views on the 'Future of Japan' and demanding a say in all decisions. Aide-Memoires, Australian Legation to State Department, 13 August 1945 and British Embassy to State Department, 20 August 1945, *FRUS*, VI, 650-654 and 678.

²² Cables, Attlee to Chifley, 13 August 1945, Chifley to Attlee, 17 August 1945, Australian Government to Addison, 21 August 1945, Attlee to Chifley, 1 September 1945, Chifley to Attlee, 10 September 1945, Evatt to Chifley, 14 September 1945, Chifley to Attlee, 21 September 1945 and Chifley to Churchill, 27 July 1945. *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 258,333,345-6,359,390-1,405-6,417-429 and PRO PREM8/192.

The British Government had agreed to make the offer to the Australians as a result of a recommendation from the British Chiefs of Staff who believed that through the setting up of a joint Commonwealth organisation, akin to the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff structure, to oversee the BCOF it would be of 'material benefit to Commonwealth defence matters in the future.' See Minutes of the Defence Committee of Cabinet, 31 August 1945, PRO PREM8/192 and also PRO CAB800/443/45/8.

²³ Bates, *Japan and the British Commonwealth Occupation Force*, pp.15-17, 37 and 173.

²⁴ Cable, Australian Legation, Washington, to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, 24 September 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 445-7.

²⁵ Cables, Addison to Australian Government, 30 September 1945 and Evatt to United States Secretary of State, James Byrnes, 6 October 1945, *ibid.*, 466-8 and 540-541; see also Minutes of British Cabinet Meeting, 36(45), 28 September 1945, PRO CAB128/1.

²⁶ Letter, Evatt to Addison, 25 September 1945, PRO PREM 8/19.

²⁷ Rosecrance, pp.16-17.

²⁸ Letter, Evatt to Byrnes, 25 October 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 540; letter, Evatt to Byrnes, 26 October 1945 and memorandum (verbatim) of Evatt-Byrnes conversation, 1 November 1945, *FRUS*, VI (1945), 796-7 and 812-814.

²⁹ Cables, J.S.Duncan, acting Australian High Commissioner, London, to Chifley, Norman Makin and Evatt, 7 December 1945, Evatt to Makin, Acting minister for External Affairs, 9 December 1945, and Evatt to Makin, 15 December 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 682-3, 689 and 712-3. See also letter, Evatt to Addison, 25 September 1945, PRO PREM 8/192 in which Evatt maintained that the matter of a control council for Japan 'should not be discussed or even broached at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Australia's absence, but that it should be discussed in the first place between Mr Bevin, Mr Byrnes and myself'.

³⁰ Cables, Addison to Commonwealth Government, 24 and 28 December 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 752-3.

On 20 December the British Cabinet had agreed that the Australian Government should be allowed to nominate the British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council, and the Dominions Office recommended that Canberra should be informed quickly 'in order to forestall an expostulation from Dr Evatt, who...may well feel disposed to complain at Australia not securing separate representation on the Allied Council.' Draft letter, S.L.Lee, Private Secretary to Addison, to J.N. Henderson, Private Secretary to Bevin, 24 December 1945, PRO DO 35/2038.

³¹ Letters, Evatt to John R. Minter, United States Charge d'Affaires, Canberra, 10 and 24 January 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 33 and 74-5.

³² Letters Bevin to Addison, 26 January 1946, Addison to Attlee, 6 February 1946 and Attlee to Chifley, 8 February 1946, PRO DO35/2038.

³³ Cable, Australian Government to Addison, Fraser and External Affairs Department, New Delhi, 12 April 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 286; letter, Chifley to Evatt, 28 May 1946, *ibid.*, 464; memorandum, Hector McNeil, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Orme Sargent, British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 April 1946, cable, Dominions Office to British High Commissioner, Canberra, 28 October 1946 and cable, British High Commissioner, Canberra, to Dominions Office, 1 November 1946, PRO DO35/2044.

³⁴ *CPD*, Vol.186, p.191, 13 March 1946.

³⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 18 August 1943.

³⁶ ANZAC Agreement, 21 January 1944, and letter, Curtin and Peter Fraser, New Zealand Prime Minister, to Cranborne, 25 January 1944, *DAFP*, VII (1944), 70 and 83-4.

³⁷ Memorandum of verbatim Evatt-Byrnes conversation, 27 October 1945, United States National Archives, State Department Record Group 59 (hereinafter USNA RG59), 711.47/10-2745.

³⁸ Cables, Bevin to Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to United States, 8 and 12 October 1945, and Halifax to Bevin, 8 November 1945, PRO DO35/1739; see also *FRUS*, VI (1945), 206-214.

It would seem that at first the American Chiefs of Staff at this time sought access to and use of the bases in order to contain Japan, that is their defence strategy was aimed at preventing a recurrence of the Pacific War. The Truman Administration and the State Department, on the other hand, seemed to think they were entitled to long term rights in these bases as a result of their heavy wartime investment in building them.

Subsequently Byrnes informed Halifax that the United States wished to add the air bases at Karachi and at Calcutta to the list; the Americans judged these to be 'strategically important.' Cable, Halifax to Bevin, 10 November 1945, PRO DO35/1739. Though the British had to tell Byrnes that these bases were outside their control as India was gaining its independence the Americans persisted in pressing the issue. At the end of February 1946 he, in the process of discounting the importance of the South Pacific bases - they were only good for meeting a danger from Japan and the Americans had no intention of letting that happen again - told Halifax, with a large scale map of the world before him, that the 'bases in India were within closer reach of where trouble might develop.' The previous day in making the same point to John Balfour, a member of the British Embassy staff, Byrnes, when asked whence that trouble might arise, had slapped his hand down on Siberia. Cables, Sir John Balfour, Minister in British Embassy, Washington and Halifax to Bevin, 27 and 28 February 1945, *ibid.*; see also PRO FO800/443/46/15.

³⁹ Cable, Addison to Chifley, 22 November and 11 December 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 632 and 696-7.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 17 November 1945.

⁴¹ Australian-New Zealand Agreement, 21 January 1944, and cables, Commonwealth Government to Peter Fraser, 27 December 1945 and to Addison, 12 January 1946, *DAFP*, VII (1944), 70, VIII (1945), 752 and IX (1946), 47.

⁴² Minutes of a Meeting of British, Australian, New Zealand and American representatives, 22 January 1946 and Extract from British Cabinet Meeting, 22 January 1946, PRO DO 35/1739. At the meeting with Byrnes, Bevin in order to overcome Security Council difficulties had indicated that as many bases as possible should take the form of 'civil air stations, which would be easily converted in an emergency: by so doing it would be possible to dodge the Security Council issues.'

⁴³ Cables, Norman Makin, Minister for the Navy, to Evatt, 19 January 1946, Makin to Chifley and Evatt, 23 January 1946 and Chifley and Evatt to Makin, 26 January 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 59-60, 72 and 83.

⁴⁴ Cable, Evatt to Beasley and Makin, 26 January, 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 84; *New York Times Magazine*, 3 February 1946; see also *CPD*, Vol.190, p.1170, 26 February 1946.

⁴⁵ Cable, Attlee to Chifley, 4 February 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 102.

⁴⁶ Cable, Fraser to Evatt, 10 February 1946, PRO DO 35/1739; letters, Addison to Beasley, 14 and 27 February 1946, *ibid.*; Chifley Directive to Australian Defence Committee after Discussion with Evatt and Deputy Prime Minister F.M. Forde, 15 February 1946, and cable, Chifley to Beasley, 21 February 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 129-135 and 147; letter, Beasley to Addison, 14 February 1946, *ibid.*, 123 and PRO DO 35/1739; *CPD*, Vol.186, p.192, 13 March 1946.

⁴⁷ Letter, Beasley to Addison, 18 February 1946, PRO DO 35/1739.

⁴⁸ Cable, Dominions Office to Australian and New Zealand Governments, 4 April 1946, PRO DO35/1740.

⁴⁹ Memorandum, United States Department of State to Australian Legation, Washington, 14 March 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 183-7.

⁵⁰ Memorandum, 'Regional Security in the Pacific, Including the Use of Bases by the United States', adopted by Cabinet, 8 April 1946, AA CRS A4311

⁵¹ Cable, Minter to State Department, 13 April 1946, *FRUS*, V (1946), 27.

⁵² Cables, Bevin to Halifax, 22 March 1946 and 3 April 1946, PRO DO35/1740.

⁵³ Minutes of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting, 23 and 24 April 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 321-4 and 331-3.

⁵⁴ Cable, American Charge d'Affaires, London, to State Department, 25 April 1946, *FRUS*, V (1946), 33.

⁵⁵ Letter, Nevile Butler, British Foreign Office, to Sir Eric Machtig, Dominions Office, 22 April 1946, PRO DO35/1740 enclosing a Memorandum which set out the Foreign Office view on 'United States Requests for Bases; Pacific'. In the document it was stated that 'Mr Byrnes should be informed of the importance which we attach to reaching agreement with the United States, but that this itself would be valueless unless we were in complete accord with the Dominions on the points at issue.' Minutes of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting, 26 April 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 361-4.

⁵⁶ Cable, Department of State to American Ambassador in London, Averell Harriman, 27 April 1946, enclosing 'Memorandum of Regional Defence Arrangement for the Southwest Pacific', approved by SWNCC, and Memorandum of Bevin-Byrnes Conversation, 24 May 1946, *FRUS*, V(1946), 34 and 38-40; cable, Bevin to Attlee, 3 May 1946 and Minutes of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting, 3 May 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 390 and 399-403; extract from Minutes of British Cabinet Meeting, 3 May 1946, PRO DO35/1741.

⁵⁷ Minutes of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting, 6 May 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 406-410.

⁵⁸ Cables, Bevin to Attlee, 5 May 1946, and Attlee to Bevin, 7 May 1946, PRO DO35/1741.

⁵⁹ Extract from Minutes of British Cabinet Meeting, 13 May 1946, PRO DO35/1741.

⁶⁰ Cables, Balfour to Bevin, 24 May 1946 and Bevin to Balfour, Washington, 29 May 1946, PRO DO35/1741.

⁶¹ *CPD*, Vol.187, p.1560, 19 June 1946; cable, Evatt to Chifley, 20 May 1946, *DAFP*, IX (1946), 444.

⁶² Cables, Evatt to Chifley, 21 June 1946, Chifley to Evatt, 28 June 1946 and Evatt to Chifley, 1 and 19 July 1946, *ibid.*, IX (1946), 543-4, 560, and X (1946), 3-5 and 53-4; letter, Balfour, Washington, to Nevile Butler, British Foreign Office, August 1946, PRO DO 35/1741.

⁶³ Cable, Chifley to Evatt, 30 July 1946, *DAFP*, X (1946), 77-9; see also *CPD*, Vol. 189, p. 90, 8 November 1946.

⁶⁴ Cables, Robert L. Butler, American Ambassador, Canberra to State Department, 15 October and 13 November 1946, USNA RG59, 711.47/10-1546 and 711.47/11-1346; note, United States Embassy, Canberra, to Department of External Affairs, 12 December 1946, *DAFP*, X (1946), 507-8 and also cable, State Department to Robert L. Butler, American Ambassador, Canberra, 5 December 1946, *FRUS*, I (1946), 680-1; aide memoire, Australian Government to Robert Butler, 19 February 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 384; 'Notes of Meeting of Ministers on Council of Defence', 6 March 1947, *ibid.*, 299-302.

⁶⁵ Council of Defence Minute, 12 March 1947, *ibid.*, 303-5.

⁶⁶ Note, 'Base at Manus', AA CRS A4311 Box 17; despatch, Robert Butler to Department of State, 20 June 1947, USNA RG59, 811.237/6-2047.

⁶⁷ Cable, Commonwealth Government to Cranborne, British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1 August 1945 and cables, Commonwealth Government to Addison, 11 August 1945, *DAFP*, VIII (1945), 284-286, 312-316 and 322-324; aide-memoires, Australian Legation to State Department, 13 August 1945 and British Embassy to State Department, 20 August 1945, *FRUS*, VI (1945), 650-654 and 678. For an account of the origin and nature of the *Tennosei* or Emperor system, see Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, 1985).

⁶⁸ Memorandum, McNeil to Sargent, 30 April 1946, PRO DO35/2040.

⁶⁹ Cable, Evatt to Ball, 4 August 1946, *DAFP*, X(1946), 96; see also cable, Evatt to Chifley, 24 August 1946, *ibid.*, 141. .

⁷⁰ Cables, Evatt to Ball, 4 August 1946 and Evatt to Beasley, 16 September 1946, *ibid.*, 207.

⁷¹ Cable, Evatt to Addison, 26 October 1945, AA CRS A3300, file 455.

⁷² Australia had become disillusioned also about the failure of the FEC to adopt a basic policy statement. It was not until 19 June 1947 that this was achieved. By this time Australia had become convinced that the FEC was a hindrance not a help in advancing Australia's peace aims. The Australian representative had protested about the delay and informed the Commission that Australia was 'now looking towards the Peace Settlement.' After it was agreed that a British Commonwealth Conference should be called to discuss the terms the Australian representative was instructed that in dealing with FEC business he should 'retard the pace as much as possible.' Cables, Makin to Evatt, 31 May 1947, AA CRS A1068, ER47/31/23 and cable, External Affairs Department to Makin, 2 June 1947, AA CRS A3300, 745.

⁷³ Cable, Australian Legation, Washington, to External Affairs Department, 6 January 1947, AA CRS A3300, P47/10/61/10 and *New York Times*, 24 February 1947.

⁷⁴ *CPD*, Vol.190, p.171, 26 February 1947.

⁷⁵ *New York Times*, 18 March 1947; Takeshi Igarashi, 'Acheson and the Japan Peace Treaty' in D.Brinkley (ed.), *Dean Acheson and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (London, 1993), p.136.

⁷⁶ Cables, External Affairs Department to N.St.C. Deschamps, Australian Charge d'Affaires, Moscow, 10 April 1947 and Addison to Australian Government, 11 April 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 520-521; cable, Australian Government to Addison, 19

April 1947 and 2 May 1947, PRO FO371/63767; cables, Beasley to Evatt, 21 May 1947, Evatt to Beasley, 27 May 1947 and Beasley to Evatt, 30 May 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 527-528, 532 and 535-536..

⁷⁷ *CPD*, Vol.119, pp.1174-1175, 26 March 1947; Cabinet submission by Evatt, 22 May 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 529-530; *CPD*, Vol.192, p.1560, 6 June 1947.

⁷⁸ Cable, Addison to Evatt, 20 June 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 540-541; letter, Hilldring to MacArthur, 9 June 1947, *FRUS*, VI (1947), 461.

⁷⁹ Record of Conference in Secretary's Room, 8 July 1947, AA A4311/1, Box 453; for Evatt's 'liberal internationalist' critique of the role of Great Powers in the international system, see Neville Meaney, 'Australia, the Great Powers and the Coming of the Cold War,' *Australian Journal of History and Politics*, 38 (November, 1992), 316-333.

⁸⁰ *New York Times*, 31 July 1947; cable, Australian Mission, Tokyo, to External Affairs Department, 4 August 1947, *DAFP*, XII(1947), 568-569; cable, George Atchison to American Secretary of State, George Marshall, 28 July 1947, *FRUS*, VI (1947), 475-476; cable, Sir Alvary Gascoigne to Bevin, 31 July 1947, PRO FO371/63775.

⁸¹ Cables, Evatt to Chifley, 28 July and 1 August 1947, AA CRS A4311, Box 449.

⁸² 'Outline Notes' and 'Verbatim Minutes' of the Canberra Conference Meetings, 26-29 August and 1-2 September 1947, AA CRS A4311, Boxes 17 and 492.

⁸³ 'Verbatim Minutes' of the Canberra Conference, 1 September 1947, AA CRS A4311, Box 17 and PRO CAB133/16.

⁸⁴ Cable, Esler Dening to C.R.Price, Commonwealth Relations Office, 28 August 1947, PRO FO371/63779 and United Kingdom delegation's 'Report on Japanese Peace Settlement—British Commonwealth Conference, 26 August-2 September 1947, PRO FO371/63781 and CAB133/16.

Roger Dingman's contention that by the time of the Canberra Conference there had been 'an essential change', a softening change, in Australia's Japan policy brought on by a desire to win America's goodwill in return for a security guarantee seems an overstatement. At the Conference Evatt continued to advocate Australia's established policy which sought extensive economic and political reforms and a military force either stationed in Japan or the adjacent islands under American control ready to act in case of Japan's failure to observe the peace terms. See Roger Dingman, 'The View From Down Under: Australia and Japan, 1945-1952' in Thomas W. Burkman, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The International Context* (Norfolk, Virginia, 1984), p.108.

⁸⁵ Cable, Evatt to Marshall, 2 September 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 611-612.

⁸⁶ Letters, Evatt to Marshall, 16 October 1947 and Marshall to Evatt, 22 October 1947, *DAFP*, XII (1947), 622-624; cable, Evatt to Burton, 22 November 1947, *ibid.* p.626; cable, United States Ambassador, London, to Marshall, 2 December 1947, *FRUS*, VI (1947), 582.

⁸⁷ Cables, Burton to A.S.Watt, Australian Minister, Moscow, 16 January 1948 and Watt to Burton, 14 March 1948, *DAFP*, XIV(1948-1949), 589 and 592-593.

⁸⁸ Letter, Chifley to Attlee, 10 January 1948, PRO FO 371/68041; cables, Attlee for Chifley, 14 January 1948 and Chifley for Attlee, 22 January 1948, PRO PREM8/787; see also Chifley's response to Attlee's defence of Britain's action, cable, Chifley for Attlee, 11 February 1948, *ibid.*, 'We appreciate your great difficulties and the absolute need in your present economic and military position to obtain and maintain the sympathy and support of the United States of America, but that support should not be obtained on the basis that war with the Soviet Union is inevitable. That view appears, on private advice we have received, as being fostered by certain sections in the United States of America.' It might be noted that Evatt in early October 1947, while still optimistic about American support for an early peace, had publicly endorsed American aid to Greece under the Truman doctrine. He denounced Soviet criticisms as 'allegations of the crudest, almost infantile kind.' See Evatt's speech to the Political and Security Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, *Current Notes on International Affairs*, Vol.18 (November 1947), pp. 684 and 690-691.

⁸⁹ *CPD*, Vol. 196, pp.747-748 and 751, 8 April 1948.

⁹⁰ Letter, E.J. Williams, United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canberra, to Sir Eric Machtig, Commonwealth Relations Office, 15 April 1948, PRO PREM8/787. Perhaps Evatt was encouraged to think that the British Labour Government might share Australia's disillusionment with America because of the British protest in early April at General MacArthur's unilateral announcement which seemed to foreshadow a relaxation in restrictions on Japanese trade and travel. Evatt had not directly alluded to this in his parliamentary speech. It may be that MacArthur was still too much of a saviour icon in Australian public discourse to have permitted a critical reference to his part in the 'reverse' course. The Australian Government regarded MacArthur's publication of his message to the War Department as 'discourteous and altogether disturbing.' They saw it as part of 'a calculated campaign to work up public feeling in United States. In(sic) favour of action to rebuild Japan.' They told the British that 'such a policy in resurrecting Japanese war potential are matters of great concern to us.' In these circumstances they now wished to reaffirm the rights and responsibilities of the FEC which they hoped might act as a curb on American action. See cables, Commonwealth Relations Office to U.K. High Commissioner, Canberra, 5 April 1948 and Australian Government to Commonwealth Relations Office, 6 April 1948, PRO FO371/69927.

The British government was not disposed to allow Evatt's anti-American complaints to pass without comment. They made it plain that they disagreed with Evatt's views. In reply they stressed that they did 'not (repeat not) regard them [the Americans] as

actuated by mercenary motives.’ Western European nations were being threatened with Communist aggression from within as well as without. They rejected any idea of collaborating with Australia and New Zealand in foreign affairs which excluded the United States for, they maintained, it was only with the co-operation of the United States that they would have ‘some prospect of building up in Western Europe an independent association of free States which seems so essential.’ Cable, Machtig to Williams, 24 April 1948, PRO PREM8/787.

It may well be that in their frustration Evatt and Burton were most immediately stimulated to take this general anti-American position as a result of reading one or more of the three articles which Harold Laski, a former chairman of the British Labour Party executive and Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and Politics had contributed to the American ‘liberal’ journal, *Nation*, at the end of 1947 and in early 1948. Laski’s critique of American policy was more sophisticated and rounded but in substance there was much in common between Laski’s overall argument and the Australian leaders’ argument. See ‘Is Europe Done For?’, ‘America—1947’ and ‘Getting on with Russia’ in *Nation*, 23 November and 13 December 1947 and 4 January 1948. The emphasis given to the implications of America’s Cold War policy for Japan was, however, Evatt’s own. Evatt linked the perceived needs of Australian security with Australia’s right to a leadership role in foreign affairs and the cause of international justice and world peace. While it is not unusual for national leaders to succumb to this self-gratifying temptation, nevertheless in Evatt’s exposition of this relationship it took an extreme and at times almost hysterical form.

⁹¹ Letter, F.K. Roberts, Bevin’s Private Secretary, to L.N. Helsby, Attlee’s Private Secretary, 29 December 1947, PRO PREM8/736; letter and minute, F.E. Cumming Bruce, Commonwealth Relations Office to J.L.Pumphrey, Attlee’s Private Secretary, 8 January 1948, *ibid.* For an account of the American breaking of the Soviet codes which revealed leaks of secret material from Australian official sources to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra, see Desmond Ball and David Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia’s KGB Network 1944-50*(Sydney, 1998).

⁹² Letter, Bevin to Attlee, 3 April 1948 and cable, Attlee for Chifley, 6 April 1948, PRO PREM8/736. Though Dening was to visit India, Pakistan and Ceylon on his way to Australia this was part of the window dressing which the British had contrived to hide the true nature of his mission to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. While in South Asia he was only to discuss the Japanese peace treaty; he was not to canvas the issue of secret Far East talks with the Americans. This was strictly a matter for the ‘old Dominions.’

⁹³ Foreign Office Brief, ‘Far Eastern Talks with Australia, New Zealand and Canada’, 20 April 1948, PRO FO371/69927. The basic draft for these instructions was written by Dening himself.

⁹⁴ Memorandum, Burton to Evatt, 3 May 1948, AA CRS A1838/1, item 78/7.

⁹⁵ Cables, Williams to Machtig, 5,6 and 7 May 1948 and letter, Dening to Machtig, 7 May 1948, PRO PREM8/736.

⁹⁶ Cable, Sir Oliver Franks, British Ambassador to Washington, to Bevin, 29 May 1948 and letter, Denning to Michael Wright, British Foreign Office, 1 June 1948, PRO FO371/69926; memorandum of conversation, Lovett with Denning and others, 27 May 1948 and memorandum of conversation, George Kennan, Director, Policy Planning Staff, with Denning and others, 28 May 1948, *FRUS*, VI (1947), 782-785 and 788-794.

⁹⁷ Record of a conversation between Attlee, Bevin and Noel-Baker, 14 May 1948, and cable, Attlee for Chifley, 24 May 1948, PRO PREM8/734.

The Foreign Office showed some understanding of the Australian antagonism towards the Americans. Sir Orme Sargent, the permanent head of the Foreign Office, wrote Denning that while 'hostile attitude of the Australia towards the United States Far Eastern policy and its corollary, a relative sympathy with the Soviet point of view' was 'most worrying' nevertheless he was 'inclined to believe that the explanation lies in accumulated resentment at the domineering tactics of the Americans rather than in a considered divergence from United States policy.' If this assumption were correct he suggested that Denning tackle the State Department officials about 'the American habit of unilateral action' and their building up of Japan without concern for the interests of 'other friendly powers.' It might 'be true that the Australians have been unduly sensitive over instances of non-consultation but the Americans are themselves very much to blame.' See cable, Franks to Denning, 2 June 1948, PRO FO371/69926.

⁹⁸ See for the Australian side of this question, Neville Meaney, 'The End of White Australia and Australia's Changing Perceptions of Asia,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 49 (November, 1995), 171-190 and Stuart Ward, 'Discordant Communities: Australia, Britain and the European Community, 1950-1963', Ph.D. dissertation, History Department, Sydney University, 1999.

⁹⁹ Cable, Chifley for Attlee, 29 May 1948, PRO PREM8/734.

¹⁰⁰ Cable, Attlee for Chifley, 30 May 1948, *ibid.* The Canadian Prime Minister had declined on the grounds that he had 'overriding political commitments' at home and the South African Prime Minister found it 'impracticable' because he had just taken up office.

¹⁰¹ Cable, Chifley for Attlee, 28 June 1948, PRO PREM8/712E which set out the main topics Chifley wished to cover, namely the general dollar problem, the trade and payments issues arising out of Western Union, Britain's trade policy and the sterling balances; minutes of the meetings between Chifley and British Ministers, 8 and 9 July 1948, *ibid.*; extract from minutes of meeting of Chifley with ministers on 'The Pacific', 9 July 1948, PRO PREM8/1169.

¹⁰² Cable (200), Noel-Baker to Department of External Affairs, 21 July 1948, *DAFP*, XIV (1948-1949), 472-474 (economic background); cable (423), Attlee for Chifley, 21 July 1948, PRO PREM8/1169 (political background)-not in *DAFP*; cable, Chifley for Attlee, 27 July 1948, *ibid.*

¹⁰³ British Chiefs of Staff Joint Planning Committee, J.P.(48) 71(Final), 'Commonwealth Co-operation', 3 July 1948, PRO PREM8/747.

¹⁰⁴ Notes of meeting of British Ministers, 28 July 1948 with annex I, minute by Brook, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes of the Third, Ninth and Eleventh meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, 12, 19 and 20 October 1948, including Confidential Annex and British Memorandum on World Situation and its Defence', P.M.M.(48) I, attached to minutes of Eleventh Meeting, 20 October 1948, PRO CAB133/88.

¹⁰⁶ Letter, Chifley to Attlee, 10 September 1948, Attlee Papers, Bodleian Library, Dep.73, fol.105; extract of record of conversation, Noel-Baker and Evatt, 17 August 1948, PRO FO371/69698; despatch, Bevin to British Ambassador, The Hague, 16 August 1948, PRO DO35/2847; minute of conversation, M.R.Wright, Foreign Office, and Evatt, 7 September 1948, PRO FO371/70189.

¹⁰⁷ Cable, Chifley to Evatt, 13 October 1948, *DAFP*, XIV(1948-1949), 187. Ritchie Owendale's *The English-Speaking Alliance: Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War, 1945-1951* (London, 1985) understandably concentrates on the Anglo-American relationship, but this is to some degree at the expense of the British Commonwealth since he fails to appreciate the centrality of the 1948 Conference for British Cold War policy. He is wrong about Evatt's response to the British proposal for global defence planning, does not grasp fully the aims of the British Government and does not perceive the implications of Britain's failure to achieve its objectives for the future of the Commonwealth.(pp.80-82).

¹⁰⁸ Minutes of Ninth and Eleventh Meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, 19 and 20 October 1948, including Confidential Annex to Eleventh Meeting, PRO CAB133/88.

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of Third Meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, 12 October 1948, PRO CAB133/88.

It is worth noting that in 1948 neither the Australian Defence nor the External Affairs Department considered Japan in itself a threat to Australia: the Defence Committee had concluded, in accord with the British Chiefs of Staffs' appreciation, that Australia faced no direct threat in the Pacific and that the only threat came from the Soviet Union in Europe and the Middle East while Burton for External Affairs had argued that Australia's main strategic and security problems was China, whether Nationalist or Communist, using the Chinese diaspora to engage in subversion in Southeast Asia. See 'An Appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff of the Strategical Position of Australia', September 1947, XII (1947), 289-301, and Memorandum, Chifley to Dedman, 6 October 1948, enclosing External Affairs Department 'Political Appreciation', 30 September 1948, *DAFP*, XIV(1948), 242-248.

¹¹⁰ Letter, Chifley to Attlee, 7 February 1949, *DAFP*, XIV(1949), 204.

¹¹¹ Minutes of Meetings of Commonwealth Working Party on Japanese Peace Treaty, 1-2 May 1950, PRO CAB133/28.

¹¹² David McLean, 'Anzus Origins:A Reassessment', *Australian Historical Studies*, 24 (April, 1990), 64-82.