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Timothy Kendall: Within China's Orbit? China through the eyes of the Australian Parliament

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WITHIN CHINA'S ORBIT?

CHINA THROUGH THE EYES OF THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

Timothy Kendall
2007 Australian Parliamentary Fellow



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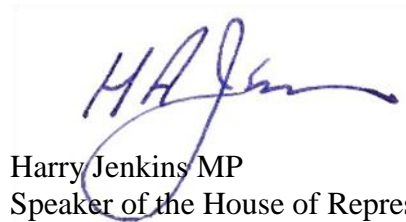
Presiding Officers' Foreword

Since its establishment in 1971, the Australian Parliamentary Fellowship has provided an opportunity for academic researchers to investigate and analyse aspects of the working of the Australian Parliament and the parliamentary process. The work of Dr Timothy Kendall, the 2007 Australian Parliamentary Fellow, explores the history of the Australian Parliament's dealings with 'China', from Federation to the 41st Parliament of Australia.

Through examining specific moments when China has become the object of parliamentary interest and the subject of parliamentary analysis, Dr Kendall's monograph offers an historically informed and critical account of the Australian Parliament's fears and hopes for China.



Senator the Hon. Alan Ferguson
President of the Senate



Harry Jenkins MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives

August 2008

Timothy Kendall holds a PhD in cultural and literary studies from La Trobe University. He has published widely on the Australia–China relationship and is author of *Ways of Seeing China: From Yellow Peril to Shangrila* (Curtin University Books/Fremantle Press, 2005).

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Introduction

As the People's Republic of China continues to develop as the subject of intense economic, political and cultural interest, this study examines the place 'China' has held in the parliamentary imagination. It achieves this by exploring the history of the Australian Parliament's dealings with China. The monograph's period of historical focus is broad: it begins with an analysis of Federation debates over immigration restriction and concludes with a detailed assessment of the bilateral relationship during the 41st Parliament (November 2004–November 2007). While the monograph provides extensive coverage of the changing nature of Australia–China relations, it does not attempt a full narrative history of the period with which it is concerned; rather, it offers an analysis of a series of foundational moments in the development of the relationship.¹ Such a methodological approach enables the research to document the profound transformation that has taken place in Australian parliamentary attitudes towards China.

In seeking to establish how parliamentary attitudes have been formed through a complex and interactive series of cultural, historical and ideological processes, the overarching goal of the monograph is to examine specific moments when China has become the object of parliamentary interest and the subject of parliamentary analysis, for example: the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; recognition of the People's Republic in 1972; Hu Jintao's address to the Parliament in 2003. Through identifying the historical continuities and discontinuities in parliamentary attitudes, the study also documents how Australian parliamentarians have appropriated 'China' to serve a variety of political and nationalist ends. While China has been used to define Australia's place in the world—variously emerging as an 'other' to Australia and as integral to Australia's economic, political and strategic future—China has also been manipulated for domestic political purposes. At Federation, parliamentarians drew upon the Chinese presence in Australia to assist in the cultivation of a white nationalist identity; during the Cold War the Liberal-Country

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1. For more extensive histories of the Australia–China relationship see: E. S. K. Fung, and Colin Mackerras, *From Fear to Friendship: Australian Policies towards the People's Republic of China 1966–1982*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1985; Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing Perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996; Thomas, Nicholas (ed.), *Re-orientating Australia–China Relations: 1972 to the Present*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004; Timothy Kendall, *Ways of Seeing China: From Yellow Peril to Shangrila*, Curtin University Books/Fremantle Press, Fremantle, 2005.

Party exploited the fear of Chinese communism as a potent political mobiliser which would help it retain power for 23 years; and in the period following recognition, both major parties have drawn upon the bilateral relationship for purposes of political differentiation, each claiming itself best placed to manage the relationship.

A concomitant goal of the research is to examine the specific contribution made by the Parliament to the development of bilateral relations. In the first instance, this involves identifying the way the relationship has been advanced through the processes, practices and outputs of the Parliament—policy and legislative debates, the activities of parliamentary friendship groups, the visits of delegations, the work of the committees of the Parliament. Beyond this, the monograph is also interested in exploring the importance of the Parliament as a powerful knowledge-producing institution, one which has played a critical role in the formation of Australian attitudes. In claiming that the Parliament has operated as an originating site for many popular Australian understandings of China, the monograph suggests that the Parliament's fears and hopes for China have contributed to the creation of some enduring and pervasive social and political visions—the yellow peril, the red menace, the land of sublime opportunity.

The monograph begins by offering an account of the evolution of the Australia–China relationship through exploring three binding themes: immigration, political economy and foreign policy. This is followed by an analysis of the spectacular growth in Australia–China relations at the start of the 21st century. To achieve this the monograph utilises a diverse range of material: parliamentary reports and debates, personal papers, archival documents, policy and legislative outputs, committee reports and data from surveys and interviews conducted with members of the 41st Parliament. As a whole, the research provides the most extensive history of the Australian Parliament's engagement with China that is currently available. Each of the four chapters gives priority to those themes, events and debates which have hitherto received limited critical analysis—J. G. Latham's visit to China in 1934, Hu Jintao's address to the Australian Parliament in 2003, and the attitudes of *parliamentarians* to subjects ranging from Chinese 'soft power', to human rights in China to the political status of Taiwan.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One explores the way the Chinese presence in the colonies of Australia during the 19th century provided one of the central motivations for Federation and played a significant role in the development of an early Australian national identity. Antipathy towards the Chinese—fears about miscegenation, contamination and anxiety about the degradation of the white type—manifests itself in discriminatory legislation which

included one of the first acts of the new Federal Parliament, the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901. In offering an account of Federation attitudes towards the Chinese, this chapter is particularly concerned with examining how Victorian racial theory and fears about racial intermingling, blood-mixing and degeneration came to inform parliamentary debate to produce an immigration policy which would help cultivate a white Australia.

Chapter Two turns to examine how the Australia that was imagined at Federation—racially pure, separate from Asia and committed to pursuing imperial interests—was gradually replaced by a nation which began to imagine China as part of its economic future. In outlining the activities of Australia’s first diplomatic mission to Asia, the Australian Eastern Mission of 1934, the chapter investigates how the effects of the Great Depression prompted Australian policy makers, still committed to the policy of a white Australia, to seek engagement with the peoples and nations of Asia. Following an assessment of the shift that took place in Australian self-perceptions during this period, the chapter turns to identify parliamentary reaction to the establishment of the People’s Republic. After exploring how the fears of Chinese communist expansionism led to calls for the containment and isolation of China during the Cold War, the chapter concludes by examining the way China was resituated in the parliamentary imagination following Gough Whitlam’s recognition of the People’s Republic in 1972.

Chapter Three documents a landmark event in the recent history of the Australian Parliament’s engagement with China: President Hu Jintao’s address to a joint meeting of the Parliament in 2003. After examining the reaction to the prospect of an address to the Parliament by a non-democratically elected head of state, the chapter charts the development of the bilateral relationship during the Howard years. A discussion of the speeches by Prime Minister Howard and President Hu, which reveals differences in the way the two nations seek to engage diplomatically, concludes with a discussion of how John Howard employed a model for Asian engagement which sought to differentiate him from his political rivals. The chapter also reveals why President Hu Jintao’s address to a simultaneous and co-located meeting of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Australian Parliament would be the last by a visiting head of state.

Chapter Four offers a detailed discussion of the specific contributions of the 41st Parliament to the development of bilateral relations. It achieves this through examining the major China-related outputs of the Parliament—committee and delegation reports, parliamentary debates and policy and legislative material—while

also drawing on the results from a survey and interviews with members of the 41st Parliament. The survey and interview materials provide unique insights into the attitudes of contemporary parliamentarians. Based on this information, the chapter explores a range of subjects including the activities of parliamentary friendship groups, influential historical milestones in the relationship, attitudes towards the current state of economic relations, sources of information about China, travel to China, and relations between the Chinese Embassy and Members of the Australian Parliament.

In its entirety, the monograph tells the story of profound social, political, economic and attitudinal transformation. In telling this story, it is argued that ‘China’ has held a critical place in the parliamentary imagination and played an integral role in modern Australian political history. The anxieties about economic competition and genetic corruption, which prompted the first Parliament to pass legislation that sought to exclude the Chinese (and other non-white people) from Australia, are replaced by a China which emerges as an indispensable economic and strategic partner, positioned near the centre of Australia’s foreign policy. Perhaps the full extent of the transformation is evidenced by the fact that at the start of the 42nd Parliament, Australia has both a Chinese-speaking Prime Minister and the first overseas-born, ethnic Chinese, member of the Federal Ministry, Senator Penny Wong.

In a study which canvasses the Parliament’s fears and hopes for China, the monograph seeks to look beyond many of the laudatory statements that are often made about China’s burgeoning economy, to provide an historically informed and critical account of the evolving attitudes of the Australian Parliament towards China. In such a quest it is useful to note J. G. Latham’s caution to the House of Representatives in 1934:

It has been usual in Australia to regard China as offering great potentialities for the marketing of Australian goods. This arises, no doubt, from our habit of thinking of China in terms of China’s population ... But perhaps no other market offers more difficulties, and no other market requires such specialized knowledge of local conditions and sales procedure. It can also be said that in no other eastern market is competition so keen, or is there such a concentration of international commercial representation, both business and official. Most countries have recognized the necessity for official trade representation, and the trade representatives are, generally speaking, men of extraordinary ability and acumen.²

Some seventy years after Latham offered this advice, it would appear appropriate to investigate the intellectual, cultural and strategic capacity of the Australian Parliament

2. J. G. Latham, ‘The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham’, *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 12.

to manage the gravitational pulls and influences—the shifting forces of attraction and repulsion—which now keep the Australia–China relationship in orbit.

Chapter One: Federation and the Geographies of Whiteness

Let us keep before us the noble idea of a white Australia—snow-white Australia if you will. Let it be pure and spotless.¹



1. Chinese Arch Melbourne, 1901, Australian Federation celebrations, National Library of Australia Picture Collection (nla.pic-an13117280-23)

Taken on 7 May 1901, this is a photograph of Federation street celebrations in Melbourne. Onlookers observe a carriage transporting Chinese dignitaries along a crowded Swanston Street festooned with flags, lanterns and other street decorations. The featured Chinese arch, comprising two pagoda-style tiered towers, had been recently erected to celebrate the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of York to Melbourne. The Chinese community had raised the funds to construct the arch and the residents of

1. James Black Ronald, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 September 1901, p. 4666.

Little Bourke Street had donated the Chinese silks to decorate the arch's timbers. On the day of the photograph, taken two days before the Duke of York opened the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Chinese eagerly participated in the city-wide celebrations. A procession of Chinese standard-bearers, musicians and dancers weaved their way through the streets of Melbourne pursued by two traditional Chinese dragons.

An article published in the Melbourne *Argus*, on the following day, offers an example of how Chinese participation in the parade was reported. The sense of antipathy and condescension which pervades the opening statements gives way to a sense of curiosity and fascination. The novelty of the dragon parade, the quality of the music and the 'prettiness' of the 'half-caste women' prompts the anonymous reporter to describe the Chinese as a skilful and diligent people capable of creating processions of great beauty. According to the description, the energy and artistry of the performers and the enthusiasm displayed for Federation celebrations stirred the interest and admiration of onlookers; so much so, that at the conclusion to the parade the spectators rose 'and gave the clever Chinese the cheers they deserved', 'forgetting for the nonce White Australia'.²

In between the two towers of the photographed arch and upon the central span is a banner welcoming the monarchs to Melbourne: 'Welcome by the Chinese Citizens'. The usage of the term 'Chinese citizens' suggests that the Chinese understood citizenship to have a lived or experiential aspect—citizenship was demonstrated through a civic commitment to Australian nationhood and a Chinese citizen's arch acted as a material symbol of this lived *citizenship*. However, while the Chinese sought to position themselves within the civic 'tapestry' of the new nation-state, the concept of *citizenship via participation* did not afford any legal entitlement. Australian citizenship was not legally defined until the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* of 1948, which subsequently became the *Australian Citizenship Act*.³ Up until this time, a non-British subject acquired British subject status by naturalisation. In most instances this entitled a person to all the rights and privileges, as well as the obligations, of a British-born

2. 'The Chinese Procession: Novel and Picturesque Display', *Argus*, 8 May 1901, p. 8.

3. For a discussion of citizenship at Federation see Kim Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, Lawbook Co., Sydney, 2002. It should be noted that sections of the Commonwealth and colonial legislation dealing with matters of immigration and naturalisation were regularly, or continuously, amended.

subject.⁴ In the pre-Federation period this was regulated by the colonies through a raft of legislation prohibiting the Chinese from becoming naturalised.⁵ After Federation, naturalisation would be governed by the *Naturalisation Act* of 1903, under which indigenous people from Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands (excepting New Zealand) were prohibited from becoming British subjects. While naturalisations granted prior to Federation were valid under Commonwealth law, those Chinese who did not, or could not, become naturalised had no claim upon the state, and as such faced uncertain futures.

Using this account of Chinese civic patriotism as a starting point, this chapter examines the debates associated with the passage of the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901. It offers a counterpoint to Keith Windschuttle's recent critique of the 'White Australia policy', in which he argues that the parliamentary debate over the legislation was primarily focused upon the economic motivations for immigration restriction. The chapter suggests that the debate over the Immigration Restriction Bill was mediated by a pervasive and incontrovertible racism which had at its heart the assertion of white genetic and cultural superiority. This is demonstrated by exploring how the debate, which was governed by anxieties about racial intermingling, blood-mixing, contamination, and the dilution and degeneration of the white race, was committed to producing legislation which would maintain racial purity. Central to the argument is that during the Federation period *whiteness* operated as a cultural ideal critical to the formation of an Australian national identity. Through propagating fears about the loss of the white nation-*self*, the Parliament sought to transform whiteness into a normative national category; Federation sought to *indigenise* whiteness.

Motivations for Federation

There were at least four motivations for Federation: removing the divisions that separated the colonies; creating unified immigration legislation that would restrict the entry of non-Europeans; the establishment of tariff barriers to protect Australian

4. In New South Wales, a naturalised citizen could not sit in Parliament (until after the 1858 Electoral Act) and could only lease land for fixed periods. See Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1996, p. 189.

5. In New South Wales, for example, the legislation regularly changed and for extended periods there were laws which prevented the Chinese from becoming naturalised—from 1850 to 1856, between 1862 and 1867 and again after 1888 with the passing of the *Chinese Restriction Act*. By this time, 889 Chinese had taken advantage of the non-exclusionary periods and became naturalised in New South Wales. See Shirley Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

workers and manufacturers from foreign competition; and the creation of a nation that would provide the citizenry with the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of a democratic political life. While the protectionist platform extended from barring the entry of cheap manufactured goods to barring the entry of cheap labour, at the heart of the federalist movement was the intention to establish a new nation defined in racial terms.

There was a determined sense that Federation presented an unparalleled nation building opportunity. The pervasive mood of optimism, the spirit of hope and nationalist ambition promoted many of the first parliamentarians to experiment with different social and political visions. When speaking to the Immigration Restriction Bill, parliamentarians commended to the people of Australia a vision of a progressive, young and pure nation defined in racial terms. The racial character of the new nation was deemed critical to preserving Australia's British heritage and it was largely considered part of one's patriotic or imperial duty to keep the nation *snowy white*. Commonly, the white nation, or anthropomorphised *self*, was represented as being threatened with imminent extinction, and as such, the legislation restricting the immigration of non-Europeans was considered 'a matter of life and death to the purity of our race and the future of our nation'.⁶

The first Parliament consisted of 111 parliamentarians and three major political parties: the Protectionists, the Free Trade Party and Labour (who were largely divided between free traders and protectionists).⁷ There were 75 Members of the House of Representatives: 31 Protectionists (who formed Government under Edmund Barton), 28 Free Traders (who formed Opposition under George Reid), 14 Labour (who were led by Chris Watson) and two 'others'.⁸ The majority had served in colonial parliaments. In

6. William McMillan, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4629. Alfred Deakin spoke of the threat to the 'national manhood': 'We here find ourselves touching the profoundest instinct of individual or nation—the instinct of self-preservation—for it is nothing less than the national manhood, the national character and the national future that are at stake'. 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 September 1901, p. 4804.

7. In 1908, the ALP adopted the formal name *Australian Labour Party*. In 1912, as a result of the influence of the American 'labor' movement, the Party adopted the American spelling, *Labor*; see 'History of Australian Labor Party', <http://www.alp.org.au/about/history.php> (accessed 17 July 2007). Therefore, when talking about the period pre-1912, I use the term 'Labour'.

8. See *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1915, and Geoffrey Hawker, *Politicians All: The Candidates for the Australian Commonwealth Election—A Collective Biography*, Wild and Woolley, Sydney, 2002.

the Upper House, the Free Trade Opposition had 17 of the 36 Senate seats, the Protectionists 11 and Labour 8.⁹ It was a requirement that all Federation parliamentarians were British subjects. This prerequisite resulted in two parliamentarians inventing a British heritage: Labour Leader John Christian Watson was born Johan Cristian Tanck in Valparaiso, Chile. His father was a Chilean of German descent and his mother was Irish-born. To this day, Watson remains the only prime minister of Australia (27 April 1904–17 August 1904) who was neither English-born nor of Anglo-Celtic descent. The second non-British subject was American-born King O'Malley. O'Malley's origin is uncertain but his biographer tentatively places his birth in Kansas, United States.¹⁰

The Immigration Restriction Bill, which enacted the white Australia policy, was initiated in the House of Representatives by Prime Minister Edmund Barton on 5 June 1901, nine sitting days after the Duke of York had opened the Australian Parliament on 9 May 1901. The Bill was one of the first substantive pieces of legislation to be introduced to the new Commonwealth Parliament and was debated in the House of Representatives and the Senate from August to December 1901. Possibly one of the most extensively debated pieces of legislation ever to come before the Parliament, it occupies 600 pages of Hansard and more than half a million words.¹¹ As there was almost universal support for the immigration restriction of non-Europeans to Australia, much of the parliamentary debate focused on the character of the bill—not whether or not it should be enacted. The debate explored the best method of exclusion and whether exclusion was best achieved through the introduction of an education or dictation test. The majority of parliamentarians advocated absolute exclusion; others supported the admission of small numbers of coloured labourers to work in the tropical regions of the north, while a minority argued for admitting a limited number of educated 'coloured aliens'.¹² The Protectionist Government was unified in its support for the Bill. Labour politicians, who were vociferous in their opposition to coloured labour, offered strong

9. See *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1915.

10. As cited in A. J. Grassby and Sylvia Ordonez, *The Man Time Forgot: the life and times of John Christian Watson, Australia's first Labor prime minister*, Pluto Press, Annandale, pp. 18, 63.

11. Keith Windschuttle, *The White Australia Policy: Race and Shame in the Australian History Wars*, Macleay Press, Sydney, p. 286.

12. For example, Thomas Macdonald-Paterson (Member for Brisbane), 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 November 1901, p. 6937.

support to the Government. Dissent from the dominant position was extremely rare and when opposition was expressed it came from members of the Free Trade Party.

It was widely considered that unified immigration legislation would provide, in Alfred Deakin's terms, the 'statutory armour' that would stop all 'leakages' between the states:

... there are considerable differences between the restrictions imposed in the various States. We find ourselves to-day, it may be said, with, at all events, a half-open door for all Asiatics and African peoples, through which entry is not difficult ... It was with a full recognition of those facts that the first plank in the Government platform ... was the plank which for ease of reference was called the declaration for a 'White Australia'. It was for this reason that so much stress was laid on this issue, and it was for this reason that since the Government took office, no question has more frequently or more seriously occupied their attention, not only because of this one proposal before the House, but with regard to executive acts that have been and will be necessary.¹³

As Deakin suggests, there were other pieces of legislation that sought to supplement the *Immigration Restriction Act*. The *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act 1901*, limited import licences for Pacific island labourers (or 'Kanakas') and laid the platform to deport many of the Pacific islanders in Queensland and northern New South Wales after 1906. The *Post and Telegraph Act 1901* attempted to keep the seas white through the provision that ships subsidised to carry Australian mail only employ white labour. Together these three acts formed a package of legislation to exclude, and if necessary remove, non-Europeans from Australia.

Interpreting the Legacy of Immigration Restriction

In recent years there has been renewed debate over how historians have interpreted the legacy of the *Immigration Restriction Act*. In *The White Australia Policy*, Keith Windschuttle suggests the historical claims about the inherent racism of the policy have been exaggerated by a generation of historians too eager to please 'modern, racially-sensitive readers' and too eager to condemn the first Parliament for its racism. Windschuttle suggests that such interpretations have been informed by a narrow, cultural orthodoxy and facilitated by a methodology which favours plucking a few lines out of Hansard and producing the most 'cavalier generalisations' about the legislation. Windschuttle argues that as a result of these politicised generalisations, we have

13. Alfred Deakin, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 September 1901, p. 4805. Deakin uses this armour/leakage metaphor, p. 4806. Such an argument was also offered in the Senate—see Senator James Drake (Queensland), 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 15 November 1901, pp. 7335–7336.

become ‘saddled with myth and half truths about the debate and about the opinions of those who spoke it’.¹⁴ In endeavouring to restore the balance, Windschuttle’s revisionist history focuses on economic motivations for immigration restriction, arguing that concerns expressed over racial matters represented a minority view:

Rather than being ‘pervaded with ideas of race and blood’, the majority of parliamentary opinion wanted to exclude Asian immigrants because they would potentially undermine the standard of living of Australian working people. Of almost equal concern was the politicians’ fear that the creation of a racially-based political underclass would inhibit Australia’s attempt to create an egalitarian democracy. Far from being fixed on ‘racial contamination’, most politicians supported the Bill for economic and political reasons.¹⁵

As Windschuttle suggests, many parliamentarians promoted economic arguments in support of the legislation: upholding labour practices, reducing the competition of coloured labour, maintaining wages and protecting white Australia’s standard of living. The debate against coloured labour was led by Labour leader Chris Watson, who offered forceful statements about the threat posed by the Chinese:

We know that a few years ago business men—speaking by and large—looked upon the Chinese or other coloured undesirables as men who could be very well tolerated, because they took the place of labourers, of men who might be unreliable, or not quite so cheap, but when it was found that these Orientals possessed all the cunning and acumen necessary to fit them for conducting business affairs, and that their cheapness of living was carried into business matters as well as into ordinary labouring work, a marked alteration of opinion took place among business men, so far as the competition of the ‘heathen Chinese’ was concerned.¹⁶

From the 1870s, the labour union movement had protested against foreign labour. Frequently, the labour movement identified the Chinese as the greatest threat to Australian work practices: their industriousness, their ability to live frugally and what was perceived as their ‘imitative’ capacities were considered to increase competition and drive down wages.¹⁷ Numerous members of the Free Trade Party were also wary of the competitive threat posed by coloured labour. Vaiben Solomon, the importer with

14. Keith Windschuttle, op. cit., pp. 287, 289.

15. Keith Windschuttle, op. cit., p. 8.

16. Chris Watson, ‘Immigration Restriction Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4633.

17. Vaiben Solomon (Member for South Australia), refers to the Chinese as ‘a most industrious and imitative people’, ‘Immigration Restriction Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 September 1901, p. 5239.

mining interests and former owner-editor of the *Northern Territory Times*, offered an alternative perspective on industriousness of coloured labour:

My experience of these different races has shown me that it is not so much the vices or the uncleanliness of the Japanese, Chinese and the Malays that we have to fear, but rather their virtues, if I may put it so, their industry, their indomitable perseverance, their frugality, and their ability to compete against European labour.¹⁸

While Windschuttle's detailed analysis is useful for the way it challenges readers to reengage with the primary material, it is important to locate Windschuttle's argument within a broader and intensely ideological debate about contemporary Australian historiography. In speaking to this debate (the so-called 'Australian history wars'), Windschuttle claims that, so determined to assert that deep-seated racism is central to the Australian psyche, Australian historians have misinterpreted and misrepresented the debate over the Immigration Restriction Bill. This argument is encapsulated by the description on the back cover of *The White Australia Policy*, 'Australia is not, and has never been, the racist country its academic historians have condemned'.

Yet ironically, Windschuttle—like so many of the contributors to the 'history wars'—produces the same type of ideologically-based history that he criticises. Windschuttle's ideological stridency results in the creation of an erroneous and artificial binary. In claiming that there was a single motivation for immigration restriction and that this was economic, not racial, Windschuttle falls into the trap of considering the motivations exclusive to one another—something akin to suggesting that the history of slavery was not predicated upon racism. As we will see, the arguments identifying the negative effect of coloured labour and the arguments about blood or racial contamination operate concurrently, cross-referentially and in support of one another. Further, it becomes evident that even when the debate about immigration restriction related to the protection of labour rights, it was presented in a quasi-scientific, racist language.

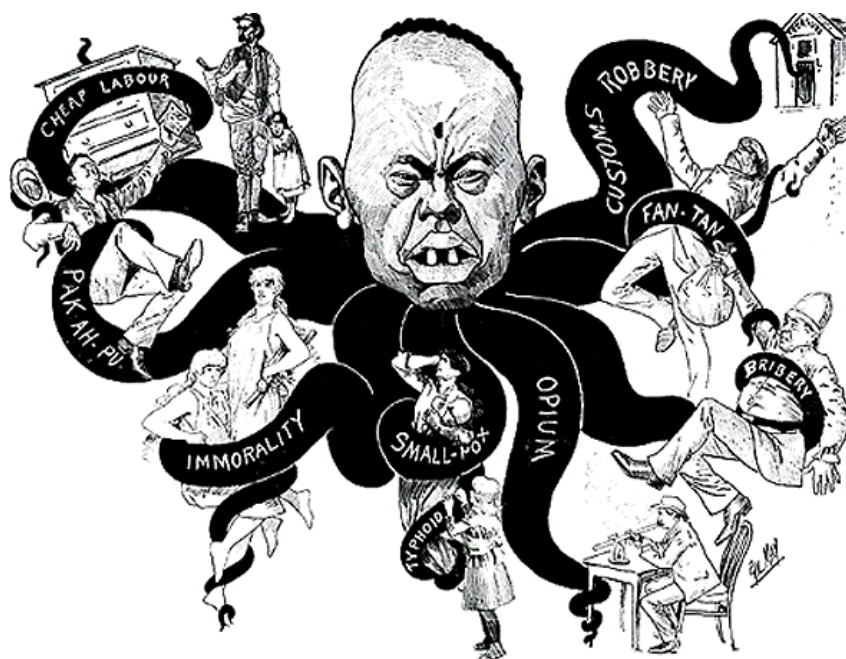
Windschuttle's failure to recognise the depth of the racism that frames the parliamentary debate appears to stem from his restrictive definition of racism. In utilising a definition that is exclusively connected to discrimination against biological or genetic difference, Windschuttle fails to fully engage with the way racism was constituted and practiced at the time.¹⁹ As it was, and often is, widely perceived that

18. *ibid.*

19. Windschuttle argues that biologically-based racial theories, like social Darwinism, had little impact on Australians who were influenced by a Scottish Enlightenment model which emphasised the historical rather than biological differences between the races.

race and culture are inextricably linked, the debates over the Immigration Restriction Bill extend well beyond the notion of the biological or genetic. In fact, the evolutionary biological theories that were employed in parliamentary debates relied upon identifying the social pathology of ‘degenerative’ cultures.

Before turning to examine the way the parliamentary debate focused on matters of contamination and racial purity, it is worth briefly identifying other rationales that were drawn upon to supplement the arguments for economic and racial protection. These might loosely be categorised as the social and the political. It was widely believed that any colouring of Australia would inevitably result in moral and social degeneration. Since the 1870s, nationalist publications like the *Bulletin*, the *Boomerang*, *Punch*, *Queensland Figaro* and the *Illustrated Australian News* consistently warned Europeans that Chinese immigration would result in moral degradation and spiritual corruption. The animosity felt towards the Chinese is rather infamously depicted in the Phillip May cartoon of 1886—‘The Mongolian Octopus’.



2. Phillip May, ‘The Mongolian Octopus—his grip on Australia’, *Bulletin*, 21 August 1886; May depicts the range of stereotypes that were popularly used to represent the Chinese. Unambiguously associated with various forms of disease, vice and immorality, the pig-tailed and buck-toothed Chinaman ensnares naïve and unsuspecting Europeans.

As if echoing elements of the Phillip May cartoon, the Labour Member for Southern Melbourne, James Ronald, utilises the metaphors of elevation and degeneration to identify the effect that contact with ‘inferior’ races has upon white women:

We do not object to these aliens because of their colour. We object to them because they are repugnant to us from our moral and social stand-points ... I want to say, however that our intention in regard to these alien races is perfectly honourable, and that we have no racial hatred or antipathy towards them. We wish them all well; we desire to do them good, but we do not believe that by allowing them to come among us we shall do any thing to elevate them. It is just like that which very often happens. Some pure-minded, noble woman marries some degenerate debauchee, with the hope of reclaiming him; but the almost inevitable result is that the man drags her down to his level. So with these inferior races.²⁰

Another argument advanced for immigration restriction was that racial homogeneity was required for the establishment of a democratic society—a notion predicated upon the belief that democracy was a political state which was only really possible for Europeans. The Chinese, it was argued, had been exposed to non-democratic or despotic regimes of governance which had rendered them unable to participate in modern democratic political life. It was considered, therefore, that the Chinese presence would stifle the new nation's democratic political development.

Debate over the Immigration Restriction Bill

The position of the Protectionist Government was clearly articulated by Prime Minister Edmund Barton. In introducing the Immigration Restriction Bill to the House of Representatives on 7 August 1901, Barton identified the Bill as '... one of the most important matters with regard to the future of Australia that can engage the attention of this House'.²¹ He then proceeded to draw a connection between the Chinese presence in Australia and the need for the legislation. Barton quotes Professor Charles Henry Pearson's *National Life and Character: A Forecast*:

The fear of Chinese immigration which the Australian democracy cherishes, and which Englishmen at home find it hard to understand is, in fact, the instinct of self-preservation, quickened by experience. We know that coloured and white labour cannot exist side by side; we are well aware that China can swamp us with a single year's surplus of population ...²²

20. James Ronald, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4665.

21. Edmund Barton, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 7 August 1901, p. 3497.

22. Edmund Barton, op. cit., 1901, p. 3503, quoting from Pearson's *National Life and Character: A Forecast*, p. 36. In *National Life and Character*, Pearson also forecasts China's emergence as a world power.

Barton also argued, in unequivocally discriminatory terms, that there was nothing that the British-born subject has in common with the Chinaman.

I do not think either that the doctrine of the equality of man was really ever intended to include racial equality. There is no racial equality. There is basic inequality. These races are, in comparison with white races—I think no one wants convincing of this fact—unequal and inferior. The doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of the Englishman and the Chinaman. There is deep-set difference, and we see no prospect and no promise of its ever being effaced. Nothing in this world can put these two races upon an equality. Nothing we can do by cultivation, by refinement, or by anything else will make some races equal to others.²³

Attorney-General, Alfred Deakin, who was largely responsible for the Bill in the House, spoke at length on its character. On 12 September 1901, Deakin raised the question of how the Commonwealth will define non-European aliens once the program of a white Australia has been implemented:

The programme of a ‘white Australia’ means not merely its preservation for the future—it means the consideration of those who cannot be classed within the category of whites, but who have found their way into our midst ... We find on our hands this not inconsiderable number of aliens who have found admission to these States ... There have been determinations which hereafter may have important consequences arising out of our administration, as well as other measures submitted to Parliament, all having in view the accomplishment of the same end. That end, put in plain and unequivocal terms, as the House and the country are entitled to have it put, means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more, it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst. The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy—the policy of securing a ‘white Australia’.²⁴

The two things that Deakin identified as going hand in hand, as a ‘necessary complement of a single policy’, were the repatriation of existing coloured labour currently domiciled in Australia, under the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act*, and the prevention of any non-whites from settling in Australian in the future, via the *Immigration Restriction Act*.

When speaking to the Immigration Restriction Bill on 26 of September 1901, the merchant and Independent Member for Capricornia, Alexander Paterson, presented a

23. Edmund Barton, ‘Immigration Restriction Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 September 1901, p. 5233.

24. Alfred Deakin, ‘Immigration Restriction Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 September 1901, pp. 4805–4806.

personal narrative which attests to the way in which the perception of the economic threat posed by coloured labour was expressed in racialised and racist terms.

The first time the magnitude of this Asiatic pestilence really arrested my attention was under the following circumstances:—I had been making a little unostentatious tour through a central section of Queensland, and when I arrived home I found, standing at the back gate of my house, a vegetable cart owned by a Chinaman and driven by a Chinaman. There was trouble in the domestic establishment that day. I said, ‘Why is this? I shall lose my election if this sort of thing goes on. I shall go down to the grave unwept, unhonoured, and unsung, instead of speaking in the halls of Parliament. This must be altered.’ The reply which was made to me was this: ‘It is all very well for you to talk in that strain, but we live 6 miles from town, and how on earth we are to get vegetables from anyone excepting a Chinaman I cannot tell.’ I said—‘While the world standeth I shall eat no soup made from vegetables grown by Chinamen, you must get vegetables grown by Europeans.’ The result was that the custom of the establishment was transferred to a German, with which arrangement I was perfectly satisfied. But I may tell honourable members that it broke me all up when I afterwards found that the German bought his vegetables from a Chinaman. While this question has its humorous side, it also has a very painful aspect. How is it that we ever allowed Chinamen to interfere so much with our trade as to put them in the position of being able to dictate to us? ... I look on the [education or dictation] test as a moral anaesthetic. We have to pull a tooth out of the wolf that would destroy us, and we want to do it painlessly if possible; and the educational test gives us an excellent means.²⁵

Determined not to eat soup made with vegetables grown by a Chinaman, Alexander Paterson transferred the custom of his establishment from a Chinaman to a German only to find that the German he so recently engaged, had himself purchased his vegetables from a Chinaman. The self-deprecating humour that was attached to Paterson’s frustrated domestic intervention was quickly replaced by a genuine sense of dread or moral panic. Upon arriving at the ‘painful aspect’ of the story, Paterson shifted from the comical to the cautionary to the Sinophobic. In suggesting that it had become near impossible for any well-intentioned European to avoid any commercial dealings with a Chinaman, Paterson drew upon this personal narrative to advocate for legislative change. He concluded his address by offering his unequivocal support for the Bill, explaining that he ‘is just as anxious for a “snowflake” Australia as anyone else in the House’. In commending the Bill to the House, he explained that he approaches the question of the Immigration Restriction Bill ‘without any feeling of party spirit’ and that he would vote with the Government in order to stop this ‘objectionable alien

25. Alexander Paterson, ‘Immigration Restriction Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 September 1901, pp. 5273–5274. Scottish-born Paterson was narrowly elected with 51% of the vote.

traffic'. He therefore endorsed the 'moral anaesthetic' that was the education or dictation test.²⁶

While motivated as much by pride and ambition, as by any perception of public good, Paterson drew upon the two major rationales for immigration restriction: those related to protecting white labour and those related to protecting the ethnic (and moral) purity of the nation. Paterson argued that the 'objectionable races' had begun to control the agricultural sector of regional Australia. The regional sector to which he was referring was his federal seat of Capricornia. Capricornia, whose very name acts as a reminder of Australia's geographic proximity to Southeast Asia, was settled later than many of the southern and costal regions of Australia, and as such, was home to large numbers of indigenous and non-indigenous people-of-colour; a racial frontier upon which the struggle for racial purity and ethnic unity was most evident.

Paterson's comments about his seat intersect with two issues which dominated parliamentary debate about labour conditions in Queensland: the question of whether white men could acclimatise in the tropics, without degeneration, and the practice of 'blackbirding'—recruiting and exploiting cheap non-white 'Kanaka' or Pacific Islander labour. Many considered the tropics a poor habitat for white men. Senator Sir Josiah Symon claimed, for example: 'Providence never meant tropical countries to be peopled by the Anglo-Saxon race'.²⁷ With regard to the practice of blackbirding, Senator George Pearce suggested that the coloured man's domination of the labour market in northern Queensland resulted in no continuity of employment for the white man who often found himself itinerant and a mere supplement to coloured labour during peak periods.²⁸

Paterson's speech suggests that he was an early advocate of what would emerge as a 'Buy White' campaign, through which Anglo traders urged Australians to refrain from purchasing the product of coloured labour. The corollary of this was that buying white would help keep Australia white.

26. Paterson uses the expressions: 'objectionable races' and 'objectionable alien traffic', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 September 1901, p. 5274.

27. Senator Josiah Symon, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 27 November 1901, p. 7988.

28. Senator George Pearce, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 26 November 1901, p. 7830.



3. White Australian Pineapples, M. Finucan Bros., Brisbane, 1910²⁹

Beyond what it says about federation anxieties concerning matters of trade—or for the insights it offers about our first parliamentarians eschewing contact with the Chinese—the extract is of interest for the way it employs a dental or medical metaphor. Metonymically, this is exemplified by the figure of the impacted or toxic tooth. By extension, parliamentarians are the practitioners, or in this instance the extractors, who have the power and moral authority to inoculate the new nation against this singularly sly and predatory Chinese ‘pestilence’. Echoing the comments by Deakin about the deportation of coloured aliens, Paterson’s uneasy central metaphor is also suggestive of not simply restriction but extraction—the removal of Chinese from Australia. The range of imagery also exposes Paterson’s overarching anxiety about disease or contamination. The general fear of contact with the Chinaman unifies Paterson’s various anxieties: the presence of coloured labour, the capacity of the Chinese to embed themselves as local traders throughout Central Queensland and the moral (if not physical) contamination that may occur from eating soup made from Chinese-grown vegetables. Together these fears coalesce around the notion of moral degradation and the fear of the dilution or devolution of the white nation-self.

29. White Australian Pineapples appears on the *Migration Heritage Centre* website and the *Making Multicultural Australia for the 21st Century* website. It is also available at the National Museum of Australia. Mimmo Cozzolino and Fysh Rutherford’s *Symbols of Australia* (Penguin, Melbourne, 1980) includes a range of early nineteenth century advertisements which champion white Australia and promote products which are deemed to help whiten the nation.

Fear of Degeneration and the Dilution of Whiteness

The late nineteenth century concept of race was powerful and pervasive and resulted in actively discriminatory social practices. Popular understandings about the hierarchy of the races borrowed heavily from evolutionary models. Whites were placed at the apex of the racial hierarchy (while ties to Britain offered a heightened sense of racial and imperial legitimacy). ‘Asiatics’ were clearly inferior to whites, Pacific islanders were inferior to Asiatics and indigenous Australians were considered little more than a dying breed—an example of predestined extinction. Unease about maintaining racial purity resulted in anxieties about the degradation of the white type as the fear of biological, cultural, social and political degeneracy manifest in a myriad of parliamentary statements about miscegenation, contamination and contagion. Within this culture of whiteness, the Chinese became the most obvious and identifiable ‘other’. This had parallel effects: while the Chinese were identified as an impediment to realising the cultural ideal of whiteness, the creation of ‘Chineseness’ also helped to stabilise whiteness as a privileged racial, social and moral category.

Throughout the nineteenth century a series of socio-biological/medical theories were assembled to legitimise white power: phrenology, social Darwinism or social evolutionism, and eugenics. The *science* of phrenology (in which the physiology of the brain and the study of the cranium enabled the indexation of human or racial development) was replaced by the *logic* of social Darwinism (in which Charles Darwin’s theories of evolutionary biology were attached to the social and racial realm), which in turn was replaced by the ideology used to promote the advancement of whites—eugenics (the deliberate interfering with human breeding in the hope of halting or reversing biological or racial degeneration).

The degree to which federation politicians drew upon these social and scientific theories of human difference, these forms of scientific racism, is open to debate. While it is true that only some supporters of the Immigration Restriction Bill made explicit reference to these bio-medical theories, or to popular racial theorists, such theories were critical to informing many nineteenth century assumptions about race and provided a framework which was employed to justify attitudes about non-European immigrants.³⁰

30. Popular racial theorists of the time included: Arthur de Gobineau, Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton. Often described as the sire of modern racism, Frenchman de Gobineau provided a ‘scientific’ rationale for white supremacy. In *The Inequality of the Human Races* (1853) he identifies physiological or phrenological differences between ‘white’, ‘black’ and ‘yellow’, arguing that if the races were not kept separate miscegenation would result in social chaos. The founder of social Darwinism, Herbert Spencer believed

Certainly, that Barton quoted from Charles Pearson reminds us that parliamentarians did not exist in an ideological or critical vacuum but rather that they were informed by contemporary debates about race. Charles Pearson distinguished between the 'evanescent' races (the Australian Aborigine, the Kanakas and the American Indians) who he claimed would disappear and the 'lower' races who were beyond extinction (the Chinese, the Hindu and the Negro).³¹ Such a claim is further supported by the fact that Protectionist Samuel Mauger quotes from the English racial theorist, Karl Pearson, and his *National Life from the Standpoint of Science* (1900), invoking social Darwinism and evolutionary theory, in an attempt to demonstrate the danger of the 'Kanaka':

If you bring the white man into contact with the black you too often suspend the very process of natural selection on which the evolution of the higher type depends. You get superior and inferior races living on the same soil and that co-existence is demoralising to both. They naturally sink into the position of master and servant, if not admittedly into that of slave-owner and slave.³²

Free Trader, and ardent advocate of the prohibition of coloured immigration, Senator Staniforth Smith similarly argued that exclusion was necessary on *scientific* and ethnological grounds:

All anthropologists agree that the Caucasian races cannot mingle with the Mongolian, the Hindoo, or the negro. Nott says—"The mulattos are the shortest lived of any of the Branch races, and are very unprolific." Warren tells us that—"The half-cast of India comes to a premature end without reproduction, and if there are any offspring they are always wretched and miserable."³³

that the evolution of races takes place through natural selection. It was Spencer, rather than Charles Darwin, who coined the phrase 'the survival of the fittest'. Founder of the British eugenics movement, Francis Galton was committed to improving the collective human condition through 'breeding-up' and is remembered for establishing anthropometric or biometric laboratories across Britain. Australia was represented at the First International Eugenics conference in London in 1912 by South Australian politician and medical practitioner, Sir John Cockburn, National Archives of Australia, 'International Eugenic Congress', A11804, 1912/209.

31. For a fuller description of Pearson's perspectives on racial character see David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850–1939*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, pp. 44–47.
32. Samuel Mauger, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 November 1901, p. 6823.
33. Senator Staniforth Smith, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 14 November 1901, p. 7246.

Senator Smith proceeded, 'We know from the teachings of science' that the 'Chinese and other coloured races cannot mix with us'. Notions of evolution and progress were also carried over to the political domain and used to support the ability of different races to participate in democracy. In fact, the evolution or whitening of Australia symbolised the transformation of the colonial settler society into a nation. Correspondingly, the marginalisation and objectification of the Chinese became an expression of Australia's national modernity.

Victorian racial anxieties, combined with a fin-de-siecle optimism, prompted some parliamentarians to speak like social and racial engineers, each with an image of the future which held at its centre the ideal of whiteness. The debate that took place between August and December 1901 was peppered with comments about racial admixture and the commingling of blood. Free Trader, Sir William McMillan, spoke of the dangers inherent in allowing for 'alien or servile races' to mix or 'interfuse' among themselves and among the Australian people³⁴. Leader of the Opposition and future prime minister, Free Trader George Reid, suggested that there was unanimity that 'the current of Australian blood shall not assume the darker hues'³⁵, while the soup-eating Alexander Paterson claimed, 'the Bill before us ... deals with the protection of blood'.³⁶ Member for Bland, Chris Watson, imagined the national challenge in terms of maintaining blood purity and resisting contamination:

... the objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia ... lies in the main with the possibility and probability of racial contamination ... The question is whether we would desire that our sisters or our brothers should be married into any of these races to which we object. If these people are not such as we can meet upon an equality, and not such that we can feel that it is no disgrace to intermarry with, and not such as we can expect to give us an infusion of blood that will tend to the raising of our standard of life, and to the improvement of the race, we should be foolish in the extreme if we did not exhaust every means of preventing them from coming to this land, which we have made our own. The racial

34. Born in England, Sir William McMillan was the Member for Wentworth representing the Free Trade Party, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4626.

35. George Reid, (Free Trade Member for East Sydney), 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 September 1901, p. 5168. Here he also speaks of 'highly civilised nations—who share our blood' ...

36. Alexander Paterson, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 September 1901, p. 5275.

aspect of the question, in my opinion, is the larger and more important one; but the industrial aspect also has to be considered.³⁷

Samuel Mauger, Member for Melbourne Ports and the author of *A White Man's World* (Melbourne 1901), was obsessed by the possibility of contamination. Here he issued a warning about the struggle to protect bloodlines and propagate whiteness in Queensland:

When I visited the northern part of Queensland recently, I was alarmed not only at the great number of aliens who are making inroads in all trades, but who are intermingling with the European races there. One only has to visit the public schools to see that the very contamination and deterioration that my honourable friend speaks of is actually taking place in Queensland to an alarming extent ... We have something like 800,000,000 Chinese and Japanese, within easy distance of Australia, from whom we have to fear contamination.³⁸

Associated with this notion of contamination was the prospect of an Asiatic invasion. Within the context of the debate, invasion most often referred to uncontrolled settlement of Asians or the domination of the Chinese in local trading and agricultural sectors, rather than any planned military offensive.³⁹

Such concerns over blood contamination manifest in an anxiety about miscegenation and the possibility of a multiracial or mixed-race future. Labour's Member for Kennedy, Charles McDonald, imagined the prospect of a region he ineloquently identifies as—*Mongrelia*. Echoing Herbert Spencer, McDonald suggested that the 'former' white man has become piebald:

Through the promiscuous intercourse with aboriginal women, a hybrid race is being established in that fair corner of the continent, such as the world has never before witnessed. To describe some of the children to be seen in the Broome district would utterly puzzle the cleverest ethnologist. The Malay, Japanese, Philipino have crossed with blacks. The union of **former** white men [emphasis added] and aboriginal women have produced half-castes, who in turn have bred from Chinese, Malays and Manillamen. Half-castes may have crossed with Quadroons, or Octoroons, and so the mixing up of the nationalities and hybrids continues until 'Mongrelia' is literally the

37. Chris Watson, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4633.

38. Samuel Mauger, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4631.

39. See, for example, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4631; 12 September 1901, p. 4804; 26 September 1901, p. 5239.

name that should be applied to the region. This rising generation inherits all the vices and physical infirmities of the Eastern coolie, who at best is a low type of humanity.⁴⁰

McDonald's comments reveal the way in which the anxiety attached to attempting to control sexual relations between Aboriginal women and members of other ethnic groups was related to a fear of racial devolution. McDonald's account of the degradation of the white man in Broome or 'Mongrelia', which is buttressed by contagionist notions of social pathology, provides a chilling example of the way in which miscegenation was considered to result in the contamination, the deterioration, the dilution and ultimately the death of whiteness.⁴¹ McDonald's comments offer an example of how, to borrow his racist nomenclature, the Half-caste, the Quadroon and the Octoroon become feared and despised because they destabilise fixed racial identity.



4. Livingstone Hopkins, 'Piebald Possibilities—a little Australian Christmas family party of the future', *Bulletin*, 13 December 1902. Interracial sexuality is considered to threaten the borders of white identity and mix-raced people become the embodiment of that threat. Ironically, many speakers to the debate fail to comprehend the way the objectification and marginalisation of non-white people resulted in forcing them together.

40. Charles McDonald reading an extract from the *Melbourne Age*, 16 August 1899, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 October 1901, p. 5379. In 1892 Herbert Spencer claimed, 'It is not at the root a question of social philosophy; it is at root a question of biology. There is abundant proof alike furnished by the intermarriages of human races and the interbreeding of animals, that when varieties mingle, diverge beyond a certain slight degree, the result is inevitably a bad one in the long run'. As quoted in Richard Hall, *Black Armband Days: Truth from the Dark Side of Australia's Past*, Vintage, Milsons Point, 1988, p. 120.

41. The Protectionist Member for Darling Downs, Littleton Ernest Groom, compares the coloured races to rapidly multiplying pests like rabbits and prickly pear. L. E. Groom, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 September 1901, p. 5173.

The Member for Maranoa, James Page, quoting from an unidentified newspaper claimed that an irreversible racial contamination had taken place in Townsville. In so doing, he introduced the brutal metaphor of bleaching:

Mr. Mauger went into the Cathedral in Townsville on a Sunday, and met 13 half-castes and no others. The first man the speculator met in Townsville was a Chinese, the second was a Chinese. 'I went a little further,' he said, 'and met a kanaka, then three yellowy-brown children passed me at a trot. Then came a Jap, with a black wife, and two children of a dirty drab colour. An aboriginal was standing at the next corner begging, and a half-caste Chinese girl gave him a penny. I had counted sixteen different complexions within the space of three blocks. At the hotel there were white people of course, and we talked the matter over. To one man I ventured to express the opinion that we would have a white Australia in twelve months. 'May-be you'll have it white enough down south' he said, 'but it'll take a thousand years to bleach Townsville.'⁴²

Bleaching is of course suggestive of removing or striping away colour—or even ethnic cleansing. Attendant to the idea of bleaching is the eugenicist imperative of 'breeding-up', halting or reversing degeneration through the inter-generational introduction of whiteness and the dilution and elimination of colour. It is here that we perceive the merging of the project of Federation governance and Victorian racial theory as we observe the way the debate was framed around notions of social evolutionary progression and the eugenicists imperative to halt or reverse degeneration.

Page's apocalyptic vision was accompanied by other alchemistic metaphors. Sounding like a concerned apothecary, Labour Senator for Queensland, James Stewart warned:

With regard to race, we cannot mix with them. There is no natural affinity between them and us. If an attempt were made to confine them and us within one bottle, so to speak, one or the other must be precipitated to the bottom. A compact and homogeneous community cannot be formed out of such heterogeneous compounds.⁴³

42. James Page, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 October 1901, p. 5378.

43. James Stewart, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 15 November 1901, p. 7331.



5. Parsons' Starch: A White Australian—Parson Bros. & Co Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1903⁴⁴

Matters of race and colour had become embedded in the national consciousness and were indispensable to the formation of a modern Australian identity. Whiteness became a bio-medical, legislative, commercial and even a popular cultural category. Here are examples of two agents of whiteness that emerged in the post-Federation period—each aspiring to the national ideal. In the first instance we observe the conflation of discourses of hygiene (cleanliness) and race in the commercial sphere, as the gendered female subject becomes critical to this process of whitening. In the second we find a 'game' through which 'white men' seek to remove 'coloured men' from Australia. The whitening of Australia became performed and embodied in recreational activity as players attempted to 'Get the Coloured Men Out and the White Men In'. These examples testify to the formation and production of white subjectivity through commercial and recreational form.

44. *Parsons' Starch: A White Australian* is available at the Macquarie University Australian History Museum. It also appears in Mimmo Cozzolino and Fysh Rutherford's *Symbols of Australia*.



6. The White Australia Game 1914, National Archives of Australia: A 1336, 3368 (Author: Francis James Shaw)

Alternative Voices

While the deliberately discriminatory policy had near unanimous parliamentary support, there were parliamentarians who dissented from the majority position. Two Members of the House of Representatives expressed strong opposition to the Immigration Restriction Bill: the Member for Parkes, Arthur Bruce Smith of the Free Trade Party, and the Member for Tasmania, Donald Cameron, also of the Free Trade Party. Bruce Smith opened his address to the Parliament with the following caveat: 'I am very much afraid that the remarks I intend to make will seem exceedingly heterodox after the very continuous flow of advocacy for a white Australia ... [and the]

determination to keep Australia white and pure ...'⁴⁵ In identifying some of the 'glib phrases' that have been used throughout the debate—'white and pure', 'The equality of man' (as used by Edmund Barton), 'too beastly virtuous'—Smith suggested that 'the legislation is founded upon hysteria',⁴⁶ before offering the following assessment of the debate:

The public have been told over and over again that the purity and whiteness of the Australian Commonwealth is being endangered by the incursion of these hordes of Asiatics. I say that it is a fable; that it is altogether a fairy story.⁴⁷

However, while Smith favoured the admission of 'educated aliens' he certainly did not wish to see Australia populated by uneducated coloured labour.

Donald Cameron offered historical context for his rationale of 'fair play':

I say without fear of contradiction that no race on the face of this earth has been treated in a more shameful manner than have the Chinese. They are about the most conservative race in the world, and up to late years they had no desire whatever for any intercourse with what they called the outer barbarians, but they were forced at the point of the bayonet to admit Englishmen and other Europeans into China. Now if we compel them to admit our people into their land, why in the name of justice should we refuse to receive them here? ... Therefore I say most empathetically that we are responsible to a certain extent for forcing an entrance into China, and that we should, in a spirit of fair play, allow the Chinese to come into Australia in reasonable numbers.⁴⁸

Cameron was correct to point out that the Chinese passage to Australia had been facilitated by the European occupation of China. Once Chinese ports fell under the control of various European powers, as a result of the Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60), more Chinese would leave China's shores than ever before. It is also worth noting that in the months prior to Federation, the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia had supplied personnel to support the British and European nations to suppress the Boxer rebellion—an anti-imperial uprising in China.

45. Bruce Smith, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 September 1901, p. 5153.

46. Bruce Smith, op. cit., pp. 5153, 5154, and 5158.

47. Bruce Smith, op. cit., p. 5160.

48. Donald Cameron, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 September 1901, p. 4839.

Dictation Test

Under the Immigration Restriction Bill, the mechanism intended to restrict immigration of undesirable persons was the dictation test. The test was to be administered by Customs officers at ports across Australia. While some parliamentarians favoured a test in the English language, including Prime Minister Barton, the British were concerned that such a test would offend non-English speaking British subjects. Others in the House argued that such a test would also offend non-English speaking Europeans and affect the small emigration from Europe.⁴⁹ Advocates of absolute exclusion opposed an education or dictation test. One of the most strident critics of the test, George Reid, spoke repeatedly about the hypocrisy of a test which permitted a Customs officer to apply a test, in any European language, to any immigrant he considers undesirable or distasteful. Reid claimed, 'It is bad enough even for some of us to have to write our own language from dictation, but if we were asked to put into French on the spur of the moment some English read by a Customs officer, I think we should all have to be expatriated.'⁵⁰ Reid would later describe it as 'a test which will reflect ignominy and discredit upon Australian legislation'.⁵¹ Giving consideration to Britain's multi-racial Empire, British Colonial Secretary Chamberlain recommended that Australia adopt the type of European language test that was in operation in the British colony of Natal. While there was intense debate over whether the test should be applied in English, and only in English, or in a variety of European languages, in order to appease the British, the Parliament adopted a similar Natal-type test that had been previously used in Western Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Labour called for absolute exclusion and Chris Watson moved an (ultimately unsuccessful) amendment which sought the exclusion of 'any person who is an Aboriginal native of Asia, Africa or the islands thereof'. Watson's opposition to the test was based on the belief that the more educated an Oriental the greater threat he became:

With the Oriental, as a rule, the more he is educated the worse man he is likely to be from our point of view. The more educated, the more cunning he becomes, and the more able, with his peculiar ideas of social and business morality, to cope with the

49. See, for example, Senator James Stewart, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 15 November 1901, pp. 7331–7332.

50. George Reid, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 September 1901, p. 5168.

51. George Reid, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 October 1901, p. 5812.

people here. I do not think there is any advantage in restricting the admission of coloured people to those who are educated; and, in any case, I contend that the number which will filter through under the Government's proposal will still be sufficiently large to constitute a great menace to the well-being of the people as a whole.⁵²

This sentiment was echoed by King O'Malley who claimed the educated Chinaman 'the very worst man we can have in the community'.⁵³

While the test could theoretically be given to any person arriving in Australia, in practice it was administered selectively and applied to those deemed 'unwanted or undesirable': the 'idiot or insane person', the ill, the criminal, the deviant and the coloured. The test was, of course, a ruse and various Australian governments employed it to conceal their real motivation for excluding 'coloured undesirables' who inevitably failed a test which could be delivered in any number of European languages. Section 3(a) of the *Immigration Restriction Act* reads:

Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in a European language directed by the officer.

The test would be no less than fifty words, and the passage chosen could often be difficult and obscure, so that even if the test was given in English, a person was likely to fail. An example of a test given in Western Australia on 1 May 1908 reveals how arcane, elliptical and impenetrable the test could be:

Very many considerations lead to the conclusion that life began on sea, first as single cells, then as groups of cells held together by a secretion of mucilage, then as filament and tissues. For a very long time low-grade marine organisms are simply hollow cylinders, through which salt water streams.⁵⁴

Natural phenomena, business affairs, design of sea craft, book-keeping practices and animal behaviours were popular sources for content. Here is an example from August 1926:

52. Chris Watson, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4636.

53. King O'Malley, 'Immigration Restriction Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 September 1901, p. 4639.

54. Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1923, p. 126.

The butcher bird is known to all. He is a robber and the chief of feathered ruffians. He usually has a stronghold in the glade in the bush, which for him is home during at least two or three months of the year, whence he sallies forth over the surrounding country plundering and pillaging.⁵⁵

The Dictation Test was administered 805 times in 1902–03 with 46 candidates passing the test and 554 times in 1904–09 with only six people successful. After 1909 no person passed the dictation test.⁵⁶ While the numbers of those who sat the test is relatively low, the test clearly had a deterrent effect. Applicants became fewer as the nature of the test became more widely known. Its mere existence kept uneducated classes from attempting it. The test was ultimately abolished by the Commonwealth *Migration Act 1958*.⁵⁷

Chinese residents who wished to travel abroad could gain exemption from the test by applying for a Certificate of Domicile. This Certificate was required to ensure that a shipping company would give passage to a Chinese returning to Australia. The Act reads:

Anyone who is domiciled in the Commonwealth, and is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, and who desires on his return to be excepted from the Act under

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55. National Archives of Australia, Test Passages: Immigration Act 1901–33, A1, 1935/704.
56. Making Multicultural Australia for the 21st Century, <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/hotwords/hottext.php?id=78> (accessed 25 May 2007).
57. Comparisons have recently been made between the dictation test and today's Australian Citizenship Test. However, the two tests have different objectives: the dictation test was employed to limit the entry of non-Europeans into Australia, whereas the Citizenship Test seeks to achieve civic integration through testing an individual's English language skills and understanding of Australian 'values'. Nevertheless, in spite of this distinction there is at least a perception of a historical link. *The Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs into Citizenship Testing* claims: 'This test might also suffer from historical perceptions of previous practice in immigration during the "White Australia" era', (*Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Act 2007* [Provisions], p. 14). The Dissenting Report of the Australian Greens also identifies this historical parallel suggesting that the people of Australia 'have had to stand up for a vision of Australia based on openness and generosity—not one based on fear and a closed door' (*Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Act 2007* [Provisions], p. 61). The effect of the two pieces of legislation might also be dissimilar. For while the *Immigration Restriction Act* was successful policy in its (albeit brutal) capacity to restrict coloured immigration, the intended citizenship test is unlikely to become an effective instrument for instilling Australian 'values'.

paragraph (a), subsection 3 thereof (that is the test), may apply to the Collector of Customs at the port of departure for a certificate of domicile.

After Federation these certificates were only given to Chinese who owned property in Australia and while the issue of certificates allowing for readmission increased after 1903, as A. T. Yarwood suggests, every encouragement was given to the Chinese to visit China ‘in the hope that they would be tempted to remain’.⁵⁸

In the fifty years following the introduction of the *Immigration Restriction Act* the numbers of Chinese living in Australia reduced substantially, from 32,700 in 1901 to 12,100 in 1947.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Federation was a moment of self-determination which presented the new nation with a unique opportunity to reflect upon matters of identity, citizenship and nationhood. In its attempt to construct the ‘statutory armour’ that would keep the nation white, the first Parliament of Australia drew upon this opportunity—this moment of sovereignty—to construct deliberately discriminatory and racially exclusive legislation. As the *White Australia Game* of 1914 suggests, the *Immigration Restriction Act* announced that it was now time to—‘Get the Coloured Men Out and the White Men In’. Yet, for a white nation on the edge of Asia, surrounded by seas of yellow (as depicted in the *White Australia Game*), the challenge of building a snowy white Australia had only just begun.

In the observations of the Federation celebrations that were reported in the *Argus* on 8 May 1901, we find that the public image of the Chinese became transfigured by their participation in the Federation parade. For the duration of the parade citizens, who were typically separated by race and class, were able to partake in new kinds of social interaction. This enabled the Chinese to escape from the racist objectifications that often shadowed them, allowing them to demonstrate a different type of civic identity—an identity which challenged the way they were represented in the nationalist press and in the parliamentary debate. Indeed, with a people brimful with optimism, and guided by nationalist idealism, such a moment hinted at the possibility of a more tolerant, more inclusive—even multi-racial—national future.

58. A. T. Yarwood and M. J. Knowing, *Race Relations in Australia: A History*, Methuen, Sydney, 1982, p. 238.



7. Wong Ah See's Certificate of Domicile, National Archives of Australia (Queensland): J2482, 1903/163. Certificates of Domicile included the recipient's biographical data (physical description, dates of arrival and departure and names and addresses of references in Australia), a left hand impression, and a photograph of the full face and profile. Certificates of Domicile were issued by the Collector of Customs in each State or port of departure and hand prints were used by Customs officials to identify Chinese residents of Australia returning from overseas.

A native of Canton, Wong Ah See had lived in Townsville since 1895. Wong was an unmarried gardener who owned a 1/3 share in a garden at Mundingburra, valued at £150. Wong departed Australia on the *Taiyuan* for Hong Kong on 23 November 1903.

The passivity of the regulated non-citizen contrasts the energy exhibited by the Chinese during the Federation celebrations. Certificates of Domicile testify to the elaborate system of registration, compliance and surveillance that shadowed the Chinese in the post-Federation period.

59. 1911: 25,800; 1921: 20,800; 1933: 14,000; see Arthur Huck, *The Chinese in Australia*, Melbourne, Longmans, 1968, p. 5.

C18
9333 Fee paid No. 4726

Book No. 246

Form No. 21. **COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.** No. 091
DUPLICATE. *Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, **WILLIAM HENRY BARKLEY** the Collector of Customs for the State of **NEW SOUTH WALES** in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that *Choy Yee* hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of **THREE YEARS** from this date.

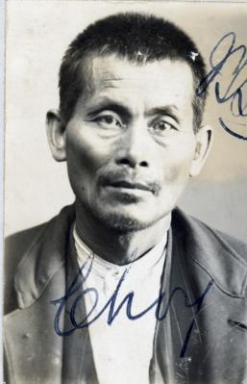
Date *30 Decr 1918* *W. H. Barkley*
per Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION

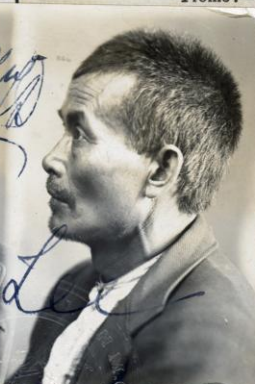
Nationality *Chinese* Birthplace *Canton*
 Age *50 years* Complexion *Dark*
 Height *5ft 6 in approx* Hair *Dark*
 Build *Medium* Eyes *Brown*
 Particular marks *mole left side upper lip*

(For impression of hand, see back of this document)

PHOTOGRAPHS.



Full Face



Profile :-

Date of departure *31. 12. 18* Port of Embarkation *Sydney*
 Ship *Changsha* Destination *China*
 Date of return *29/9/21* Ship *Victoria*
 Port *Moony* *Post Road*

Customs Officers.

4.214/8.17.—0.2005.

8. Choy Yee's Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test, National Archives of Australia (Sydney): ST84/1, 1918/246/91. In the decade after Federation the legislation was amended to contain provisions to admit particular categories of desirable coloured labour to Australia on a non-permanent basis. A native of Canton, Choy Yee departed Sydney for China on the *Changsha* on 31 December 1918; he was temporally exempted from the dictation test providing he returned to Australia within three years.

Chapter Two: *Facing Asia: Changing Parliamentary Attitudes towards China 1934–1989*

In the previous chapter it was observed how Australia's Federation identity was considered to be indivisibly British; Australia was imagined as a permanent and prosperous home for a white race and a nation which would benefit from the best of British culture and tradition. Australia's physical distance from Britain, and corresponding contiguity with Asia, gave added impetus to this identification. Federation parliamentarians considered Australia to have little in common with Asia and believed that Australia's future prosperity would be realised through its bond to Europe and not through its proximity to Asia. By contrast, this chapter documents the critical role that China played in transforming parliamentary attitudes towards Asia throughout the twentieth century. It begins by examining an important precursor to regional engagement: Australia's first diplomatic mission to Asia—the Australian Eastern Mission of 1934. An analysis of this landmark event is followed by a critique of parliamentary responses to the changes that occurred across Asia in the post-war years. The chapter then concludes by examining the development of the Australia–China relationship in the post-recognition years (1972–1989). In examining these three distinct periods, the chapter reveals how a self-conscious nation, which was primarily committed to pursuing British imperial interests, developed into a nation capable of making an independent assessment of its economic and strategic interests. The chapter will tell the story of how a nation, having once turned its back on Asia and its people, emerged to consider Asia critical to its future.

The Australian Eastern Mission 1934

In *Australian Foreign Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (1998) Derek McDougall suggests that in the post-Federation period Australia had little control over its international affairs:

‘Australia’ as a political entity came into existence in 1901 following the enactment of the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* by the British Parliament in 1900. Although Section 51 (xxix) of the Constitution gave the Parliament of the Commonwealth power over ‘External affairs’, this meant essentially relations between Australia and the United Kingdom. Foreign policy remained under the control of Britain since it was Britain that acted on behalf of the British Empire, and Australia was a self-governing country within the British Empire. When Australia had foreign policy concerns these were normally expressed by bringing the matter to the attention of the government in London ... As far as Australia's independent status

was concerned, the passage of the Statute of Westminster by the British Parliament in 1931 was in effect a proclamation of Dominion independence, but Australia was slow to take advantage of the new situation. The Australian Parliament only ratified the Statute of Westminster in 1942, and then largely for technical reasons to do with wartime conditions, rather than as an ‘act of independence.’¹

The fact that Australia did not choose to exercise its right to Dominion independence until 1942 might suggest that Australian policy makers were largely satisfied with the arrangements under which its international affairs were managed. Australian interests were largely considered an extension of British interests and it seemed unnecessary for Australia to duplicate the administrative structures required to manage its own international relations. However here, in examining the activities of the Australian Eastern Mission of 1934, this chapter argues that Australia was more proactive in its foreign relations than this line of argument would suggest. The Australian Eastern Mission marked a turning point in the history of Australia’s external relations where a more self-confident and assertive nation began to distinguish Australian from British interests.²

During April–May 1934, the Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, J. G. Latham, led Australia’s first mission of a diplomatic character to foreign countries. Latham travelled to seven countries/colonial territories including: the Dutch East Indies, Singapore and Malaya, French Indochina, Hong Kong, China, Japan and the Philippines.³ The declared purpose of the Mission was to develop ‘friendly relations’ with the region. Because Australia did not have diplomatic representation in Southeast Asia, the Mission was undertaken with the assistance and support of British diplomatic officials.⁴ Latham travelled with an Advisor from the

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1. Derek McDougall, *Australian Foreign Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*, Longman, Melbourne 1998, p. 20.
 2. Prime Minister Stanley Bruce appointed R. G. Casey as Australia’s first diplomat in 1925. Casey operated as an Australian Liaison Officer within the Foreign and Colonial Office, acting as a point of liaison for communications between Britain and Australia. Casey’s appointment did not, as such, represent the origins of an autonomous foreign policy.
 3. Latham spent twelve days in China visiting Shanghai, Nanking, Tientsin, Peiping and Canton. He also spent twelve days in Japan, ten days in the Dutch East Indies, three days in French Indochina and two days in each Hong Kong and the Philippines.
 4. The Eastern Mission was approved by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Shannon L. Smith claims that the British had given ‘reluctant approval’ for the Mission, see David Goldsworthy (ed.), *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia, Volume 1: 1901 to the 1970s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2001, p. 72.

Attorney-General's Department (Eric Lloyd), an Information Officer from the Department of Trade and Customs (Arthur Moore), a Secretary (Henry Standish), an Assistant Secretary (John Ferguson), and a Stenographer (Marjory Grosvenor). Latham was also accompanied by his wife and daughter.

In reporting on the activities of the Mission to the House of Representatives on 6 July 1934, Latham claimed that the Eastern Mission was intended as 'a Mission of friendship to our neighbours'.⁵ This message was reiterated in each country Latham visited, 'This is not the visit of a trade delegation; it is a complimentary call for the purposes of demonstrating our goodwill and friendship'.⁶ While the Eastern Mission was unique in the history of Australia's external relations, Latham's speech to the House could also be considered as operating as an originating point for a different type of Australian thinking about Asia:

Our next nearest neighbours (after New Zealand), if one may use the phrase, are to be found in those countries which make up what is known as the Far East. I am glad that we are essentially a European community, and are not confronted with the problems that arise from mixed races in other parts of the world. We have adopted European phrases and the ideas that correspond to them. From our childhood we have been accustomed to read, think, and speak of the 'Far East'. It is the Far East to Europe, to the old centres of civilisation, but we must realise that it is the 'Near East' to Australia ... It is inevitable that the relations between Australia and the Near East will become closer and more intimate as the years pass. Therefore, it is important that we should endeavour to develop and improve our relations with our near neighbours, whose fortunes are so important to us, not only in economic matters, but also in relation to the vital issues of peace and war.⁷

Latham communicates a respect for Empire or the old centres of civilisation, and maintains a commitment to the policies of white Australia. He also attempts to recast Asia as Australia's 'Near East', a Near East which is critical to Australia's economic and strategic future. In seeking to re-situate Asia in the parliamentary imagination, he communicates a powerfully symbolic message—Australia needed to replace British geographic descriptors with terms reflecting Australian realities. Over the course of the Mission, Latham made dozens of speeches in which he reiterated that while Australia

5. J. G. Latham, 'Australian Eastern Mission: Report', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 July 1934, p. 329.

6. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 26.

7. J. G. Latham, 'Australian Eastern Mission: Report', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 July 1934, p. 328.

was a proud member of the British Empire, Australia was also ‘a nation of the Eastern hemisphere’.⁸ The *Peiping & Tientsin Times* reported:

The declared purpose of his mission is to repair the rather curious omission so far of any official visit from the Commonwealth to these neighbouring countries ... From this point of view it reflects the livelier interest taken of late by the Commonwealth in its external relations.⁹

Yet for all Latham’s declarations of friendship there is evidence to suggest that the Mission was as much about trade as goodwill. Along with the description of the activities of the Mission that were presented to Parliament, Latham produced a series of companion documents—secret Cabinet reports which examined the opportunities for expanding Australia’s trade to Asia.¹⁰ These reports reveal that Latham had actively sought information about trading opportunities across Asia, entering into frequent and detailed discussions with prime ministers, foreign ministers, premiers and governors about Australia’s trading and commercial interests, custom duties and tariffs. Latham also canvassed the possibility of establishing Australian trade commissioners across Asia. Latham’s personal papers, held at the National Library of Australia, also reveal that the Mission had been motivated by two reports that had emerged as a strategic response to the Great Depression: Herbert Gepp’s *Report on Trade between Australia and the Far East* (1932) and A. C. V. Melbourne’s *Report on Australian Intercourse with Japan and China* (1932). Both reports recommended that an official economic mission visit China and Japan to determine the opportunities for increasing Australian trade to the ‘Far East’ and both Gepp and Melbourne recommended the appointment of Australian trade representatives across the region.¹¹

While Australia’s turn to Asia was motivated by economic and commercial imperatives, there are a number of reasons why Latham intended the Mission be interpreted as one of friendship and goodwill. Latham, who had clearly reflected on the

8. Latham made this comment during a radio broadcast in Japan, J. G. Latham, ‘The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham’, *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 26.

9. ‘An Australian Argosy’, *Peiping & Tientsin Times*, 3 May 1934, as it appears in Sir John Latham Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 1009, Series 58, Box 96.

10. National Archives of Australia, A981, FAR 5 PART 16, ‘Far East. Australian Eastern Mission 1934’. The secret report of the Eastern Mission, dated 30 July 1934, can also be found in the papers of Sir Earl Page, National Library of Australia, MS 1633.

11. Sir John Latham Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 1009, Series 58, Box 96.

way his visits would be received, considered it important that matters of friendship be seen to precede matters of trade. Latham made this clear in his speech to the House:

At the outset it was difficult for some to understand that any object would be served by sending a Mission of friendship to our neighbours. Hitherto, the general intercourse of Australia with these countries has been almost purely economic in character ... The Western mind does not always realize that in the East there are many people who appreciate a compliment even more highly than a bargain, and who see a genuine significance in a sincere act of courtesy.¹²

Beyond the diplomatic value that was attached to a *goodwill* Mission, Latham had another motivation for representing the tour in these terms. From 1932, Australia was bound by the imperial preferences system (later to become the Commonwealth preferences system). The British had established the imperial preferences system with Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and India following the Great Depression, at a time when many nations had imposed protective tariffs for their domestic industries. Through inventing a system of preferential trade duties, signatory countries could increase intra-empire trade and Britain, through securing trade preferences, could maintain access to goods from overseas markets. Because of these various preference deals, which became known as the Ottawa Agreement, Australia could only enter into limited negotiations with trading partners outside the British imperial system—in this instance, the Dutch (East-Indies), the French (Indo-China), the Chinese and the Japanese.

In his speech to Parliament Latham restated Australia's commitment to intra-empire trade, claiming that Australia's relations with Great Britain were 'closer than they have ever been'. He also suggested that 'a more urgent effort is being made to maintain and extend trade between Australia and other parts of the Empire', before gesturing towards a hierarchy of interests:

As part of the British Empire we then naturally and properly consider the interests of the British Empire and its various parts. We are **then** [emphasis added] prepared to make trade arrangements with the countries which trade generously with ourselves.¹³

12. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 3.

13. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission: Report', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 July and 1934, p. 327, p. 331 and J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 26.

What is less clear, however, is whether the Eastern Mission was deliberately testing the implications of the Ottawa Agreement.

In his public statements, Latham suggested that the Mission served both imperial and Australian interests; he claimed that in all his deliberations he ‘frankly put the Australian point of view’, but he was also mindful to speak of the interests of the British Empire.¹⁴ However, in the secret reports prepared for Cabinet, Latham almost exclusively identified Australian interests. Together these two positions suggest that the Eastern Mission of 1934 represented a transitional moment for Australia. While the Great Depression had prompted Australian policy makers to look towards Asia, and think more independently about Australia’s external affairs, Australia was still operating under the administrative umbrella of the British Empire. The transitional nature of the moment was also reflected in the qualified position Latham took on Australian representation in Asia. Latham suggested that the desirability of appointing trade commissioners in ‘Eastern countries’ was ‘almost beyond question’, but he did not see any need for recommending the appointment of Australian diplomats to the region.¹⁵ When in Shanghai, Latham offered the following statement about *diplomatic* representation:

As far as diplomatic representation is concerned Great Britain has provided for us, and at present I cannot see that any advantage would be gained by separate representation. I would stress however that Australia is a self governing country and, as such, could appoint diplomatic representatives as she so desired. But both the interests of my country and our natural loyalty to Great Britain makes it desirable that there should be unity in matters of major importance.¹⁶

Nevertheless, Latham remained a strong advocate for establishing trade representation across Asia, arguing that British diplomatic and consular representatives lacked the knowledge of Australia (and quite possibly the impetus) to adequately represent Australian trading interests.¹⁷

14. J. G. Latham, ‘The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham’, *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 3.

15. J. G. Latham, ‘Australian Eastern Mission: Report’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 6 July 1934, p. 333.

16. ‘Exchange of Australian and Chinese professors is likely in the future’, *Shanghai Times*, 7 May 1934, p. 4.

17. He also wanted representatives on the ground to manage any misinformation about Australia, for example, questions he encountered about Australia’s coastline being fortified by 16-inch guns.

Over the course of the Mission a number of representations were made to Latham about the administration of the *Immigration Restriction Act*. Latham's report does not attach much significance to these representations and he implies that they were distractions from more important discussions. Each time the policy of immigration restriction was raised, Latham sought to justify Australia's position by attempting to identify a protectionist policy employed by the government raising the objection.¹⁸ Because Latham downplayed the significance of these discussions, newspaper reports better illustrate the attention that was, in actual fact, accorded to the matter. Reports in the *Sydney Morning Herald* suggest that discussions over the *Immigration Restriction Act* dominated the meeting with Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Ching-wei. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs 'eagerly asked many questions about immigration restriction' before suggesting:

He [Wang Ching-wei] had hoped that the Australian Government would find means to allow admission to the Commonwealth of particular individuals, such as the sons and other close relatives of established Chinese merchants in Australia, who were dying there or past the age of continuing business and wished their heirs to carry on [sic] their enterprises.¹⁹

It is further reported that Latham suggested to the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs that he was prepared to make sympathetic representations to Cabinet, noting that immigration concessions might assist in the development of trade with China.²⁰

In his public statements Latham noted that the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs had concerns about immigration restriction; however, he failed to record them. Rather, he suggested that the Chinese and the Japanese had objections to the administration—and not the *principle* of the policy—adding that the Minister's concerns had been previously raised by the Chinese Consul-General and 'were under the consideration of

18. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 3.

19. F. M. Cutlack, 'Australian Mission: Strange Scenes in China', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 1934, p. 9. The significance of the Mission is further underscored by the fact that it was accompanied by two Australia journalists, Frank Murray of the *Sydney Sun* and F. M. Cutlack from the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

20. F. M. Cutlack, 'Australian Mission: Strange Scenes in China', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 1934, p. 9 and 'Our Restrictions on Asiatics: Exemptions Sought in Certain Cases', *Argus*, 3 May 1934, p. 12. The Japanese would also raise their concerns about immigration policy requesting that the restrictions placed on Japanese labourers be lifted; see National Archives of Australia, A981, FAR 5 PART 16, 'Far East. Australian Eastern Mission 1934'.

the Cabinet'.²¹ Latham also claimed that he advised the Minister that the 'rigidity in administration had been the outcome of attempted deception by Chinese'.²² While Latham, rather self-consciously, looked to avoid the subject of immigration restriction when negotiating with foreign counterparts, it was clear that immigration restriction continued to take priority over all other policy considerations—Australia's commercial turn to Asia did not alter the commitment to a white Australia.

The Mission presented an opportunity for the Chinese and Japanese governments to make direct representations to Australia about immigration restriction and provided early evidence that Asian nations did not consider matters of immigration and trade as isolated from one another. In spite of his public protestations, it would appear that Latham was aware that the policy of immigration restriction may have implications for Australia's engagement with new trading partners. This is reflected in his acknowledgement that immigration concessions might assist in the development of trade with China and was reinforced by the fact that his confidential reports gave more consideration to the immigration concerns expressed to him.²³

Considering the unique nature of the Mission, it is surprising that the tabling of the report to Parliament inspired little debate. The few questions that were asked about the activities of the Mission would suggest that the Parliament was slow to realise its significance. One question related to the nature and names of the titles bestowed upon Latham and the members of the delegation to Japan, another related to the total cost of the Mission, a third concerned the cost of cables made by Latham to Australia.²⁴ While it is possible that any potential debate may have been interrupted by the dissolving of Parliament on 7 August 1934, the fact that the report was not debated in the 11 sitting days available might suggest that the Parliament was yet to develop any significantly independent perspective on foreign affairs, and that parliamentarians considered matters of external affairs far removed from their legislative responsibilities. Yet the parliamentary reticence also reinforces the fact that Latham was a politician ahead of

21. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 11.

22. *ibid.*

23. National Archives of Australia, A981, FAR 5 PART 16, 'Far East. Australian Eastern Mission 1934'.

24. Senator Dunn, 'Goodwill Mission to the East', Senate, *Debates*, 11 July 1934, p. 365; Edward Ward, 'Mission to the Far East', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 4 July 1934, p. 215; Senator Rae, 'Goodwill Mission to the East', Senate, *Debates*, 24 July 1934, p. 561.

his time, a pioneer who sought to build a conceptual and practical framework that would develop Australian relations with the region. The Eastern Mission paved the way for Australian trade commissioners to be appointed in Shanghai, Tokyo and Batavia in 1935 and provided the impetus for an Australian Department of External Affairs, with a dedicated Minister, to be established in 1936.

The creation of a Department of External Affairs assisted in the development of a series of important bilateral relationships. In 1940 Australian legations were established in Washington (headed by R. G. Casey) and Tokyo (headed by J. G. Latham, and which was terminated with the outbreak of war), while in the following year (1941), Australia established full diplomatic relations with the Government of the Republic of China. Frederic Eggleston was appointed Australia's first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to China and a legation was established in the war-time capital of Chungking. Keith Waller, who served as Second Secretary at the Chungking Legation, claims the legation was established in Chungking 'partly to balance the fact that (Australia) had just opened one in Tokyo, and partly to show some support for the Chinese Government' who were at war with the Japanese.²⁵ A further motivation for establishing the legation was that it was believed that it would help to build a foundation which might be of considerable benefit to Australia in the future.²⁶

25. Keith Waller, *A Diplomatic Life: Some Memories*, Australians in Asia Series No. 6, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, Griffith University, p. 9. Throughout this period there was growing parliamentary concern over increased Japanese militarism during the Sino-Japanese War 1937-45. Numerous parliamentarians had expressed sympathy for the Chinese people, and for 'China's gallant struggle against Japanese imperialism' (Arthur Calwell, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 3 February 1943, p. 257). In the incident that earned Menzies the nickname of 'Pig Iron Bob', waterside workers at Port Kembla refused to load pig iron bound for Japan on the grounds that it was going to be utilised to manufacture weapons for use against the Chinese. Keith Waller's personal account of the conditions under which the legation was established in Chungking, found in *A Diplomatic Life: Some Memories*, makes for absorbing reading.

26. In January 1941 the Department of External Affairs presented a cabinet submission supporting the idea of establishing an Australian Minister in Chungking: 'Establishment of a Legation at a most unfavourable time and when few reciprocal material benefits can result, will probably create a profound impression on Chinese minds, and have incalculable consequences in our future relations ... To this end, it might well be regarded as a very valuable insurance premium'. As quoted in Warren G. Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston: An Intellectual in Australian Politics*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1985, p. 203.

Australia's Cold War

On 5 March 1946, while visiting the town of Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill made the speech that is often considered to have signalled the start of the Cold War. Churchill's call for the containment of the Soviet Union and the end to the communist advance popularised the term 'iron curtain'. It also suggested that the two world powers and former allies, the Soviet Union and the United States, had become polarised. With the iron curtain drawn, communism and anti-communism became the two dominant ideologies of the post-war era. A few years after the 1946 Missouri speech, Churchill's iron curtain metaphor was reshaped to include the *spread* of communism to Asia. By the time Mao Zedong stood at the Gate of Celestial Peace overlooking Tiananmen Square and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China, on 1 October 1949, a 'bamboo curtain' was said to have emerged, dividing communist from non-communist Asia.

This section of the chapter examines the Australian Parliament's reaction to the events which signalled the start of the Cold War across Asia. It first explores parliamentary attitudes to the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the question of recognition. It then examines two critical foreign policy speeches from the early Cold War period. First it discusses Percy Spender's inaugural speech as Minister for External Affairs, made shortly after the establishment of the PRC and outlining the objectives of the Colombo Plan (9 March 1950). Secondly it considers Prime Minister Menzies' first speech to the 21st Parliament, in which he speaks about the character of the communist *menace* and signals Australia's commitment to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (5 August 1954). In documenting the Parliament's growing anxiety about the rise of Chinese communism, the discussion provides an outline of the security architecture developed to support one of the most important foreign policy commitments of the time, the policy of containing China.

Throughout 1947 and 1948 parliamentary statements about the Chinese civil war were rare. Both major parties were slow to appreciate the full implications of the war in China and were unclear how they should regard the competing forces. Towards the end of the civil war, however, there was growing anti-Nationalist sentiment in some sectors of Parliament. In December 1948, Prime Minister Chifley claimed, 'from the point of view of the allied nations, the organization in China (the Nationalists) has not been such to inspire great confidence'.²⁷ In comments more explicit in their condemnation, Labor

27. J. B. Chifley, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 2 December 1948, p. 3891.

Senator for New South Wales, Donald Grant, spoke repeatedly about the corruption and nepotism of the Chiang regime, while the Labor Member for Hoddle, Jack Cremean, referred to the 'ex-generalissimo' as a 'grafter' and 'the embodiment of the Chinese desire for squeeze'.²⁸ Labor Member for Watson, Max Falstein, stated that 'it is well to remember that the Chinese, being Orientals, have an entirely different conception of political morality from that of Western nations' and called for the Nationalists to be removed from their permanent seat at the Security Council.²⁹ Three months before the formation of the People's Republic, the Minister for External Affairs, H. V. Evatt, offered an assessment of events in China, suggesting that it was incumbent on the democracies of the world not to isolate a new communist government:

Predictions about what will happen in China are always liable, perhaps certain, to be wrong. China is a country that is able to suffer tremendous cataclysms and shocks and to recover from them and absorb them, the situation becoming, after a time, completely changed. Therefore, dogmatism about the present situation in China is, in my opinion, dangerous. It is hard to see how the present Chinese Government can prevent the Chinese Communists from extending their hold over the greater part of China within the next year ... I submit for consideration the view that it would be tragic if, through any failure or neglect on the part of the democracies towards the Chinese, an honourable and long-established association with the freedom-loving peoples should be abruptly terminated. If, at this stage, we were to give the Chinese Government of the north, the Chinese Communists, any ground for thinking that they can never expect international co-operation from the West in the future, that very declaration might lead them to adopt an extreme course and to sever all their traditional contacts with the democracies ...³⁰

Evatt added that China could be a stabilising force in the region, but that if the Chinese communists were to become expansionary, a United Nations force would be likely to repel them.

It took eighteen days, or nine sitting days, after the formation of the People's Republic before China was mentioned in Parliament. The aforementioned Labor Senator for New South Wales, Donald Grant, again condemned the Nationalists, while recommending to the House that Australia recognise the new government in China:

28. Senator Grant, 'Customs Tariff Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 9 April 1948 p. 786; John Cremean, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 March 1950, p. 1182.

29. Max Falstein, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 September 1947, pp. 225–6.

30. H. V. Evatt, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 21 June 1949, p. 1222.

I believe that we shall have to recognize the Republican Government in China. That country presents an unlimited market for Australian trade. I do not believe that Mao and his followers will immediately establish a communist state. The task of restoring government that confronts them will take decades to complete. I know the topography of China. Rivers have to be harnessed, and for the general work of reconstruction China will require millions of pounds worth of capital goods, including machinery. If we are wise we shall cultivate the goodwill of the Chinese people. It is time that we realized once and for all that the domination of the Asiatic people by the white man is finished. The sooner we realize that fact the better it will be for us.³¹

Grant, who clearly foresaw opportunity attached to Australia's recognition of the People's Republic, also tried to dispel the myth of communism rising to a position of power in Australia.³² He was firmly of the belief that communism would struggle to survive when confronted with good democratic governance. Grant's comment about cultivating the goodwill of the Chinese people was the only comment made in the Parliament between 1 October 1949 and the final sitting day of the 18th Parliament on 27 October 1949.

While the federal election of December 1949 took place against the background of the developing Cold War, little attention was given to foreign policy and little concern was expressed about international communism. When Menzies argued that the Chifley Government took a soft line on communism, he was largely referring to domestic communism. Throughout the campaign, Menzies exploited fears of communist influence in the trade union movement and suggested that Chifley's plan to bring the banks under government control was essentially socialist. After eight years in office, the Labor Government would go on to be defeated at the polls, a victory which marked the start of the ALP's twenty-three years in Opposition.

On the second sitting day for the new Parliament (23 February 1950) Labor Senator for Western Australia, Donald Willesee, was the first parliamentarian to ask whether the new Government intended to recognise communist China. Senator Willesee was told to place his question on the notice paper for the Minister for External Affairs (Percy

31. Senator Grant, 'Estimates and Budget Papers 1949-50', Senate, *Debates*, 19 October 1949, p. 1561. Scottish by birth, Grant had visited China in the 1930s and was advisor to the Minister for External Affairs, H. V. Evatt.

32. The advantages of trade would later be raised by H. V. Evatt, 'I have to believe that if it were done (recognition) it would be an enormous advantage from a trading point of view ...', 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 16 March 1950, p. 919.

Spender).³³ On the following day, the Labor Member for East Sydney, Edward (Eddie) Ward, raised the question of recognition, asking the Minister for External Affairs directly if he had recently been involved in a dispute with Jawaharlal Nehru over the recognition of communist China. The Minister for External Affairs replied that he would respond to questions about recognition of China in his foreign affairs statement to the House.

Six sitting days into the new Parliament, Labor Senator for South Australia, Sidney O'Flaherty, described the communist victory in China as a victory for the common man over a corrupt and oppressive regime:

China is going through a stage of revolution because the serfs and peons of China have turned on the people who were controlling them for years ... A revolution has taken place and the people themselves have formed a government ... We should not concern ourselves with the ideologies of other nations and such things as shadows and the Iron Curtain ... The working people of the world are awakening to the fact that they can rule nations.³⁴

Labor Member for Blaxland, James Harrison, recommended aiding China as integral to any security strategy:

Our whole approach to this problem has been wrong. Having regard for the global situation, it would be much better for us to assist the starving millions of China, irrespective of the type of government they may have established in that country, and to aid Burma and other friendly nations to withstand the onrush of communism, than an attempt to build up a worthwhile military force. We should do everything possible to assist to provide the wherewithal to keep together the bodies and souls of 200,000,000 starving Chinese, rather than prepare to send another army to France or Flanders ...³⁵

33. Senator Willesee, 'China', Senate, *Debates*, 23 February, 1950, pp. 36–37; Willesee asks again on 1 March 1950, 'China', Senate, *Debates*, p. 172 and the response was that the matter will be dealt with by the Minister for External Affairs in his upcoming statement to the House.

34. Senator O'Flaherty, 'Governor-General's Speech', Senate, *Debates*, 2 March 1950, pp. 290–291.

35. E. J. Harrison, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 March 1950, p. 1064. While the Labor member for East Sydney, Edward Ward, claimed: 'Most of the teeming millions of Asia are illiterate. Does the Government imagine for a moment that communism means anything to them? They probably do not know the meaning of the word. But they know the meaning of hunger, and they know the meaning of imperialism, which has brought hunger to them', 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 March 1950, p. 1079.

The question of recognition would be used by both sides of politics for point-scoring. Evatt, now speaking from Opposition, claimed that the question of the recognition of the People's Republic of China could not be deferred indefinitely. The Leader of the Opposition (Chifley) argued that the Government 'will inevitably be compelled to recognise some government in China'.³⁶ Typically, the Government responded to such comments by suggesting that the ALP had let pass their opportunity to recognise China. To this charge, Chifley explained why the Labor Party had delayed on the question of recognition:

There can be no question about the mind of my Government with respect to the recognition of the government. Although honourable members opposite may not believe me, I say frankly that at the time I considered the subject to be of such importance that with a general election pending it should be decided by the incoming government.³⁷

Chifley may have considered the issue of recognition sufficiently important that it be given the full consideration of Parliament; however, he had clearly been concerned about the effect recognition would have on a domestic audience increasingly concerned about the communist influence in Australian unions. Prior to the December election, no non-communist country had recognised China and it was extremely unlikely that Australia would be the first. On the question of recognition, Australia would find itself wedged between the historically-grounded tendency to follow the British—who recognised the People's Republic in January 1950—and the desire to establish a China policy consistent with the United States—with whom they were about to sign the ANZUS security treaty.

Between March and June 1950, the Menzies Government made it clear that it intended to closely observe events in communist China:

... to ascertain to what degree the new regime in Peking intends to live up to international obligations in both its internal treatment of foreigners and its external non-interference in the affairs of neighbouring states. Several Opposition members have advocated early recognition of the new regime as the Government of China. The Government has no present intention of so doing.³⁸

36. J. B. Chifley, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 March 1950, p. 1174.

37. J. B. Chifley, 'Prime Ministers Conference', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 7 March 1951, p. 85.

38. Percy Spender, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 June 1950, p. 4012.

Two and a half weeks after Spender made this comment about Peking living up to its international obligations, the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel and entered the Republic of Korea. The outbreak of hostilities in Korea, which would ultimately result in Australia becoming engaged in hostilities against China, saw the Menzies government dispense with the prospect of recognition.³⁹

Up until the outbreak of the Korean War, which clearly fuelled fear about Chinese communist expansionism, the Parliament's reaction to communism was predominately influenced by domestic factors.⁴⁰ To this point, Prime Minister Menzies, who offered no early comment on the recognition of China, was almost exclusively concerned with domestic communism. Once he replaced Chifley as prime minister, one of Menzies' first actions was to introduce legislation that sought to ban the thirty-year-old Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and other organisations that the Government thought to be substantially communist.⁴¹ The Communist Party Dissolution Bill was introduced to the Parliament in April 1950 and debated for 39 sitting days between April and October 1950. It was one of the most contentious pieces of legislation to be considered by Parliament. The Bill, which was passed on 19 October 1950, sought to render the CPA and associated organisations unlawful and members of the Communist Party were to be 'declared' making them ineligible for employment in the public service, a trade union or a defence-related industry.⁴² When the High Court of Australia ruled the *Communist Party Dissolution Act 1950* unconstitutional, on 9 March 1951 (6 to 1), Menzies tried to change the constitution by putting the question of abolition to a

39. Some time later Menzies would state: 'We, the Government of Australia, did not recognize Communist China. We have never recognized it ... Communist China has promoted military activities against our own people in Korea and has dealt out death and injury to them ... I have made it clear that the recognition of red China is simply not on our agenda paper', R. G. Menzies, 'Estimates 1953-54', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 24 September 1953, p. 652.

40. In the days before the 1951 election Menzies exploited the perceived threat of international communism, rallying, 'Labour leaders must take the Australian people for fools if they think that they have not read the lessons of Korea, and the threatening intervention of Communist China', as quoted in Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes towards China*, Princeton University Press, New York, 1965, pp. 74-75.

41. The Communist Party of Australia was established in 1920, three years after the Russian revolution. Encouraged by the wartime alliance with the USSR and the defeat of fascism in Europe, the CPA reached its peak membership of 23,000 in 1945. Ten years later, however, its numbers had dwindled to 8,000, Alastair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History*, Hoover Institution Press, California, 1969, p. 107.

42. Although a 'declared' person could appeal to the High Court, the onus of proof was reversed, making it necessary for them to prove they were not a communist.

referendum. This second attempt to ban the CPA, via referendum (September 1951), was also defeated.⁴³ Following a series of allegations about espionage activity that were made by Vladimir Petrov—the Soviet intelligence officer who was granted political asylum in April 1954—the Parliament, by a unanimous vote of both Houses, passed a bill to authorise the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into Petrov’s allegations. Lasting fifteen months, the Royal Commission failed to reveal a Soviet spy network in Australia, yet was pivotal in determining the outcome of the 1954 Federal Election.⁴⁴ Five years after taking office, Menzies had failed in his pledge to make communism unlawful.

A Very Great Burden of Responsibility: Spender and the Colombo Plan

On 9 March 1950 Percy Spender gave his first foreign policy address to Parliament. Occupying twenty pages of Hansard, Spender’s speech offers a detailed outline of the new Government’s foreign policy commitments. Spender began by describing foreign policy as ‘a projection of domestic politics into world politics’ before reiterating Australia’s ‘self-evident and unchanging’ foreign policy objectives—to seek the ‘closest possible cooperation’ with nations of the Commonwealth, the United States and the United Nations.⁴⁵ The speech addressed the issue of the establishment of communist China and it represented the point at which Cold War era security concerns would begin to dominate Australia’s external relations. Beyond this, the speech offered an outline for what would later become a key instrument of Australian foreign policy,

43. There were 2,317,927 YES votes and 2,370,009 NO votes; a NO majority of less than 0.5%; New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia had NO majorities, Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (eds.), *Australia’s First Cold War 1945–1953*, Vol. 1, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, p. 133.

44. The Leader of the Opposition, H. V. Evatt, became embroiled in the controversy over communist subversion when he attempted to defend Allan Dalziel, a member of his staff who was found to have supplied information to the Soviet Embassy. For a discussion of how Menzies used the recently created Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) to identify and intimidate communists see Timothy Kendall, *Ways of Seeing China*, Chapter 4, ‘Either with Us or Against Us’, Curtin University Books/Fremantle Press, Fremantle, pp. 125–159

45. Percy Spender, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 March, 1950, p. 621.

the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan represented the moment when Asia's social well-being and national development was deemed critical to Australia's regional security.⁴⁶

Claiming that the 'centre of gravity of world affairs' had shifted to this area, Spender proceeded to offer an appraisal of Australia's changing security predicament:

We could many years ago reasonably regard ourselves as isolated from the main threats to our national security. Our security, however, has become an immediate and vital issue because changes since the war have resulted in a shifting of potential aggression from the European to the Asian area, and our traditional British Commonwealth and United States of America friends have not yet completed their adjustments to the new situation. A very great burden of responsibility rests especially on us, but also upon the other British Commonwealth countries of this area.⁴⁷

Spender's central contention was that two factors had combined to alter the geo-strategic character of Asia. China had *fallen* under the control of a government which was communist in form and indigenous nationalist movements had emerged across Southeast Asia. In outlining the possible consequences of the communist victory in China, Spender offered a scenario in which the newly established post-colonial administrations, which he believed to be experiencing varying degrees of political instability, would fall one after another to the forces of communism. Spender spoke of the possibility of the Vietminh and Ho Chi Minh taking control of Vietnam and of the implications this would have for the new states of Laos and Cambodia. Envisaging that Laos and Cambodia would be unable to offer much resistance to communism, Spender identified Thailand as the next target of communist pressure. Communist guerrilla activity in Malaya and the Philippines; the challenge of a newly independent

46. Spender also explains that the time has come when the occasional statement made by the Minister for External Affairs, 'no matter how frank and detailed', is insufficient in providing members and the people they represent with the 'continuous flow of information which is essential to an appreciation of Foreign Affairs'. Spender announces, therefore, that the Government proposes to establish a standing committee on foreign affairs which can give constant attention to issues of foreign policy. Spender claimed that the great value of the committee would lie in 'its ability to give detailed study to the great problems of the day and to pass on to the Parliament the expert knowledge which it will, in the course of time, acquire'. Percy Spender, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 March, 1950, p. 622. The Committee was formally established in 1952. Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley explain that 'because of its in camera discussions and direct subordination to the Minister for External Affairs, it was boycotted by the ALP until 1967', *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, p. 176.

47. Percy Spender, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 March, 1950, p. 623.

government of Indonesia and the ‘instrument’ of millions of Chinese scattered throughout Southeast Asia, were each considered to have rendered the region extremely vulnerable to the advance of communism.

Spender suggested that the capacity for communism to spread throughout the newly independent states had created a ‘very great burden of responsibility’ and that, because Australia has special interests in Southeast Asia, it was critical that it work with these states to help them maintain their newly won independence. In turning to the central focus of his address, Spender then provided the Parliament with the outlines of the Colombo Plan.⁴⁸ The recommendations for the plan had been drafted at a meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Colombo in January 1950. Spender explained that while the recommendations were yet to be accepted, he believed that the plan would stimulate the productive capacities of vulnerable states.⁴⁹ He argued that stabilising governments through bilateral aid, infrastructure projects and technical assistance programs, would help create the conditions of economic life under which ‘the false ideological attraction which communism excites will lose its force’.⁵⁰

Spender’s speech invoked images of falling dominos across Southeast Asia. However, while speaking of ‘the ever-increasing thrust of communism’ and ‘territorial aggrandizement’, Spender moderated his comments with statements indicating that the government does not ‘accept the inevitability of a clash between the democratic and communist way of life’. He also restated his commitment to maintaining ‘the traditional contact’ between China and the Western world.⁵¹ Spender reiterated that while ‘It is not for us to question the kind of government the Chinese people choose to live under’; the Government remains concerned that China will conduct itself in accordance with the principles of international law.⁵²

48. Otherwise referred to as the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia.

49. Despite the fact that Spender had only been appointed as Foreign Minister a fortnight before the January meeting he was one of the plan’s chief architects. Spender resigned from politics in 1951 and was appointed Australia’s second ambassador to the United States.

50. Percy Spender, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 March 1950, p. 629.

51. Percy Spender, *op. cit.*, p. 626.

52. Percy Spender, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 March 1950, p. 626. Spender raises concern about the recent treatment of United States citizens in China and China’s ‘eager recognition of rebel forces in Vietnam’.

The idea of containing the spread of communism through an economic and development assistance scheme to bolster the resistance of the vulnerable ‘free’ countries was given broad parliamentary support. There was an understanding that Australia, as a nation of the Asia-Pacific, had a clear role to play and it was agreed that the economic and social benefits of such a program would help Australia meet its strategic and geopolitical objectives. While there was occasional concern about the cost of development aid, such concerns were accompanied by statements, noting with pride, the leading role Australia was taking in ‘Pacific’ affairs.⁵³ In 1955, some four years after the introduction of the Colombo Plan, the Liberal Member for Robertson, Roger Dean, would claim:

Visitors from countries which benefit from the Colombo plan have been taken to various parts of Australia and have been entertained in the homes of the people, and by small groups and organizations of people. In that way, they have learned to know us much more easily. There is need for us to encourage greater numbers of people from South-East Asian countries to visit this country so that the flow of people across the bridge to Australia may be greater ... If it were possible for people in the countries to our near north to visit Australia, a greater number of South-East Asians would have the opportunity of seeing democracy at work in this country.⁵⁴

In Dean’s terms, the Colombo Plan had contributed to the flow of people across the bridge. This had allowed those from ‘our near north’ to see democracy at work and provided an opportunity for them to *learn to know us much more easily*. In seeking to insulate Southeast Asian nations from communism, the Colombo Plan represented the origins of Australia’s soft power diplomacy; the Menzies Government would project its foreign policy objectives and promote the values of democracy through cultural, political and educational programs.⁵⁵

53. See, for example, K. E. Beazley, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 21 March 1950, p. 978; Senator d Murray, ‘South and South-East Asia’, Senate, *Debates*, 21 June 1950, p. 4578; Edward Ward, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 27 September 1950, p. 45; H. V. Evatt, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 16 March 1950, p. 915. For statements of pride see, for example, Senator Robertson, Senate, *Debates*, 8 March 1950, p. 477.

54. Roger Dean, ‘Foreign Affairs and Defence’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 3 May 1955, p. 349.

55. The father of Australia’s first ethnically Chinese, overseas born Minister, Senator Penny Wong, was a student of the Colombo Plan. In her first speech to the Parliament Senator Wong related: ‘One thing my father always told me was this: “They can take everything away from you but they can’t take your education”. For him the opportunity to study that he was given, particularly the Colombo Plan scholarship to Australia, defined his life. It gave him opportunities he would never otherwise have had and enabled him to climb out

Because the educational scholarship programs which became integral to Australia's Colombo commitment were not intended to result in the permanent settlement of participants in Australia, the program of *seeing democracy at work* did not interfere with the objectives of white Australia. In fact, rather than representing any diminution of the policy of immigration restriction, the Colombo Plan resulted in its rearticulation. When Spender was in Jakarta, en route to the conference of Commonwealth nations at Colombo, he was asked at a press conference whether there was to be a more liberal administration of the white Australia policy, to which he replied: 'there could be no compromise upon the white Australia policy by this or any other Australian government ... No alteration of the Immigration Act is contemplated'.⁵⁶ That Spender stated that there *could* be no compromise, implied a lack of choice, or even, a state of impossibility.

However, in spite of this renewed commitment, Australia's changing security predicament had begun to alter the way some parliamentarians viewed immigration and calls were made for Australia to recruit large numbers of Europeans to help Australia defend itself. Senator Grant argued:

I emphasize that Australia is in a precarious position by reason of the fact that as a white people we are surrounded by Asiatics. Therefore, we must increase our population as quickly as possible. I believe that if we fail to increase our population to the maximum within the next twenty years we shall lose this country altogether ... It is our duty to welcome migrants and to educate them to the Australian way of life so that, should the necessity arise, they will be prepared to fight alongside us. We must get the best people of the world to migrate to this country.⁵⁷

The expression 'populate or perish' was first used by the longest-serving member of the Australian Parliament, W. M. (Billy) Hughes, before being revived after the Second World War by the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, when there was increased incentive to grow the Australian population.

In developing the metaphor which would come to govern Australia's experience of the Cold War, Spender outlines a strategy for preventing the dominos from falling across Southeast Asia, opening-up a communist path to Australia. While Spender's speech

of the poverty he experienced as a child in Malaysia. It is a large part of how I come to be here today.', 'First Speech', Senate, *Debates*, 21 August 2002, pp. 3498–9.

56. Percy Spender, 'White Australia Policy', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 February 1950, p. 54.

57. Senator Grant, 'Estimates and Budget Papers 1949–50', Senate, *Debates*, 19 October 1949, p. 1561.

offered a new metaphoric template for speaking about the Cold War, Australia's Cold War anxieties would find fuller expression in Menzies' speech of August 1954. In what follows, we can observe the way Australia's fight against communism became not just an economic, but a spiritual undertaking.

A Battle for the Spirit of Man: Menzies, SEATO and the Communist Menace

At 8:00pm on 5 August 1954, the second sitting day of the 21st Parliament, Prime Minister Menzies gave one of the most important speeches on international affairs that the Parliament had heard in years.⁵⁸ The speech identified a number of the key international events which had occurred during the interregnum and provided an outline of the new government's foreign policy commitments.⁵⁹ Fighting in Indo-China had resulted in Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese communists overtaking the French stronghold of Dien Bien Phu (7 May 1954). This had in turn led to the Geneva Conference of 21 July 1954, at which it was settled that Laos and Cambodia would remain independent and sovereign states while Vietnam would be divided allowing for communist administration in the north and non-communist administration in the south. Menzies reported to Parliament that the increased communist presence in Southeast Asia had made Australia's problems of security 'more visible and acute than before', rendering Australia, 'a democratic nation vitally at risk in these seas'.⁶⁰ Menzies' attention then turned to the political conference which had been planned to establish a 'Southeast Asia defence organization'. While Menzies did not elaborate at any great length on the character of the organisation which would become the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), or John Foster Dulles' commitment to expanding America's

58. E. G. Whitlam claimed that the government had not permitted parliamentary debate on foreign affairs for more than three years, or during the period of the 20th Parliament. Whitlam suggests that the last debate of any length on foreign affairs occurred on 10 July 1951 and occupied 2 hours 40 minutes. On 6 May 1952 a statement made by Casey was debated for 18 minutes. After noting the lack of debate on matters of foreign affairs, Whitlam advocates for the recognition of China—at a time when there was far less support than there had been—and points to the anomaly of claiming the government of Formosa as the real government of China, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 August 1954, pp. 272–276.

59. The previous Parliament was dissolved on 21 April 1954.

60. R. G. Menzies, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 August 1954, pp. 65–66.

military presence in Southeast Asia, he gestured that a multilateral organisation for collective defence would be created in order to oppose further communist gains.⁶¹

Menzies used the opportunity of the speech to distinguish between the character of democracy and the character of communism. Democracy was identified as 'the noblest system of government yet devised', because it promoted the 'significance and well-being of the individual'. Beyond this, Menzies suggested that democracy is correspondingly 'complex', for it required a citizenry with 'educated intelligence, self-discipline, a community conception, and a capacity for selection and judgement'. It is for this reason that Menzies believed that it is 'idle' to suppose that communities with 'high levels of illiteracy', 'primitive civic organisations' and 'little acquaintance with the art and science of democracy' can be readily transformed into democracies.

Menzies proceeded to highlight the differences between the two political philosophies through distinguishing the 'materialist' from the 'spiritualist' tradition:

Communists, wherever they may be grouped, are confessed and clamant materialists. The conceptions of the rights and spiritual dignity of man which inhere in the genuinely-held religions of the world, and which feed these noble aspirations which have led to democracy and national freedom, have no meaning or reality in the Communist mind. That is why Communist aggression uses cunning or bloodshed, fraud and fury, with callous indifference to all moral and spiritual considerations. The one objective is the enlargement of the boundaries of dictatorial and materialist power. All of us who live in free countries, lifted to noble issues by religious faith, will forget these grim truths at our peril ... It is desperately important that the world should see this as a moral contest; a battle for the spirit of man.⁶²

In suggesting the war had become a moral contest between the 'noble' spiritualists and the 'dictatorial' materialists, Menzies had begun to develop a political language more

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61. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty or the Manila Pact was signed on 8 September 1954. The formal institution of SEATO was established at a meeting of treaty partners in Bangkok in February 1955. The United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Pakistan, and the Philippines became the member states. The treaty committed signatories to the collective defence of one another. Labor Member for Dalley, Arthur Greenup, would later suggest, 'Events in Indo-China during the last three years have caused grave concern to Australians. That unhappy country is the gateway of South-East Asia, and the successes of the Communists at the Geneva conference opens up for Mao Tse Tung and Chou En Lai a vista of further conquests that could include Australia, possibly after the subjugation of Indonesia and New Guinea'. House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 August 1954, p. 193.
 62. R. G. Menzies, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 August 1954, p. 66.

forceful than anything he had used since the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. In claiming a spiritual dimension to ideological conflict, Menzies developed an evangelical rhetoric that spoke of ‘faith’, ‘moral revolution’ and of converting the workers chained by their communist masters, back to truth.⁶³

There was general bipartisanship expressed about the gravity of the events in Southeast Asia and both sides of politics supported Menzies’ arguments for a defence and security organisation. However, in suggesting that the Cold War was no longer a contest between two economic systems—but that it had become a war of faith—the speech became an originating point for a new political vocabulary about the threat of communism. Menzies’ speech inspired a new type of anti-communist rhetoric and an avalanche of religiosity. The Liberal Member for Bennelong, John Cramer, claimed that Menzies’ sentence about ‘the battle for the spirit of man’ was one of the most important he had spoken (and that Menzies’ address was the most important he had heard in his four and a half years as a member of the House). Cramer then drew upon Menzies’ spiritualist metaphors to claim that communism ‘takes away the soul of man and destroys his relationship with God’.⁶⁴ Menzies’ rhetorical flourishes also inspired the Country Party Member for Moore, Hugh Leslie, to identify communism as ‘something that comes from hell’:

Communism is the worst evil that the world has ever known. It will undermine Western civilization, unless it is checked, because it will take from us the things upon which our civilization is founded, such as our religion, our family life, and our belief in a Supreme Being. Communism is not a political ideology. It is something that comes from hell itself for the purpose of destroying the world, if it possibly can. This is how I regard communism, and, because it is so evil, I believe that any means are justified to scorch it out, or to make certain that it does not gain a footing here.⁶⁵

While Menzies spoke of the communists’ ‘cunning or bloodshed, fraud and fury’, others would employ tidal metaphors to describe China’s ‘descent into darkness’, the territorial ambitions of the ‘communist commandos’ and the ‘creeping, dangerous, insidious flood’ of communism throughout the world.⁶⁶ Yet it is within the climate of

63. R. G. Menzies, op. cit., p. 65.

64. John Cramer, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 August 1954, p. 203.

65. Hugh Leslie, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 August 1954, p. 277.

66. R. G. Menzies, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 August 1954, p. 66; Labor Member for Blaxland, E. J. Harrison, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 August 1954, p. 250. Liberal Member for Chisholm,

growing parliamentary hysteria that the Labor Member for Wilmot, Gilbert (Gil) Duthie, provided prescient comment on the lasting effects of European colonialism across Asia:

We sowed the wind, and we are reaping the whirlwind of communism. What have we done in Asia over the last 200 years to entitle us to claim its allegiances and co-operation in the present crisis in that vast area? For centuries we have dominated its economy. We have ruled it politically through reactionary governments ... We have exploited Asia's richest resources, not for the benefit of Asia, but for our own benefit. We have failed to lift the living standards of the Asians, we have suppressed their attempts at self-government, and we have secretly despised their colour. We have given no encouragement to education or the improvement of the standard of health. Yet now we are astonished that Asia is going Communist!⁶⁷

Menzies' speech remains one of the most significant of the early Cold War period. It did not simply generate a new political rhetoric for describing the Cold War but it was delivered on the eve of a period of significant political tumult—the ALP split. In promoting the battle against communism, as a battle for the *spirit* of man, Menzies had pitched his comments to those anti-communist Catholic voters who would soon desert the ALP for the vehemently anticommunist Democratic Labor Party (DLP). That Menzies' speech was the first of its kind to be filmed for television made the communication of this message that much easier.⁶⁸

The former Labor Member for Fremantle (1994–2007), Carmen Lawrence, testifies to the power of the anti-communist message through her memories of the early Cold War period. Recalling the way that the Parliament had inspired her childhood fear of Chinese communism, she relates her nocturnal battle with slanted-eyed communists who cut the tongues from priests and pierced the eardrums of nuns—with chopsticks:

Wilfrid Kent Hughes, claimed 'No great wisdom was needed to forecast that the guns on the Yangtze in 1949 were blowing out the lights of China and would soon throw Indo-China into darkness.', 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 August 1954, pp. 132–133.

67. Gilbert Duthie, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 August 1954, p. 279. Much of this sentiment had been expressed in a speech on 23 March 1950 in which Duthie talks about the death of imperialism and colonialism and the emergence of self-governing nations. Here, Duthie also advocates the fight against communism be conducted through Protestant and Catholic missions.

68. The speech received broad coverage in the media and extensive public debate. Labor Member for Martin, William O'Connor, 'International Affairs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 August 1954, p. 172.

One of my earliest memories is of a recurrent dream: a vivid ‘night terror’ I often had when I was about eight years old. I would wake in fright—although actually still deeply asleep—to see a large man looming in my bedroom door; a uniformed figure, complete with red-starred cap and slanted eyes, brandishing a knife. This was my childish construction of a Chinese communist, a figure our teachers taught us to fear because they tortured nuns and priests, cutting out their tongues and piercing their ear drums with chopsticks. While we were almost inured to the Blood of the Martyrs pantheon having heard the gory details of their suffering so frequently, the Chinese communist bogey was especially potent because it was contemporary and so closely linked to the political fears of the day—the ‘yellow peril’ and the ‘red menace’. These weren’t ancient stories; they were happening in our time.

That I was somewhat precociously aware of the threat from the north is testament to my father’s activism in the Liberal Party and his enthusiastic support for Menzies. We would listen to Parliament on ABC Radio and often heard the grown-ups talk politics. The anti-communist rhetoric became increasingly hysterical as the Cold War escalated. In the 1954 election campaign, Menzies’ Liberals spoke of the ‘communist conspiracy’ ... Images of maps bleeding the ‘communist menace’ from China, the Petrov Commission paranoia ... For years, I could not sleep with my back to the door lest I be stabbed by a Chinese communist.⁶⁹

Such memories reinforce the way Parliament has operated as a site, even an originating site, for shaping popular understandings of China.

The ‘Other’ China

Before examining the moment, some decades later, when Australia softened its anti-communist stance, it is worth noting two significant acts of Cold War diplomacy: the visit of a parliamentary delegation to Formosa (Taiwan) in 1956 and the establishment of an embassy in Taipei in 1966. An Australian Goodwill Mission, composed largely of federal parliamentarians, travelled to Formosa in 1956. The Mission was led by J. G. Latham and included eight federal parliamentarians (three from Opposition), one state parliamentarian, an academic and a former military officer. The Mission took place at a time when both Chinese governments were busily courting Western visitors.⁷⁰ The

69. Carmen Lawrence, *Fear and Politics*, Scribe Publications, Carlton, 2006, pp. 7–8.

70. From 1956, the mainland government had begun to invite Australian delegations to visit China. These delegations included journalists, doctors, religious leaders, scientists, academics and members of the Australia–China Society and it was hoped that participants would return to Australia to speak sympathetically about what they had observed in China. Cabinet responded to these invitations by adopting the position, as of April 1956, that ‘it was undesirable that any government official or any officer of a government instrumentality should be a member of a group visiting (PRC) China’, see National Archives of Australia, A1838, 3107/38/12/2, Part 1.

Nationalists were actively engaged in developing sympathetic ears in the West and the Goodwill Mission became part of this effort—at a time when the Australian government was attempting to restrict, even prevent, contact with communist China. While the Mission sent a strong message of support to the Nationalists, Latham sought to temper the significance of the visit claiming: ‘We did not represent any party or organisation or government. We were simply a small group of actively interested individuals’.⁷¹ Despite Latham’s declarations, the delegation had access at the highest levels, and on 9 August 1956, Latham met with President Chiang for an hour-long conference.⁷² The active diplomacy that was being exercised by the Nationalists during this period helped foster a number of sympathetic voices within the Parliament. ‘Friends of Taiwan’ included the unofficial head of the Taiwan-lobby for much of the 1950s and 1960s, Liberal Member for Chisholm, Wilfrid Kent Hughes, as well as: D. J. Killen, K. E. Beazley, W. C. Wentworth, Stan Keon (who had abandoned the ALP for the DLP) and John Gorton.⁷³

The other significant event reflecting Australian Cold War attitudes to China was the establishment of an Australian Embassy in Taipei on 11 June 1966. In his history of Australia’s Taiwan policy, Gary Klintworth claims that Australia’s decision to establish an embassy in Taiwan was based on strategic considerations that arose as a result of the alliance with the United States and Australia’s continuing fear of communist China. Yet, while the establishment of the Embassy may have been a demonstration of Australian loyalty, Klintworth argues that it proved to be of little strategic or economic benefit.⁷⁴ The establishment of an Australian Embassy in Taipei was made possible by Robert Menzies’ retirement. Menzies, who is described as having ‘harboured great personal contempt for the Kuomintang (and) strongly disapproved of Australia

71. Latham, ‘Formosa: the problem island’ in *Meanjin*, vol. 16 no. 3, Spring 1957, pp. 247–254, p. 248. J. G. Gorton, who also visited Taiwan on numerous occasions, wrote an account of the trip in *Free Spirit*, 1956.

72. Personal papers of Sir John Latham, National Library of Australia, 1009, Series 75, Box 110, Folder 13.

73. In 1955, Kent Hughes, who referred to China as the *dragon under the red bruin* (‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 August 1954, p. 134), became one of the first federal parliamentarians to visit Taiwan. During this visit Kent Hughes criticised Menzies’ Taiwan policy, which resulted in him losing his seat on the front bench. Kent Hughes had spent much of World War II as a prisoner of war on Taiwan, working in the gold mines for the Japanese.

74. See Gary Klintworth, *Australia’s Taiwan Policy 1942–1992*, Australian Foreign Policy Papers, The Australian National University, 1993, p. 45.

establishing an embassy in Taipei', retired in January 1966, allowing for the new Prime Minister, Harold Holt, to change the government's policy.⁷⁵



9. Australian parliamentary delegation with Chiang Kai-shek (1956) including 'Friends of Taiwan': J. G. Latham, W. C. Wentworth, Donald Willesee, Reginald Turnbull and John Gorton. Papers of Sir John Latham, National Library of Australia.⁷⁶

Prelude to Australia's Recognition of China

The prelude to Australia's recognition of the People's Republic was Gough Whitlam's visit to China as Leader of the Opposition in July 1971. Because of the antipathy many Australians still felt towards China, Whitlam's trip to Peking represented a substantial political risk and had the potential to derail his 1972 election chances. As the Whitlam-

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75. Gary Klintworth, *op. cit.*, p. 10. For a fuller discussion of the establishment of the Australian Embassy in Taipei see Jeremy E. Taylor, 'The unexpected embassy: establishing, maintaining and ending Australian diplomatic representation in Taipei', <http://www.soas.ac.uk/academics/centres/taiwanstudies/eats/eats2007/38481.pdf> (accessed 24 November 2007).
76. National Library of Australia, Manuscripts 1009, Series 75, Box 110, Folder 13, Item 220.

led ALP delegation met the Premier Zhou Enlai in Peking, Whitlam was lampooned in the Australian press:

Mr Whitlam has not hesitated to seek Chinese smiles of approval at the cost of Australian interests ... Examples of Mr Whitlam's servility are rife ... If Mr Whitlam thinks that this wholesale selling out of friends to gain a despot's smile is diplomacy, then Heaven protect this country if he ever directs its foreign policy.⁷⁷

Whitlam would go on to be dubbed the 'Manchurian candidate' and was accused of betraying the national interest.⁷⁸ Prime Minister McMahon, attempting to draw political capital from Whitlam's China visit, told 400 cheering Young Liberals in Melbourne: 'In no time at all, Mr Zhou had Mr Whitlam on a hook and he played him as a fisherman plays a trout'.⁷⁹

The McMahon Government continued to reassert its commitment to the policy of non-recognition. However, while so doing, it was unaware that Australia's major ally was preparing to enter secret talks with the Chinese. On 11 July 1971, while the ALP delegation was in Shanghai celebrating Whitlam's 55th birthday, US presidential adviser Henry Kissinger flew from Pakistan to Peking to commence discussions with the Chinese leadership. On 15 July President Nixon announced on national television that Kissinger had just returned from Peking where he had discussed the possibility of establishing diplomatic contact between China and the United States. This represented a substantial setback for McMahon, who only hours before, had addressed a Liberal Party National Conference in Tasmania and restated the importance of containing China. Very quickly Whitlam's trip to China had become a huge domestic political success as Prime Minister McMahon was left flatfooted, defending a position—the isolation and containment of China—which the Americans were abandoning.

77. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 1971. The Labor delegation included Mick Young—Labor Federal Secretary (who had first proposed the plan to go to China), Tom Burns—Federal President of the Labor Party, Rex Patterson—Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Graham Freudenberg—Whitlam's Press Secretary and Stephen FitzGerald—China specialist from the ANU.

78. Bob Santamaria used the expression 'Manchurian candidate', he was alluding to the novel and Hollywood film, *The Manchurian Candidate*, in which an American prisoner of war becomes 'brainwashed' by the Chinese communists during the Korean War.

79. As quoted in E. G. Whitlam: 'Sino-Australian Diplomatic Relations 1972–2002', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 323–336, 2002, pp. 329–330.

Never had an Opposition exerted so much pressure on foreign policy. When Parliament resumed in August, after the winter recess, Whitlam challenged the McMahon Government to recognise China:

It is open to any Australian Government, even the McMahon Government, to normalise relations with China. We do not have to wait until after the elections but it can only be done if the McMahon Government is willing to put our national interests above what the Prime Minister believes to be smart, short-term political ploys ...⁸⁰

However, the government remained steadfast in their criticism of Whitlam. Whitlam was criticised for bargaining away Taiwan, and for trying to buy the votes of those in Australia with wheat interests.⁸¹ He was accused of kowtowing to Chairman Mao and was parodied for his alleged obsequiousness, labelled a ‘performing monkey in Peking’ and ‘the Chinese candidate for the next Australian election’.⁸² Three months after Whitlam’s visit to China, the United Nations General Assembly decided by a two-thirds majority to recognise the People’s Republic of China. This resulted in the Republic of China being supplanted by the People’s Republic at the United Nations in October 1971.

Recognition

On 5 December 1972, Whitlam held his first press conference as Prime Minister. Whitlam announced that he had instructed Australia’s Ambassador in Paris, Alan Renouf, to open negotiations with his Chinese counterpart, Huang Chen; Australia’s Ambassador to Taiwan was also recalled. On 21 December, Australia recognised the People’s Republic and signed the Joint Communiqué or *Paris Agreement* stating:

The two Governments agree to develop diplomatic relations, friendship and co-operation between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence ... The Australian Government recognises the Government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China, acknowledges the position of the

80. E. G. Whitlam, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 August 1971, p. 317.

81. In early 1971 the Chinese Government failed to renew its contract with the Australian Wheat Board because Australia did not recognise China; China was Australia’s biggest wheat market.

82. H. B. Turner, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 August 1971, pp. 323–324 and J. M. Fraser, ‘International Affairs’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 August 1971, p. 339.

Chinese Government that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China, and has decided to remove its official representation from Taiwan before 25 January 1973.⁸³



10. Prime Minister Gough Whitlam at 'Echo Wall', Temple of Heaven, Beijing, 1973. Named for its acoustic property, a whisper spoken at one end of the wall can be heard from the other, National Archives of Australia, A6180, 14/11/73/209.

83. E. G. Whitlam, 'Sino-Australian Diplomatic Relations 1972–2002', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 323–336, 2002, as quoted pp. 330–331. (New Zealand recognised China on the same day.)

Whitlam's recognition of China quickly developed into a source of national pride. The Fairfax papers ran articles celebrating Australia's independence in international affairs and Whitlam's 'new course in Asia'. However, statements were still being made in Parliament which warned about the dangers of recognising China. The Liberal Member for Balaclava, Raymond Whittorn, suggested that Whitlam had accepted 23 conditions imposed by the People's Republic as the price of securing recognition. Whittorn suggested that Australia had to *toe the Peking line* and agree to conditions more stringent than those accepted by other states.

On 31 January 1973 Whitlam sought to clarify Australia's diplomatic arrangements with China:

It is nonsense to suggest that we have been discriminated against by the Chinese and forced to accept a variety of pre-conditions. The negotiations in Paris covered only questions relating to the recognition of China and the status of Taiwan. There was no secret agreement or understanding on other matters. The wording of the published joint communiqué in which we acknowledged the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is a province of China is very similar in its wording to the Canadian and British formulas. The Maldives' formula, which has been described as softer than ours was, in fact, harder, as the Maldives 'recognised' Taiwan as an 'inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic'.⁸⁴

Whitlam had rejected the Cold War template for distinguishing allies from enemies, claiming that the binaries that had determined Australia's foreign policy for the past twenty-five years had been replaced by a 'more complex and variable web' of relationships that cut across ideological barriers.⁸⁵ Whitlam spoke of a new era of regional cooperation, and granted diplomatic recognition, not just of communist China (1972), but the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam (1973) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (1974). He resolved that there would be less emphasis on military pacts and withdrew Australian military personnel from Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore; he curtailed Australia's colonial policy by establishing a timetable for Papua New Guinea's independence; and in the week before Christmas 1972 he denounced President Richard Nixon's decision to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, making it

84. E. G. Whitlam, 'Australian recognition of China', Press statement No. 49, 31 January 1973, Prime Minister's Department, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney: http://www.whitlam.org/collection/1973/1973_01_31_australia_recognises_china.html (accessed 18 April 2007).

85. E. G. Whitlam, *Australia's Foreign Policy: New Directions, New Definitions*, Twenty-Fourth Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Brisbane, 30 November 1973, Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1973.

clear that the Australian government would no longer offer unconditional support for U.S. actions in Indo-China. When in Manila in 1973 Whitlam announced that the white Australia policy was now 'dead' and that if someone would hand him a shovel he would publicly bury it.⁸⁶ While H. V. Evatt, Percy Spender, R. G. Casey and Paul Hasluck had all attempted to develop a distinctive foreign policy, the election of the Whitlam Government was something of a watershed. Whitlam acted on the presumption that Australia had its own interests and could make an independent assessment of what those interests were. He spoke not only of a new course in Asia but also of the emergence of a distinctively Australian view of the world.⁸⁷ In December 1973, after a year in government Whitlam declared to Parliament that Australia had changed:

We are no longer a cipher or a satellite in world affairs. We are no longer stamped with the taint of racism. We are no longer a colonial power. We are no longer out of step with the world's progressive and enlightened movements towards freedom, disarmament and cooperation. We are no longer enthralled to bogies and obsessions in our relations with China or the great powers.⁸⁸

Post-Recognition

After recognition Australia's China policy assumed a bipartisan quality. When the Liberal-National Country Party coalition was elected to office in 1975 Malcolm Fraser pledged to continue to build the new relationship and forge closer political, economic

86. Bill Hayden, 'Australia's China Policy under Labor', *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, Number 11, January 1984. After a review of the non-European policy in March 1966, Immigration Minister Hubert Opperman, announced that applications for migration would be based on the suitability as migrants and not on the basis of race, colour or creed.

87. See, for example, an editorial in the *Age*, 4 January 1973.

88. E. G. Whitlam, 'Whitlam Government', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 December 1973, pp. 4729–4732. A few months earlier Whitlam became the first Australian Prime Minister to visit China. He was received with great fanfare and met with a range of senior officials including Chairman Mao Zedong. Keith Waller, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs between 1969–1973, travelled to China with Whitlam in 1973. Waller describes Whitlam's response to China in the following way, 'In China, I think he [Whitlam] was taken in by the machine. As in so many of these socialist countries, they have a very elaborate system of pageantry to welcome the visitor—the pompom girls at the airport, the troops lining the road, the cheering crowds and so on—and although we had been warned that all of that would happen and that this was standard treatment, he felt that it had never happened before.', Waller, *A Diplomatic Life: Some Memories*, pp. 49–50.

and cultural ties. Perhaps the greatest measure of how parliamentary attitudes towards China had transformed in the period after recognition was the Parliament's response to the passing of Mao Zedong on 9 September 1976. Following Mao's death both Houses passed bipartisan motions of condolence stating:

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, expresses to the people of China profound regret and tenders its deep sympathy to his family in their bereavement.⁸⁹

Tributes spoke of Mao's achievements—unifying a divided and weak state, liberating China from warlords, feudalism and foreign domination and establishing China as a self-confident member of the world community. The Labor Member for Reid, Tom Uren, described Mao as a 'brilliant revolutionary thinker, a great military strategist'. Whitlam spoke of his 'gifts as a writer and interpreter of Chinese philosophy'. The Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Reginald Withers claimed:

Unlike the armies of the Chinese leaders before him, his armies did not loot, pillage or rape. He organised great land reform and just government. He was a poet in the classical style and a humane head of a government which was the biggest bureaucracy on earth ...⁹⁰

Liberal Member for Mackellar, William Wentworth, was one of the few dissenting voices. He spoke of Mao's 'dreadful legacy', labelling Mao a mass murderer:

... Mao murdered a thousand times as many of his own countrymen as Mussolini ever did and destroyed ten times as many of their freedoms. He made a prison and called it peace ... Maoism has subjected the Chinese people to an alien ideology and has denied them their traditional life and culture ... Will the Chinese people now have the wisdom and courage to abandon these moronic aspects of Maoism and reassert their historic values?⁹¹

89. Malcolm Fraser, 'Death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 September 1976, p. 955. The Senate's condolence motion was identical but added Mao's title as Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

90. Senator Withers, 'Death of Mao Tse-tung', Senate, *Debates*, 14 September 1976. While Senator Arthur Gietzelt put on record an 'appreciation of his contribution to mankind', 'Death of Mao Tse-tung', Senate, *Debates*, 14 September 1976.

91. William Wentworth, 'Death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 September 1976, pp. 957–8.

When the House stood to honour Mao in silence, Wentworth stormed out of the chamber exclaiming: ‘Mr Speaker, Mao was a murderer’.⁹²

Whitlam, now speaking from Opposition, used the occasion of Mao’s passing to point out that five years ago it would have been ‘unthinkable’ for a condolence motion such as this to be offered by the Australian Parliament:

It says much for the changing attitudes of Australian politicians as it does for the greatness of Mao himself that we are paying tribute in this place to a man and thus to a nation and a people who until a short time ago were the objects of widespread hostility and suspicion in this country.⁹³

The Fraser years coincided with radical change in China, for the death of Mao would open the way for a comprehensive change in foreign policy and the introduction of a program of substantial economic liberalisation. After Hua Guofeng’s brief period of leadership, Deng Xiaoping came to power and instituted the policies of modernisation and economic liberalisation which would ultimately result in China’s radical transformation. Deng replaced ideological purity with a program of economic development, announcing his intention that China become a developed economy by the year 2000.

‘Special Relationship’

After the election of the Hawke Labor Government the Australia–China relationship developed quickly. After his first trip to China as Prime Minister in 1984, Bob Hawke returned to Australia enthusiastically endorsing the reformist leaders Premier Zhao Ziyang, General Secretary Hu Yaobang and paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. Hawke spoke of reducing Australia’s economic reliance on Japan and claimed that China would provide an immense market for Australian raw materials and manufactured goods. Hawke declared that ‘power would be derived from the benefits of economic liberalism and not, as Mao had put it, from “the barrel of a gun”’.⁹⁴

92. Rod Kemp and Marion Stanton (eds.), *Speaking for Australia: Parliamentary speeches that shaped our nation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004, pp. 230–231.

93. E. G. Whitlam, ‘Death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 September 1976, p. 955.

94. Greg Hywood, ‘China Days a Bitter-sweet Memory for Shattered Hawke and Betrayed West’, *Australian Financial Review*, 9 June 1989.

During Question Time on 19 April 1985 the Labor Member for Lowe, Michael Maher, asked the Prime Minister a ‘dorothy dixer’ about the significance of Hu Yaobang’s recent visit for the Australian economy. In his reply Hawke spoke of a ‘special relationship’ that was developing between Australia and China.⁹⁵ After a meeting with Deng Xiaoping in the following year, Hawke would confirm that Australia and China now shared ‘a very special relationship’. In promoting the Chinese reforms, Hawke suggested that Chinese values, ideas and forms of government were becoming compatible with our own: ‘More and more, the Chinese system and its philosophy are becoming compatible with our sorts of values’.⁹⁶

Optimism about the Australia–China relationship spread through government, business and educational sectors. Australians tried to build China into whatever they did: China became almost obligatory for government ministers, China business seminars proliferated, tertiary institutions signed up for exchanges with China, PhD scholarships were offered to people from China with no degree at all.⁹⁷ Politicians spoke repeatedly about the prospect of selling a sock to every Chinese and every Australian was urged to understand China in order to take advantage of the new opportunities China presented. Australia’s first Ambassador to China, Stephen FitzGerald, claims that even ‘the most conservative anti-communists and covert racists could not stay away from China’.⁹⁸

When the Chinese Communist Party used military force to silence protestors in Tiananmen Square during 4–5 June 1989, Hawke’s vision for Australia–China relations came unstuck. In a service at the Great Hall in Parliament House on 9 June, commemorating the lives of those killed, Prime Minister Hawke wept as he quoted from an Australian embassy cable which described the events in detail. Calling it ‘the saddest and the most compelling duty I have had to perform as Prime Minister’, Hawke claimed:

95. R. J. Hawke, ‘Australian Economy: Significance of Visit of Mr Hu Yaobang’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 April 1985, p. 1513.

96. ‘Australia’s place in the World’, The Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra, 26 August, 1983, as it appears in *National Reconciliation: The Speeches of Bob Hawke Prime Minister of Australia* (1984).

97. For an account of the China hysteria that had embraced the Parliament see Stephen FitzGerald, *Is Australian an Asian Country?*, pp. 26–7.

98. Stephen FitzGerald, ‘Australia’s China’, The Fiftieth George Morrison Lecture in Ethnology, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1989, p. 7.

... our optimism was shattered as we watched in horror the unyielding forces of repression brutally killing the vision of youth. Unarmed young men and women were sprayed with bullets and crushed by tanks. Innocent people were shot and beaten in the streets and in their homes ... Thousands have been killed and injured, victims of a leadership that seems determined to hang on to the reins of power at any cost—at awful human cost.⁹⁹

This was followed by a motion in which Parliament expressed:

... its outrage at the massive and indiscriminate slaughter of thousands of unarmed Chinese pro-democracy demonstrators and bystanders by units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Beijing on 4 and 5 June 1989.¹⁰⁰

In the following weeks Cabinet downgraded the relationship and suspended political contacts, 'severely' constrained official contacts at the senior level, cancelled all party and parliamentary visits and put on hold technical cooperation projects, but did not introduce economic sanctions.¹⁰¹ In each instance contact was suspended rather than terminated and could be seen to represent a 'symbolic' rather than an 'instrumental' response.¹⁰²

The Hawke Government also committed to extending the visas of thousands of Chinese students in Australia.¹⁰³ Noting the 'horrifying abuses of human life and human rights which have occurred in China', Prime Minister Hawke took the opportunity to reassure

99. Kim Richard Nossal, *The Beijing Massacre: Australian Responses*, Australian Foreign Policy Papers, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1993, p. 27.

100. R. J. Hawke, 'People's Republic of China', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 June 1989, p. 3523. While there was bipartisan support for the motion, the Labor Member for Prospect, Richard Klugman declared: 'Totalitarian governments behave in certain ways. Many of our people on both sides of the political fence will never learn. Some 11 or 12 years ago this House almost unanimously, with my disagreement, passed a motion of condolence for the well loved Chairman Mao', Richard Klugman, 'People's Republic of China', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 June 1989, p. 3526

101. For a full list of sanctions, which totalled twelve, see Kim Richard Nossal, *The Beijing Massacre: Australian Responses*, Australian Foreign Policy Papers, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1993, p. 38.

102. This suggestion is made by Nossal, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

103. For a more complete exposition of the events of 4 June 1989 and their policy implications for the bilateral relationship see, Kim Richard Nossal, *The Beijing Massacre: Australian Responses*, (1993) and Russell Trood, 'From Co-operation to Conflict: Australia and China in 1989' in Colin Mackerras, Kevin Bucknall and Russell Trood, *The Beijing Tragedy: Implications for China and Australia*, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, pp. 57-88.

‘Chinese students and their Australian friends that the Government of Australia will keep their situation under close and sympathetic review’. No Chinese students would be returned to China ‘in its current state’.¹⁰⁴ The Tiananmen Square incident would not only see matters of human rights become critical to the bilateral relationship, it ultimately resulted in the permanent settlement of more than 40,000 PRC Chinese in Australia.¹⁰⁵ The year 1989 simultaneously embodies the Parliament’s fears and hopes for China: it is the year in which the ‘Garnaut Report’, *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy*, laid the foundations for Australia’s policy for economic engagement with Northeast Asia and it is the year the Australian Parliament awoke to the reality of engaging with a system that was not going to change in the way some policy makers had wished it to.¹⁰⁶

This chapter has offered an account of the profound transformation that took place in Australian self-perceptions from the 1930s. The type of Australia that was imagined in the first decades after Federation—racially pure, separate from Asia and committed to pursuing imperial interests—was gradually replaced by an Australia which began to imagine Asia as part of its future. For a nation emerging out of the experience of the Great Depression, Australian policy makers looked upon Asia to help drag the nation out of economic depression. After this initial period of engagement we have observed the various shifts that took place in parliamentary perceptions of China during the post-War period. ‘China’ was variously imagined as both a threat to Australian political sovereignty and a place of great economic opportunity. The next chapter examines a different type of Australia–China relationship, a relationship that developed under the Howard Government and was predicated upon broad economic complementarity.

104. R. J. Hawke, ‘People’s Republic of China’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 June 1989, p. 3523.

105. Two Human Rights Delegations, which included parliamentarians and other officials, would visit China between 14–26 July 1991 and 8–20 November 1992. For a fuller exposition of the 1989–1996 period see, E. S. K. Fung and Chen Jie, *Changing Perceptions: The Attitudes of the PRC Chinese Towards Australia and China, 1989–1996*, Australia–Asia Paper No. 78, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, Griffith University, November 1996.

106. Ross Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy: Report to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade*, Canberra, APGS, 1989.

Chapter Three: *Foreign Policy and 'Identity Stuff'*: Hu Jintao Addresses the Australian Parliament

Chinese President Hu Jintao's address to a joint meeting of the Australian Parliament in October 2003 was a landmark event in the history of Australia–China relations. A moment of great ceremonial and symbolic significance, it represented a highpoint in the Howard Government's engagement with China. This chapter examines President Hu's address to the Australian Parliament from a range of perspectives. It begins by giving consideration to the history of parliamentary addresses by foreign heads of state, before turning to examine the addresses of President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Howard. Having provided an account of the way that these addresses came to offer some unexpected insights into the complexities that underscore the Australia–China relationship, it places the two addresses within the context of John Howard's regional diplomacy.

Prior to October 2003, only two foreign heads of state had addressed a joint meeting of the Australian Parliament: United States President George Bush senior (January 1992) and United States President Bill Clinton (November 1996). On each occasion, the parliamentary setting had been chosen to honour the shared traditions of representative government and parliamentary democracy. When Parliament was recalled in late October 2003, in what Prime Minister John Howard referred to as 'an unprecedented sequencing of speeches', Parliament would be addressed on consecutive days by the United States President, George W. Bush, and the President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao.¹

The British House of Commons and the United States Congress have contrasting positions on inviting guests to address their legislative assemblies. British parliamentary practice only permits elected representatives to address the House of Commons while the United States Congress has a tradition of regularly extending invitations to foreign dignitaries. By and large the Australian Parliament has adopted the British model. In the fifty years following Federation, the Australian Parliament was addressed by only one visiting delegation—a delegation from the British House of Commons. The visitors presented the Mace to the Parliament, on the occasion of the Parliament's jubilee in 1951, and each member of the delegation addressed the House

1. Prime Minister John Howard, 'Interview with John Laws', Radio 2UE, 13 October 2003.

of Representatives.² It was not until the 1990s that the Australian practice began to shift more substantially towards the United States model, a change evidenced by the addresses made by President George Bush senior and President Bill Clinton.³

The resolutions that were agreed to for the Bush and Hu visits in 2003 were similar to those which had been agreed to for the previous presidential visits:

The House of Representatives by resolution invited the foreign visitor to address it, and invited the Senate to meet in the House of Representatives chamber at the same time to receive the address. The Senate by resolution then invited the foreign visitor to address the Senate, and agreed to meet in the House of Representatives chamber for that purpose. The resolutions of the two Houses also provided that the Speaker would preside over the joint meeting and that the procedures of the House of Representatives would apply to the joint meeting 'so far as they are applicable'.⁴

Both presidents would therefore address a simultaneous and co-located meeting of the Senate and the House of Representatives; these meetings would be presided over by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and would follow House procedures.⁵

Prior to the Senate agreeing to these resolutions, Democrats Senator for Victoria, Lyn Allison moved two motions that Presidents Bush and Hu be received in the Great Hall

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2. As head of state, Queen Elizabeth II has delivered numerous speeches to the Parliament: 15 February 1954, 28 February 1974 and 8 March 1977. The delegation from the House of Commons visited on 29 November 1951 and included: Richard Law, David Rhys Grenfell and Joseph Grimond. I thank Rob Lundie from the Politics and Public Administration Section of the Parliamentary Library for this information.
 3. The practice of inviting foreign heads of state to address the Australian Parliament emerged during the early 1990s. Prime Minister Hawke had wished to confer on the President of the United States the same honour that had been conferred upon him in 1988—an address to a joint meeting of both Houses of Congress. Prime Minister Keating would later follow Hawke's practice by extending an invitation to President Bill Clinton. Ironically, as Alan Ramsey points out, by the time George Bush senior addressed the Parliament, Keating had replaced Hawke as Prime Minister and by the time Clinton addressed Parliament Keating had been replaced by John Howard. ('A crowded House of Yankee lackeys', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 2003, p. 43.) Therefore, in 2003, John Howard became the first Prime Minister to host a foreign head of state invited during his prime ministership.
 4. Senate Standing Committee on Procedure, 'Joint meetings to receive addresses by foreign heads of state', *Third report of 2003*, December 2003, pp. 1–2.
 5. 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', Senate, *Debates*, 9 October 2003, pp. 16013, 16022.

at Parliament House, rather than the House of Representatives.⁶ Senator Allison's motion was defeated (Ayes 9 to Noes 35). However, it resulted in a debate which made it clear that there was strong minor party opposition to inviting a non-democratically elected head of state to address the Australian Parliament.⁷ Senator for Tasmania, Brian Harradine, the longest-serving independent federal parliamentarian in Australia's history, advanced the following position:

The proposal is to allow President Hu, who is a dictator—he is not elected and certainly not democratic—to address the democratically elected parliament of this country in the chamber. I take the view that, if we accept this, it will set a very bad precedent indeed and will reflect on the elected chambers.⁸

Greens Senator for Tasmania, Bob Brown, who identified President Hu as 'a dictator who has blood on his hands', concurred with Senator Harradine and argued that in offering the podium to the Chinese President, the Parliament had become a supplicant to 'a rich and powerful trading nation'.⁹

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6. Michelle Grattan suggests that the Chinese President was only invited to address the Parliament because President Bush was addressing the Parliament a day earlier. Grattan claims when President Hu had first indicated that he would like to visit Australia following the APEC meeting in Bangkok (October 18–21) arrangements were made for him to visit Canberra on the Thursday. However, George Bush then suggested that he would also like to visit Canberra on the same day. In order to accommodate President Bush, it was then suggested the Chinese President spend Thursday in Sydney and come to Canberra on Friday. Precedent dictated that Bush be invited to address Parliament as his father and President Clinton had done. Concerned that 'it could become a matter of comment' if President Hu was not also asked to do so, a parliamentary invitation was also extended to Hu. Michelle Grattan, 'Lessons in the delicate art of diplomacy', *Age*, 25 October 2003, p. 8. Grattan adds, while Hu's was a 'state visit', President Bush's was a 'visit'; Hu entered through the House of Representatives and met with the Presiding Officers while Bush entered through the front door and did not meet with the Presiding Officers.
 7. Ayes: Senators Allison, Brown, Cherry, Greig, Harradine, Murray, Nettle, Ridgeway, Stott Despoja.
 8. Senator Harradine, 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', Senate, *Debates*, 9 October 2003, p. 16022.
 9. Senator Brown, 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', Senate, *Debates*, 9 October 2003, pp. 16023, 16025.

President Bush's Address

*Senators Brown and Nettle defamed this nation and dishonoured our legislature ...
by heckling the American President.* Senator Santo Santoro¹⁰

Surely we must have a right to interact with anybody who comes into our parliament.
Senator Bob Brown¹¹

On 23 October 2003, President Bush stood before the joint meeting of the Australian Parliament and spoke of the forces of good and the forces of evil. He suggested that the world was a better place without former Iraq President Saddam Hussein's prisons, mass graves, torture chambers and rape rooms. At the point at which the President suggested that no one should mourn the passing of Saddam Hussein's regime, Senator Bob Brown interjected. The Speaker immediately responded by warning Senator Brown about his behaviour. (In practice, interjections that are responded to by the Speaker should be documented in Hansard; however, Senator Brown's comments have been expurgated from the historical record.) Shortly after, Senator Brown interjected a second time. This prompted the Speaker to request the Senator excuse himself from the Chamber. Senator Brown defied the Chair by failing to comply with the Speaker's order. Some minutes later, when President Bush's attentions had turned to matters of security in the Pacific, he was again interrupted, this time by the Greens Senator for New South Wales, Kerry Nettle. After Senator Nettle's second interjection the Speaker told the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove her. By the time President Bush had concluded his speech, the Serjeant-at-Arms had not been able to remove Senator Nettle. Senator Brown had also failed to withdraw from the chamber.¹² Thereafter, the Speaker 'named' Senators Brown and Nettle for defying the Chair and the Liberal Leader of the House of Representatives, Tony Abbott, moved 'that Senators Brown and Nettle be suspended from the service of the House'.¹³ The question was agreed to and Senators Brown and Nettle were

10. Senator Santoro, 'Privileges Committee Reference', Senate, *Debates*, p. 17179.

11. Senator Brown, 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', Senate, *Debates*, 9 October 2003, p. 16025.

12. See letter from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Australian Greens submission to the Senate Privileges Committee's inquiry into 'Matters arising from the joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003'.

13. 'Address by the President of the United States of America', Senate, *Debates*, 23 October 2003, p. 16721. It could be argued that their exclusion prevented Senators Brown and Nettle from fulfilling their primary objective—drawing attention to the matter of human rights in Tibet during President Hu's address on the following day.

suspended. The two senators were suspended not because they interjected during President Bush's speech, but because they defied the orders of the Speaker. Their 24-hour suspension would prohibit them from attending President Hu's address the following day.

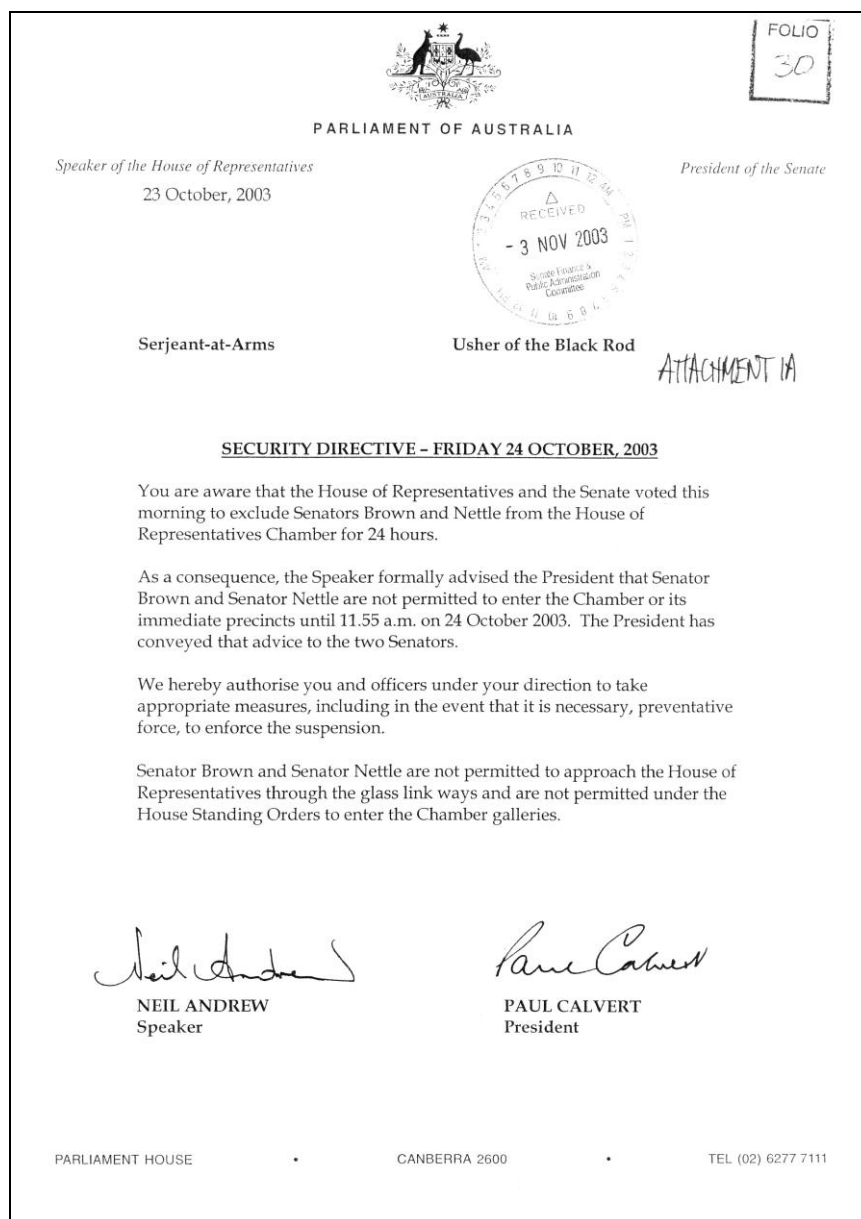
On 23 October, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate issued an instruction to parliamentary security personnel, informing them of the vote to exclude the two Senators. This instruction included the extraordinary, and unprecedented, directive that security officers, if necessary, employ 'preventative force' to enforce their suspension.

Senators Brown and Nettle, who had questioned the authority of the Speaker to ban them from attending the Chinese President's address, approached the chamber on the morning of 24 October. As they proceeded through the glass link-way, they were spoken to by parliamentary security personnel before they withdrew. They did not attempt to enter the chamber.¹⁴

The disorder that resulted from the interjections by Senators Brown and Nettle during President Bush's address raised a number of procedural and jurisdictional anomalies. Shortly after the presidential visits, Senator Brian Harradine suggested that the only constitutional precedent for a *joint sitting* was section 57 of the Constitution which permits both houses of Parliament to sit together to resolve deadlocks.¹⁵ Section 57 of the Constitution, *Disagreement between the Houses*, suggests a joint sitting is a specific body constituted under the provision that members of both houses may meet to vote on legislation which remains in disagreement after a simultaneous or 'double' dissolution. There is no other constitutional authorisation permitting senators and members to meet together. It would appear, therefore, that some years ago, when the Parliament began to replicate the American practice of inviting foreign dignitaries to address Congress, little or no consideration was given to the differences between the Australian and the United States constitutions.

14. Committee of Privileges, 'Joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003', *118th Report*, April 2004, pp. 6–7.

15. 'Procedure Committee Reference', Senate, *Debates*, 28 October 2003, p. 17015.



11. Security Directive—Friday 24 October, 2003, included in the Australian Greens submission to the Senate Privileges Committee's inquiry into 'Matters arising from the joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October, 2003'¹⁶

A critical distinction emerged between the status of *joint sittings* and *joint meetings*. There has only been one joint sitting of the Australian Parliament under section 57 of the Constitution. This occurred in August 1974 in order to pass 6 bills that had led to a

16. Australian Greens submission, *118th Report*, Senate Standing Committee of Privileges, 1 April 2004.

double dissolution. Since 1992, there have been five occasions when the houses have been brought together for joint meetings. In four instances this was to receive addresses by foreign heads of state. The fifth joint meeting was held in 2001 in the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne to commemorate the centenary of the first meeting of the Commonwealth Parliament on 9 May 1901.¹⁷

The suspension of the two senators called into question the legitimacy of the joint meeting. It was unclear whether, constitutionally, these were in fact proceedings of Parliament. Moreover, there was uncertainty as to whether, in suspending senators from a meeting of the Senate, without a vote of the Senate, the Speaker's ruling violated the principle of the complete autonomy of the Houses. In the months that followed the addresses of Presidents Bush and Hu, the Senate Standing Committee on Procedure and the Senate Standing Committee of Privileges investigated how the Senate should deal with future addresses by foreign heads of state.¹⁸ The Committee on Procedure's *Third Report of December 2003*, 'Joint Meeting to Receive Addresses by Foreign Heads of State', argued that the provisions which were made for the *joint meetings* of the two houses made them virtually indistinguishable from *joint sittings*. Moreover, given that there was no constitutional authority for a joint meeting, the authority of the Speaker to exercise disciplinary power over Senators was potentially invalid. Both Committees therefore agreed that the practice of joint meetings be discontinued. The Committee on Procedure argued:

... the procedure for the occasions be changed so that they [addresses by foreign heads of state] would be meetings of the House of Representatives in the House of Representatives chamber, which senators would be invited to attend as guests, and not formal meetings of the Senate. This would not change the appearance of the occasions, but would avoid the problems of the joint meetings. Senators would not be under the same obligation to attend as for sittings of the Senate.¹⁹

17. Committee of Privileges, 'Joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003', *118th Report*, April 2004, p. 11.

18. The Senate Standing Committee on Procedure was requested 'to draw up rules which should apply to joint meetings of the Parliament, if any', 'Joint meetings to receive addresses by foreign heads of state', *Third Report of 2003*, December 2003, p. 1. The Committee of Privileges was to examine a range of supplementary matters arising from the joint meetings including: the presence of foreign security personnel, the seating of senators' and members' guests and the implications for the powers, privileges and immunities of the Senate which arose as a result of the joint meeting.

19. Senate Standing Committee on Procedure Committee, Joint meetings to receive addresses by foreign heads of state, *Third Report of 2003*, December 2003, p. 3.

The Committee recommended therefore that:

... the Senate pass a resolution expressing its opinion that future addresses by foreign heads of state should be received in this manner and that the resolution be forwarded to the House of Representatives so that the government can consider this proposal whenever future occasions arise.²⁰

The Committee of Privileges endorsed the recommendation made by the Committee on Procedure while making a number of important statements about the powers, privileges and immunities of Senators during a joint meeting. The Committee claimed that 'serious doubts must remain about the status and validity of arrangements under which the Speaker of the House of Representatives purported to exercise the disciplinary powers of the House over Senators who were participating in a meeting of the Senate'. It added further, that it is quite possible that the Senate could not constitutionally forego or waive any of 'its powers, privileges and immunities, let alone submit to the jurisdiction of the House'.²¹

On the recommendations of the Committee on Procedures and the Committee of Privileges an alternative practice for a joint meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate was adopted.²² Message no. 297 acquainted the Senate with the resolution, agreed to on 2 March 2006, that in the future, senators be invited to attend the House as guests. When Tony Blair became the first British Prime Minister to address the Australian Parliament on 27 March 2006, he did not address a joint meeting of Parliament, but a meeting of the House of Representatives which senators attended as guests. Senators also attended the House as guests when the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, addressed the Australian Parliament on 12 September 2007.²³ President Hu's address was therefore the last occasion on which the two houses of the Australian Parliament would *meet* for a concurrent sitting.

20. *ibid.*

21. Committee of Privileges, 'Joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003', *118th Report*, April 2004, p. 12.

22. Harry Evans (ed.), *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice*, 11th ed., Department of the Senate, Canberra, 2004, *Supplementary Updates to 31 December 2006* (2007), p. 4.

23. Prime Minister Harper was asked to address the Parliament to reciprocate the courtesy extended to Prime Minister Howard. In May 2006 John Howard became the first Australian Prime Minister to address the Canadian Parliament since John Curtin in 1944.

Prelude to President Hu's Visit

Much of the parliamentary debate which occurred prior to President Hu's visit took place in the Senate. It was led by the Democrats, Greens and Independents and primarily focused upon China's human rights record. In examining aspects of this debate we can develop some appreciation of how the voices of both the major and minor parties contribute to the operations of Parliament and the activities of multi-party, parliamentary democracy. The discussion also helps to highlight differences in the political and representational functions of different political parties. It emerges that while the minor parties can examine issues like human rights in China, as isolated concerns, the Government, and even the Opposition, feel obliged to situate such concerns within the context of a concert of foreign policy interests.

Senators Harradine and Brown were the first parliamentarians to request that the government use the opportunity of President Hu's visit to raise Australian concerns about human rights in China. The Greens also took the position that if Hu was to address the Parliament then parliamentarians should be permitted to put questions to him. Senator Brown suggested:

If we are to entertain the thought of President Hu coming to the rostrum to address the several hundred representatives elected by the people of Australia, for goodness sake, let us not even mock the situation in the Great Hall of the People in China, where nobody can speak on any subject unless permitted to do so. We are not mummies. We are not here just to listen. We are here to take part in debate.²⁴

When pressed about whether the government would use the opportunity of the visit to raise concerns over human rights in China, the Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Robert Hill, spoke of Australia's ongoing Human Rights Dialogue with China, asserting that as China continues to develop economically, there will be equivalent improvement in human rights. Hill added, 'Certainly Australian foreign affairs ministers take the opportunity, when appropriate, to raise these issues with China and press upon China our values and also to point out the advantages of a more open and liberal society'.²⁵ In the House, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, claimed Australia's Human Rights Dialogue with China has given Australia 'an

24. Senator Brown, 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', Senate, *Debates*, 9 October, 2003, p. 16025. This position was advanced in the House by Greens representative Michael Organ, 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 October 2003, p. 20797.

25. Senator Hill, 'Human Rights: China', Senate, *Debates*, 14 October 2003, p. 16293.

extraordinary opportunity to be able to raise a full range of human rights issues, including those related to Tibet' adding that 'The range of issues that are of interest and concern between Australia and China will, of course, be discussed'.²⁶

Democrats Senator for South Australia, Natasha Stott Despoja, who also described President Hu's visit as an opportunity to challenge the Chinese Government on its human rights record, proposed a motion that the Senate note that wide ranging human rights abuses were taking place across China.²⁷ The wording of Motion 641 was modelled on a similar resolution that was passed by Congress. It included calls for the release of prisoners being held in relation to non-violent protest activities, the repeal of laws which permit the government to interfere in religious affairs and the call for an immediate visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religion.²⁸ Senator Stott Despoja drew attention to the fact that while the Opposition was prepared to support a motion about human rights issues in the United States they were not prepared to support a motion expressing similar concerns in relation to China. The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator John Faulkner, offered a response in which he reiterated the Opposition's support for upholding human rights internationally; he reminded the Senate of the Labor Party's 'long and proud history with China' and he acknowledged that human rights abuses continue to occur in China. However, he added that Motion 641 was 'too broad to be considered seriously without a fully-fledged and proper debate':

Motions on foreign policy matters are a blunt instrument that cannot easily express the nuances that are necessarily a part of effective international diplomacy. There are a number of elements to which we are, of course, naturally sympathetic but there are other elements of the motion that do not accurately convey our position on these matters. That is why we have not given leave for this motion to be declared formal.²⁹

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26. Questions without notice, 'Human Rights', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 October 2003, p. 21177. On the same day Luke Hartsuyker, Trish Worth and Ann Corcoran presented petitions to the House drawing attention to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Senator Stott Despoja also claimed that many senators had received phone calls, faxes and letters requesting that these issues be highlighted.
 27. Senator Stott Despoja, 'Human Rights: China', Senate, *Debates*, 16 October 2003, pp. 16606, 16641–16642.
 28. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senate Notice Paper No. 105, 14 October 2003 and Senator Stott Despoja, 'Human Rights China', Senate, *Debates*, 16 October 2003, p. 16642.
 29. Senator Faulkner, 'Human Rights: China', Senate, *Debates*, 16 October 2003, pp. 16643–16644.

The unsuccessful motion was supported by the Democrats, the Greens and Independent, Senator Harradine.

To coincide with the visit of President Hu Jintao, the Australia Tibet Council prepared an advertisement requesting that the Chinese President engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives about the future of Tibet. The full-page advertisement, appeared in the *Australian* and was signed by supporters of the Australia Tibet Council, including members of federal and state legislatures. China's Consul-General in Melbourne, Junting Tian, wrote to one of the coordinators of the advertisement, Victorian parliamentarian Elaine Carbines, with the following message:

I am now writing to remind you that the Tibet issue is an internal matter of the People's Republic of China which is very sensitive. Tibet has been part of China since the Yuan Dynasty in the mid-12th to the mid-13th century, and it is recognised by the whole international community, including the Australian government, that Tibet is a part of China.³⁰

The Consul-General then met with the Presiding Officers of the Victorian Parliament. After being criticised for his interference in the Australian political process, and for his intimidatory behaviour, the Consul-General explained to the *Australian* newspaper, 'he did not wish to silence parliamentarians. But he felt the advertisement would be "disrespectful" to the President'.³¹

Following the representations that were made by the Chinese Consulate in Melbourne the Chinese Embassy in Canberra made direct representations to the Australian media. The Press Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy, Feng Tie, emailed the following message to Fairfax newspapers about 'anti-China forces' operating in Australia:

30. 'Vic MPs say they will persist with pro-Tibet ad', *The World Today*, 17 October 2003.

31. Steve Lewis, 'Chinese embassy in bid to 'silence' MPs', *Australian*, 17 October 2003.

- A D V E R T I S E M E N T -

To the President of China, Mr Hu Jintao - a message from Australians

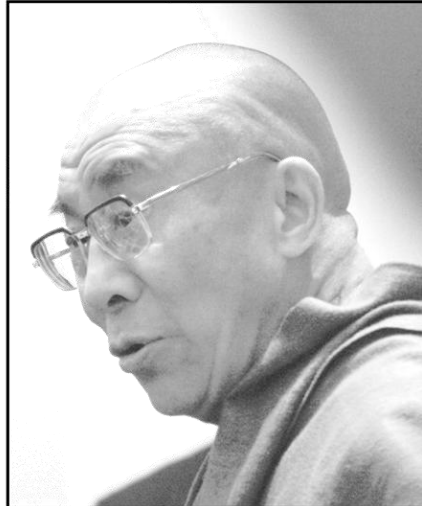


Photo: Jenny Temples

We, the undersigned, welcome you to Australia and wish you a successful and pleasant visit. We are encouraged by China's recent steps regarding the situation in Tibet, in particular the re-establishment of contact between the Dalai Lama's envoys and Chinese government. We call on you to build on this initial contact and engage in a substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives about Tibet's future.

President Hu Jintao, please speak to the Dalai Lama

This message was organised by the Australia Tibet Council and endorsed by:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Lyndy & Wai ABRAM
Prue ACTON
Peter ADAMSON
Margo ADOLSON
Mark ALLADAY &
Jillian LANGRISHIE
Dr Rod ANDERSON
Alyis & Dave ANDREWS
Maureen ARCH
Yasha AZDOR
Monique BALLEEU
Nicole BARLOW
Margaret & Peter BARNES
J.R. BARR
Therese BARRETT
Dr Peter BAUER
Yvonne BEALE
Chris BEFORD
Zoi BEFORD
Andrea BEEL
Karen BELL
Fred BENECHIE
BLACKBAY FAMILY
Bina BLUEWATER
Richard BOELE
Stephanie BOHNI
Helen BOHRER
Jade BOURGIGNON &
Rob FEASE
Paul BOURKE &
Dorey DOLMA
Dr Christine BOYCE
Yvonne BRADLEY
Hon. Peter BREEN MLC
Jon BRUCEL
Sean BRIDGEMAN
Frank BROCK
Russell BROWN
Kiro & Ruth BROWN
Ashley & Tabor BROWN
Sen. Bob BROWN
Jane BRYSOW | Vika & Linda BULL
Brett BURGE
Alex BUTLER &
Robert BROWN
Caroline BUTLER
Petrosida CAVANAGH
Ann BYRNE
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Peter CASSA
Kate & Jose CAMARENA
Rose CAPP
Elaine CARRINES MP (VIC)
Dawn CAROLE
Anna CARMOYD
Judith CARTER &
Rob MILAN
Dr Jonathan CEBON
Chris & Jill CHAMBERS
Dr Nathan CHANDRAN
Hui Fen CHANG
Catherine CHANT
B. CHARLES & Lily &
Raim MERRILL
Dr Arthur CHESTERFIELD-
EVANS MLC (NSW)
Dionisia CIROPHEL
Chris & Gill
Michael G. CHUGG AM
Matthew & Cheryl CLARKE
Anna CODY
Shaun COGLEY
Kirsteen COHEN
Ian COHEN MLC
Bernard COLE
Stuart COLLIER &
Lee BURTON
Toni COLLETTE
Tom COLLEY
Sue COLLINS
Savannah CONSIDINE
Anne CONWAY & | Leong LIM
Susan & Nathan COPE
Beverley CORNISH
Thomas CORRIGAN
Liz CRAWFORD
Stephen CUMMINGS
Ross & Stuart CUNEO
Sophie CUNNINGHAM
Annette DAHLER
DALAI LAMA IN AUSTRALIA
LIMITED
Michael DANBY MP
Margaret CAREY
Charlotte DAVIS
Adrian DEC
Adam DENNIS
Claire DIVERSON
Suzana DEWA
Pam Di CREAZZI
DISCOVERING BUDDHISM
Hui Fen CHANG
Kharma GROUP
Shearp DORIEE
Lynette DORIEE
Yvonne DORIEE &
Richard ZOLLER
Andrew DUNN
Tania DURBIN &
Phil HUNT
Klaus EHRMANN
Wilfrid ENGLISH
Leonie EDEL
Heke FARBER
George FARLEY
Luana FERRARA
Tim FINN
Anne FISHER
Janice FORD | David HOPE
Julie HOPKINS
John HOWARD
Meredith HUGHES
Nigel HUNGERFORD
Shona INNES
Gerry IVERSON
Philp JACKSON &
Robert MURRY
Lyn JAMES
Paula JAMES
Jill & Graeme JAMESON
Vicki JEFFRESS
JANEEN
JOHNSON FAMILY
Peter D. JONES
Christopher KOE
Richard KENNEDY
Duncan KEIR MP
Gaik KHONG
Hartmut KIEHN
Luona KIEHN
John KITTRIDGE
Peter B. KORNENAR
Henke KORNER
Judith KUBANYI
Dr James LANGLEY
LAZAROFF FAMILY
Chris LEACH & Lisa &
Robert JONES
Amanda LEEPER
Chrone LEONDOU
Maurice LIBERMAN
Jill LITSTER
Catherine LORD
Sue LUSHEY
Eric LUTTON
Shirley MACLAREN
Tracy MANN
Rob MANUEL
Kelly MCBRIDE
Neil & Raetene MCFARLANE | Paul MCGURK
Roger MCLENNAN
Kara & Joanne McLEOD
Daniel MCMICHAEL
Stephen MCMANARA
Dr A.M. MENZIES
Lis MERTENS &
Jorgette ROSSI
Lisa MERTON
Jerry MIKAKOS MP (VIC)
Dr J.F. MILLER
Alan & Jenny MOLLOY
Peter MOODIE
Christopher MOORE
Gerry MOORE
Jane MORRISON
Erica MORSE
Linda MORSE
Greg MORTIMER
Christine MORTON
John B. MURRAY
Colin NAHER
Jacqueline NAHER
Anthony NARDIALL
Don NARDELLA MP (VIC)
Sen. Kerry NETTLE
Renate OGILVIE &
Andrew FISHER
Mark OPENSHAW
Michael ORGAN MP
G. OSBOLDSTONE
Andy PAGE
Toni PALOMBI
Melody PARKER
Margaret PARKER
Helen PARSONS
Victoria PARSONS
Prof. Allan PATIENCE
Dr Jennifer PEARSON
Andrew PECK
Marilyn PENNECK
John PETTIGREW | Kay PHELAN
Liam PHELAN
Kamya PHUNSOOK
Tanya PIRESSEK MP
Chris POLLITT
Margaret POMERANZ
Bill POTTER
Helen PRINCE
Marc PURCELL
Gaye Lewis RADCLIFFE
Robert RADCLIFFE
Penny RAMSAY
John E. RANSELY
Elizabeth & Graham
REDWAY
Rupert REID
Lee RHANNOON MLC
(NSW)
Nicholas RIBBUSH
Doran RIBBUSH
Gil RICHARDS
Dr Irish RICHARDSON
Julie RICHMOND
Wendy RIDLEY
RICPA MELBOURNE
Sonam RIGZEN
Geoff & Marlene
ROBERTSON
Mark ROBINSON
Tony ROBINSON MP (VIC)
Diana ROCHFORD
Chiro ROE
Paul ROGERS
Heidi ROLAND
Glenn ROMANES MP
(VIC)
Gillian ROSE
Nicole ROWAN
Alison ROWLAND
Max & Karen RYAN
Margot RYAN
TIBETAN YOUTH
MOVEMENT | Peter & Bridget SACK
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Karen SAHAW
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Nizza SIANO
Silvia
Alison SMALL
Colin & Sally SMITH
David SMITH
Dean A. SMITH
Zarna SOMARA
Susan SPERS
Daphne STANDISH
Helen WALTERS &
Betty TESHARREST
Kesang WANGMO &
Ngimwing WOLONG
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Paul WATCHMAN
Wilfred WATERS
Samantha WATKINS
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Louis WEBB
Tony WEBB
Bryan WEST
Tony & Maureen WHEELER
Dr Anne WHYBOURNE
Murray WIGGINS
R.I.M. WIGHT
Karla WICKMALL
Linda WILSON &
Elizabeth RILEY
Lesley & Joe WILSON
WINDHORSE GALLERY
John WINTER
Tony WINTERS
Harley WRIGHT
Rodney, David &
Naamug WRIGHT
Hal & Sue YOUNG
Lynn YOUNG |
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12. 'To the President of China', Australia Tibet Council, *Australian*, 24 October 2003—
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As you may already know, President Hu Jintao of China will soon come to visit Australia. This visit will be a major event in China-Australia relations with profound significance. Now both the Chinese and Australian sides are working to ensue [sic] the smoothness and success of the visit. However, we have learnt that some anti-China forces in Australia, such as organizations for independence of Tibet or Falungong, are planning to disrupt the visit by issuing an open letter or putting up political advertisements in local papers at the time of the Presidents [sic] visit. To make sure that the visit will be free from such disruption, we hope that your paper will not publish their open letter, carry their political advertisements or any of their propaganda. It is our wish that with the success of the visit by President Hu, the friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries will grow further.³²

To which the editor-in-chief of the *Australian Financial Review*, Michael Gill, replied:

I'm afraid that our policy on accepting or refusing advertisements does not provide for such requests. It is, naturally, our wish that relations between Australia and China should continue to improve. However, we do not believe that goal would be served by censoring advertisements or other legitimate expressions of opinion.³³

The Australia Tibet Council advertisement appeared in the *Australian* newspaper on the day of President Hu's address and carried the names of the following federal parliamentarians: Greens Senator for Tasmania, Bob Brown; the Labor Member for Melbourne Ports, Michael Danby; Labor Member for Denison, Duncan Kerr; the Greens Member for Cunningham, Michael Organ; the Labor Member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek; the Greens Senator for New South Wales, Kerry Nettle and the Labor Member for Melbourne, Lindsay Tanner.

President Hu Jintao's Address

In what was one of his first overseas addresses as President, Hu offered a sweeping speech structured around the four principles he considers necessary for smooth state-to-state relations: mutual political respect, economic complementarity, cultural understanding and a commitment to security and world peace. In describing the China–Australia relationship as one of 'all-round cooperation', an expression which he used four times, President Hu outlined the characteristics of the relationship which fulfil each of these principles. Yet, within this seemingly benign framework, Hu gestured that, while cooperative, the bilateral relationship is by no means unconditional. Hu inferred that there numerous criteria that must be satisfied for the spirit of economic

32. Margo Kingston, 'Howard humiliates our Parliament and betrays our democracy for Hu', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 2003.

33. *ibid.*

cooperation to continue. Australia should recognise Taiwan as 'an inalienable part of Chinese territory', oppose the 'splittist activities' of Taiwanese independence forces, maintain a position of non-interference in China's internal affairs and reaffirm Australia's commitment to multilateralism. (The full text of President Hu and Prime Minister Howard's addresses are contained in Appendix A.)

Hu opened his address with a narrative connecting China with Australia—the expeditionary fleets of the Ming Dynasty which travelled to Australian shores in the fifteenth century:

The Chinese people have all along cherished amicable feelings about the Australian people. Back in the 1420s, the expeditionary fleets of China's Ming dynasty reached Australian shores. For centuries, the Chinese sailed across vast seas and settled down in what was called 'the southern land', or today's Australia. They brought Chinese culture here and lived harmoniously with the local people, contributing their proud share to Australia's economy, society and thriving pluralistic society.

While Hu avoided the terms *discover* or *discovery*, instead choosing the term *reached*, the phrase *all along* is suggestive of an original or originating point, not simply for Chinese contact, but for contact itself—350 years before Cook. In acknowledging that this land was identified as 'the southern land', Hu also implied that the land, if not regularly visited, existed in the Ming imagination—with the Chinese giving the land both a name and a cartographic identity. In each instance, somewhat controversially, Hu created a distinctively Chinese counter-narrative of Australia's early history.

The debate about the Chinese discovery of Australia has been revived in recent years by the publication of Gavin Menzies' book, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* (2002). Menzies, a retired British Royal Navy Commanding Officer, who was born in China in 1937, claims 'it is virtually impossible to claim that Columbus discovered America, that Cook found Australia or that Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the world. You have to be a crank nowadays to believe that'.³⁴ Instead, Menzies argues that Chinese fleets, under the command of the eunuch-admiral Zheng He (1371–1433), travelled through Southeast Asia to Africa and beyond. Among the objects that Menzies offers as evidence of the Chinese voyages to Australia are a map on porcelain showing the coastline of what is now New Guinea, Aboriginal rock carvings depicting junks, wreckages of ancient ships, wooden pegs found near Byron Bay, provisionally carbon-dated to the mid-fifteenth century, and an ancient Chinese

34. As quoted in 'Experts hope to emulate Chinese Columbus', BBC News, 22 October 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2349929.stm> (accessed 20 May 2007).

stone head depicting a goddess found at Ulladulla on the New South Wales coast. Since its publication, professional historians have called into question the historical accuracy of *1421*. In establishing a chronology of factual, interpretative and sourcing errors, these historians have suggested that Menzies' text be best read as a work of alternative history or historical fiction.

Hu Jintao's historiography comes into conflict with two historical legacies, two *other histories*.³⁵ In suggesting a pre-European, Chinese discovery of 'the southern land', Hu challenged the white settlement narrative that Australia, and the Parliament itself, has anxiously created to conceal the history of indigenous dispossession—Cook's discovery of *terra nullius*, Australia. Yet, while Hu overwrote this legacy he also demonstrated complicity with it. In rendering the traditional owners of the land invisible, indistinguishable within a culture of pluralism, Hu's historiography similarly overlooked the legacy of indigenous sovereignty. Potentially offensive to indigenous, nationalist and postcolonial sensibilities, the President's remarks are made more problematic by the fact that he called for, nay demanded, that Australia respect China's territorial integrity, identify Taiwan 'an inalienable part of Chinese territory' and play a 'constructive role in China's peaceful reunification'.

While foreign policy speechmaking is largely declaratory, public statements on foreign policy are, more often than not, the result of a complex and strategic process. Given this, how should we interpret Hu's appropriation of a nationalist narrative which suggests a Chinese *discovery* of Australia? It could be argued that Hu drew upon the story of Zheng He, not simply to situate Australia within the Chinese historical consciousness, but to demonstrate that China has a long history of peaceful contact with the people of this land. In claiming that the Chinese had 'lived harmoniously with the local people', Hu suggested that China has never been an imperial or colonising power, and inferred, allegorically, that Australians can be reassured—they have nothing to fear from China's rise.

35. The Chinese–Australian artist, Guan Wei, has drawn upon Menzies' account of a Ming discovery of Australia to create the exhibition, *Other histories: Guan Wei's fable for a contemporary world*. In contrast to Menzies, Guan Wei draws upon the legend of Zheng He, and the Chinese voyages of 1405–1433, to demonstrate the instability of history and the constant exposure of history to the forces of manipulation and fictionalisation. Guan Wei employs the notions of historical contestability, palimpsest and invention to destabilise or even replace the concept of historical empiricism and remind us of the instability of all our historical visions.

Hu was not the only Chinese Government official to draw upon Zheng He's *friendly voyages*. In her attempt to illustrate the peaceful continuity in China–Australia relations, Ambassador Madame Fu Ying would also go on to speak of Zheng He's expedition to Australia, claiming that 'Australia has always been on China's map of world voyage'.³⁶ Zheng He never extended beyond the peaceful nationalism of Chinese officials and in the days following Hu's address, Liberal Senator for Western Australia, David Johnston, suggested Zheng He be rightly acknowledged in Australian history:

Our history books should make greater acknowledgement of their feats [the fleets of Zheng He]. Tonight, time prevents me from further detailed discussion of these monumental voyages of exploration and discovery. However, I would like to concur with President Hu Jintao's statement that the Chinese fleets of 1421 did in fact visit our shores ... I direct senators who have an interest in this area to read the excellent work of Gavin Menzies in his book *1421—The Year China Discovered the World*. I am indebted to Gavin Menzies, Royal Navy submariner, and his outstanding research that has greatly assisted me in my understanding of this aspect of **our** history [emphasis added].³⁷

President Hu's address was largely delivered without incident. Senator Brian Harradine was the only member of Parliament to boycott Hu's address. Liberal Senator for New South Wales, Bill Heffernan, was described as protesting against President Hu's presence by refusing to wear his translation-headset, while several other Liberals were alleged to have failed to clap at the conclusion of the speech.³⁸ The only representative of the Australian Greens present, Michael Organ, wore a Tibetan flag on his jacket lapel and a black armband to protest against political prisoners held in China. However, while President Hu's address was largely delivered without incident, the address began late. Minutes before the scheduled commencement of the meeting, the Chinese Foreign Minister met with the Presiding Officers and insisted that certain guests be removed from the public galleries in order to prevent any potential interruptions. This resulted in the meeting beginning at 10:04 rather than the scheduled time of 10:00.³⁹

The intervention by the Foreign Minister resulted in claims that the Chinese Government had exercised, or sought to exercise, inappropriate influence over

36. Speech to the National Press Club of Australia as quoted in Geoffrey Barker, 'Diplomacy Personified', *Australian Financial Review*, 10 June 2005, p. 20.

37. Senator Johnston, 'Foreign Affairs: China' Senate, *Debates*, 27 October 2003, p. 16853.

38. Margo Kingston, 'Howard humiliates our Parliament and betrays our democracy for Hu', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 2003.

39. Committee of Privileges, 'Joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003', *118th Report*, April 2004, p. 21.

parliamentary proceedings. The Committee of Privileges was charged with examining two allegations. First, whether the Chinese Government had in fact sought to have the guests of the Greens senators removed from the open public galleries and seated in the enclosed galleries. Second, whether the Chinese Government had been in any way responsible for seeking the exclusion of Senators Brown and Nettle from the House.⁴⁰ The Committee of Privileges found, somewhat inconclusively:

The question of Chinese government influences on the exclusion of Senators Brown and Nettle from the proceedings and the method by which that exclusion was achieved is impossible to determine in the absence of further evidence from the Speaker and evidence from the Chinese government.⁴¹

The Speaker made the decision to place guests of the Australian Greens in the glazed galleries and accepts that Chinese government agents did not directly inappropriately influence his decision. The committee is unable to pursue with the Speaker the extent to which he may have been influenced by a desire to avoid offending the Chinese and whether this amounted to inappropriate influence, albeit indirectly.⁴²

Should Australians be concerned about the Chinese Government's attempt to censor Australian media content or their efforts to extend influence over Australia's parliamentary proceedings? Is Hu's speech of long-term strategic importance? In coupling Hu's alternative version of the past, with the conditions he outlines for the future, it could be argued that Hu's comments signalled a new era in Australia-China relations, an era when a more self-assured and assertive China would begin to project its influence. For Hu makes clear that if Australia is to continue sharing the yields that derive from China's 'socialist modernisation drive', then Australia can expect China to be more explicit in its attempts to influence public debate and Australian government policy.⁴³

40. According to Matt Price, 'Organ's invited guests—two Tibetans and a Chinese democrat—were ordered out of the open visitor's gallery and deposited behind the glass high above the chamber, all on the orders of Hu Jintao's security'. 'Wilting Green a wallflower in the house of nil dispute', *Weekend Australian*, 25–26 October 2003, p. 9. Michael Organ's guests were Democratic China Chairman, Chin Jin and Mr Dhondup Phun Tsok and Mrs Tsering Deki Tshokoto.

41. Committee of Privileges, 'Joint meetings of the Senate and the House of Representatives on 23 and 24 October 2003', *118th Report*, April 2004, p. 22.

42. *ibid.*

43. For a discussion of the way China envisages the role it can play in international affairs see: Jian Zhang's *Building 'a harmonious world'? Chinese perceptions of regional order and implications for Australia*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, June 2007.



13. President Hu Jintao addresses a joint meeting of the Australian Parliament, image courtesy Peter West/Auspic.

Prime Minister Howard's Address

Prime Minister Howard's invitation to President Hu to address the Parliament was strategic: it fortified a relationship with one of the world's most dynamic economies, it signalled Australia's embrace of China as a regional partner, while also placing China, at least symbolically, on a foreign policy footing alongside the United States. Beyond this, the opportunity allowed Howard to challenge the longstanding myth that the Australian Labor Party, which has perennially considered itself the traditional custodian of the Australia–China relationship, was best placed to manage its development. Hu's appearance before the Parliament would inexorably link Australia's burgeoning relationship with communist China with the Liberal Party's strategy of *practical* and *commonsense* engagement with Asia. While Howard's invitation to Hu confirmed the strength of the relationship, it also demonstrated Howard's credentials as an effective and dominant foreign policy prime minister, at once vindicating his commitment to a foreign policy dominated by 'pragmatic' bilateralism.⁴⁴

44. The Howard Government's relationship with China had not always been so trouble free. In 1996, the new government supported the dispatch of a United States naval group to

In his opening statement to Parliament, Prime Minister Howard pointed out that ten years previously it would have been very unlikely that a Chinese head of state would address the Australian Parliament: 'It would be no exaggeration to say that 10 years ago an event such as this would have been seen as not only unlikely but indeed highly improbable'. In making such a claim Howard alluded to the advances that have taken place in Australia–China relations as well as within China itself. China had not only become a major importer of Australian raw materials, but within the decade, China had experienced a profound shift in its economic character. China had adopted various liberal market ideals: promoting the individual work ethic, connecting personal prosperity to national wealth, increasing domestic savings and substantially boosting its foreign reserves. Within the ten-year period, China had also become integrated into the international trading system through gaining membership to groups like the World Trade Organization, while also emerging as a key international stakeholder.⁴⁵

Like Hu, Howard made it clear that mutual interest and economic complementarity are the forces that have built a co-operative bilateral relationship: Australia, rich in natural resources, has supplied China with the mineral and energy resources to fulfil its development needs. However, while Howard identified this complementarity, his welcoming remarks were preoccupied with identifying the perceived differences between Australia and China. In what was a short speech, Howard used the word *different* six times ... 'We are different societies. We have different cultures, we have different traditions and we have different histories. No purpose is served in pretending

the Taiwan Straits, after China conducted missile tests to threaten Taiwan. While China was openly critical of Australia, for being too closely tied to the United States, there were no long term repercussions for the bilateral relationship. For a more complete description of the character of John Howard's pragmatic bilateralism see: Paul Kelly, *Howard's decade: an Australian foreign policy reappraisal*, Lowy Institute paper 15, Longueville Media, Sydney, 2006 and Michael Wesley, *The Howard Paradox: Australian diplomacy in Asia, 1996–2006*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2007.

45. In response to concerns raised by the Member for Cowan, Graham Edwards, about the anticipated length of President Hu's address and the travel arrangements for those who live in 'distant states', the Leader of the House, Tony Abbott, responded that he had not been informed of a specified period of time but that he imagined that 'a ceremonial address of this nature would not go for an inordinate length of time' and that he was confident that members could book a lunchtime or an afternoon flight. At which point the Member for Banks, Daryl Melham, interjected: 'Castro does four hours!'. The Leader of the House responded, 'I think the President of China is a reformed member of a certain political party, and I think that the member would be safe to catch an early afternoon flight back to Perth', 'Address by the President of the People's Republic of China', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 16 October 2003, p. 21657.

otherwise'. Howard proceeded to speak of people-to-people links; he cited the role China has played in nuclear disarmament negotiations with North Korea, before concluding that it is Australia's aim to promote constructive dialogue between China and the United States—countries with whom Australia has 'different but nonetheless close' relations.

Given the setting, the uniqueness of the occasion and the symbolic and political weight attached, one would anticipate that Hu's presence would have been marked by a lively speech which brought the significance of proceedings into focus. Instead, Howard offered a speech which was cold and devoid of colour. It was uncrafted, employed plain, dispassionate language and was replete with awkward and unmemorable sentences, for example: 'I would characterise the relationship between Australia and China as being both mature and practical and as being a relationship that is intensely built upon growing people-to-people links'. Moreover, where Hu expressed some affection for Australia and its people—speaking of cultural exchange as a bridge of friendship between the two peoples—Howard failed to display either an interest in China or any affection for the Chinese people. Beyond this, Howard failed to deliver a message that is by any measure representative. He spoke of himself, and for his government, not once mentioning the Australian people. When Howard did refer to people-to-people links, he spoke of the number of Chinese-Australians in his seat of Bennelong. Despite the uniqueness of the occasion, the speech failed to reflect upon the character or beliefs of either the Australian or Chinese people and implied that the two countries (and their political leaderships) share little beyond complementary economies.⁴⁶

46. Paul Kelly claims 'Howard was inadequately prepared' and 'failed, surprisingly, to seize the moment' while Annabel Crabb suggests that the speech was delivered 'off the cuff', Paul Kelly, 'Power at Stake', *Weekend Australian*, 25–26 October 2003, p. 17 and Annabel Crabb, 'Off the cuff looking a little frayed', *Age*, 25 October 2003, p. 8. By contrast, Howard's speech to Sydney's Australian-Chinese community in December 2004 is more successful in articulating what is common to the two nations, 'We seek friendship with the Chinese people but very particularly I want to take the opportunity today of expressing my admiration to the Chinese Australian Community for the contribution it has made to our nation over a very long period of time. You've brought to Australia ... your strong sense of family unity, your hard work, your thirst for education, your business acumen, your willingness whilst preserving your own cultural identity to become part of the broader Australian community'. John Howard, 'Address to Sydney's Australian Chinese Community, Golden Century Chinese Restaurant', Sydney, 22 December 2004.



14. Prime Minister John Howard introduces President Hu Jintao to the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Security, Kevin Rudd, image courtesy Peter West/ Auspic.

Howard's coolness became more apparent when these welcoming remarks are compared with those made for President Bush on the previous day. Howard's personal affection for Bush, his celebration of the nations' common values and his honouring of the shared military history, resulted in a speech with a contrasting content, rhythm, tenor, language, sentence structure and an overwhelmingly different range of temporalities.⁴⁷ Bush's speech conveyed a similar—albeit folksy—sense of closeness

47. This disproportion is also reflected in the official gifts presented to the two presidents and their wives. President Hu was given a hand-blown cobalt blue freeform vessel & jarrah wine presentation box (value: \$332.00) and a jackaroo akubra hat (value: \$127.27) while the President's wife, Madame Liu, was presented with black emu and cow leather handbag (value: \$91.00). President Bush was given a cobalt blue glass platter (value: \$240.00), Helen Hewson's *300 Years of Botanical Illustration*—limited edition (value: \$267.27), and he and his wife were given his-and-her drizabone short coats with fleece liners (value: \$503.64). The President's wife, Laura Bush, was also given a standard edition of Helen Hewson's *300 Years of Botanical Illustration* (value: \$65.45) and a signed copy of Geoffrey Blainey's *Black Kettle and Full Moon* (value: \$76.36)—total values: \$550.27 (President Hu) and \$1144.42 (President Bush). 'Questions in Writing: Official Gifts', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 May 2005, p. 72. The total cost of the Hu visit was \$211,456.60 (travel: \$47,662.35, accommodation: \$43,945.54, security: \$2,492.07, other expenses: \$117,356.64) Daryl Melham, 'Question in Writing: President

and affection and Bush reminded the Parliament that when Howard recently visited the Bush ranch in Texas he dubbed him, a 'man of steel'.

The welcoming address delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, Simon Crean, succeeded, in many instances, where Howard's failed. Drawing upon the Labor Party's China-legacy, Crean borrowed the aphorism used by former Chinese President Jiang Zemin, when visiting Australia in 1999—'There is an old Chinese saying: when you go to the well to draw water, remember who dug the well'. Crean paid tribute to the old well-diggers: Gough Whitlam, who was sitting in the public gallery, his father Frank, who accompanied Whitlam during his first visit to China as Prime Minister in 1973, and the Chinese Premier of that time, Zhou Enlai. In elaborating upon this shared history, Crean was able to honour the relationship in a way that Howard, with his fixation on difference, commonsense and practicality, could not. Crean also created a sense of affection and intimacy through congratulating the Chinese, on behalf of the Parliament, and the Australian people, on their recent manned space flight.⁴⁸ Crean's speech avoided the cool, guarded, uncompromising and values-focused perspective that is offered by Howard and he made a better attempt at demonstrating what the political leaderships might have in common.

Practical Realism

If we consider foreign policy speeches as a political and diplomatic mechanism for overlooking, or even overcoming, cultural and ideological difference, it seems odd that Howard would use this opportunity to draw attention to the differences between the nations. So why did Howard offer a speech so clearly focused upon the difference between Australia and China? It could be argued that Howard wanted to remind people not to become unrealistic about a relationship which is forged by countries *who hold different values*. Moreover, Howard attempted to use 'difference' strategically; he employed it to operate as a buffer between the two nations, a strategic space from which Australia can enter into 'open and frank discussions' with China.⁴⁹

of the People's Republic of China: Travel Costs' House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 September 2006, p. 122.

48. It should also be noted that Crean refers to 'this parliament of the Australian people'.

49. Howard's address avoids the question that lingers at its heart: how do two countries with 'distinctive yet different traditions' manage their differences in times of disagreement or conflict? For surely the 'maturity' of any *transactional* relationship is tested not in times of progress, but in times of strife.

In order to fully understand this focus on difference we need to place it within the context of Howard's foreign policy vision. Howard described his approach to foreign policy as 'positive realism'.⁵⁰ Positive realism suggests a strategy of maintaining a *realistic* appreciation of the difference between societies and cultures while *positively* focusing on shared interests and mutual respect; elsewhere Howard called it 'pragmatic engagement'. Howard's foreign policy realism was positive, because it could benefit from shared interests, but it was also predicated upon observing difference. Nevertheless, Howard's position was not without contradiction, for elsewhere he had claimed:

The basis of the way in which I have conducted Australia's relations with China in the time that I have been Prime Minister has been to build on the things that we have in common and not become obsessed with the things that make us different.⁵¹

Throughout his speech Howard was at pains to make clear that while we have a value-convergence with the United States and a value-difference with China, the value discrepancy does not prevent Australia from effectively engaging China.⁵² For the theory of positive realism enables Australia to maintain two types of foreign policy relationships: those which evolve from common history and shared values and those based on mutual respect and shared interests—what Michael Wesley has termed, 'organic' and 'transactional' relationships.⁵³

It is possible that the values-focused speech for Bush and the difference-focused speech for Hu are sufficiently co-dependent that they can be read as one. The common values that are identified as being shared between Australia and the United States are directly equivalent to the differences that are identified to exist between Australia and China. The pairing, sequencing and juxtaposition of the speeches reinforces this. In reading the

50. See, for example, John Howard, 'Australia's International Relations—Ready for the Future', National Convention Centre Canberra, 22 August 2001, p. 7.

51. Quoted in Dennis Shanahan, 'Howard feels the squeeze', *Australian*, 22 July 2005, p. 17.

52. In spite of the fact that each speech is framed around the notion of value-convergence or value-difference, we are given little sense of what a value is: how is a value constituted, who these values might represent, who they exclude, or how an Australian value is similar to an American value or different from a Chinese one. Perhaps the 690,000 Australians who claim Chinese ancestry or who have emigrated from the People's Republic might feel that the differences between Australia and China are not as comprehensive or as absolute as the Prime Minister suggests.

53. Michael Wesley: 'Howard's way: northerly neighbours and western friends' in *Griffith Review*, *Up North*, Edition 9, pp. 97–106, p. 101.

two speeches together, we can identify at least three important and complex foreign policy statements that Howard appeared to be making. In the first instance, Howard used the shared interests/different values template in an attempt to place China near the centre of Australian foreign policy, while signalling to the United States what the Australia–China relationship is not. In the second instance, Howard alerted the domestic audience to the fact that his government was not singularly focused on its alliance with the US; that he could simultaneously honour the alliance with the United States and 'get on' with *Asia*. Thirdly, in offering a closing comment that Australia wants to see 'calm and constructive dialogue between the United States and China on those issues which might potentially cause tension between them', Howard sent the message to the Chinese that—despite President Bush's claim that 'Australia's agenda with China is the same as my country's'—Australia does not see China in exactly the same way as the United States.⁵⁴

In summary, if we focus exclusively on the *content* of the welcoming remarks for President Hu, it could be argued that Howard's preoccupation with difference resulted in a message which was impersonal, awkward and lacking in diplomatic finesse. However, if we focus upon the *context* of the comments, reading the welcoming remarks for Hu alongside those offered for President Bush, Howard's speech appears to have a clearer purpose and a more recognisable foreign policy objective. Howard drew upon the powerful symbolism that was attached to the sequencing of the visits, while successfully communicating a highly complex and nuanced trilateral foreign policy position.

Relational Politics and Practical Realism

As a nation we're over all that sort of identity stuff. We're far more self-possessed and self-confident and self-believing and sure of our place in the world. And it is a very identifiably Australian place.⁵⁵

Howard appeared, almost intuitively, to develop certain policy positions in a very relational or oppositional manner—he regularly defined and promoted policy positions against that which they were not. Consistent with this pattern, Howard's positive realism emerged in contradistinction to the model for Asian engagement that was developed by the Hawke and Keating Governments. In claiming that the Australia–

54. President Bush made this comment during his address on the previous day, George Walker Bush, 'Joint Meeting', Senate, *Debates*, 23 October 2003, p. 16720.

55. John Howard as quoted by Greg Sheridan, 'Foreign Regions', *Weekend Australian*, 27–28 September 2003, p. 17.

China relationship should not be 'burdened by the kinds of unrealistic expectations that featured so prominently at certain times in the past', Howard made it clear that he did not approach China with what he saw as the romanticism and 'unrealistic' expectations of the ALP.⁵⁶ Moreover, Howard always believed that the Labor model for Asian engagement was predicated upon trading Australia's history, heritage and traditions for a seat at Asia's table.

In April 1995, shortly after assuming the leadership of the Federal Parliamentary Liberal Party for the second time, John Howard delivered the Fifth Asialink Lecture. This wide-ranging lecture was Howard's first foreign policy address since regaining the leadership of the Liberal Party. The views expressed are remarkably consistent with those articulated during eleven years of government. Speaking with a voice charged with the activism of opposition, Howard attacked the notion that the ALP is the only political party that can effectively engage the region. In promoting the Coalition's Asia credentials, Howard cited John McEwen's negotiation of the Australia–Japan Agreement on Commerce (1957), Malcolm Fraser's response to the Indochinese refugee crisis of the 1970s and the commitment of generations of Liberal prime ministers/foreign ministers to Australia's engagement with the region. Howard then went on to deride Paul Keating and Gareth Evans' 'self-serving, partisan re-writing of history', rejecting the idea that the Labor Party *discovered* Asia, before committing himself to a new and independent model for Asian engagement.

Even though China hardly rates a mention, the 1995 Asialink address was the originating point for some of Howard's classic formulations about Australian identity and Australian foreign policy:

We [the Coalition] do not believe that Australia faces some kind of exclusive choice between our past and our future, between our history and our geography. We see such a choice as a phoney and irrelevant one proposed by those with ulterior motives. Australia must meet the regional challenges of the future, in Asia and elsewhere, with the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances but with pride in our history, our values and our institutions ... Once we start disavowing our history, or disowning our values or changing our institutions simply because we think regional countries will respect us more for doing so, then we will be badly mistaken ...⁵⁷

56. John Howard, 'Australia's International Relations—Ready for the Future', National Convention Centre Canberra, 22 August 2001, p. 7.

57. John Howard, 'Australia's Links with Asia: Realising Opportunities in our Region', Fifth Asialink Lecture and Asialink Birthday Celebrations, 12 April 1995.

Whether or not the Australian Labor Party really wanted to renounce Australian identity or forswear Australian traditions in the way Howard suggested, Howard had continually used this suggestion to structure his model for positive realism. Australia's engagement with Asia would be based upon mutual respect and mutual interests and not upon any 'phoney' recalibration of Australian identity.

Howard did not simply reject Keating's foreign policy vision; he rejected Keating's domestic cultural vision for Australia, wholesale. Howard believed Keating's cultural agenda plunged the nation into a cultural malaise, resulting in 'unwarranted act(s) of national self-abasement' and an intellectual culture of self-hatred.⁵⁸ Howard would go on to replace Keating's culture of 'self-abasement' with an equally authoritative version of the past. Predicated upon the rejection of what he characterised as the 'black- armband' view of Australian history, the refusal to apologise to indigenous Australia and an entrenched distrust of multiculturalism, Howard's white cultural nationalism mobilised the legacy of the Anzac, promoted the monarchy and celebrated culturally-specific *values* such as *mateship* and the *fair go*.⁵⁹

In honouring such values—and in getting over 'all that sort of identity stuff'—Howard believed he could be realistic about the differences between Australia and the nations of Asia. This would help forge relationships of mutual respect, which in turn would help in the development of relationships built upon mutual self-interest.

58. *ibid.*

59. In 1996 Howard claimed, 'I profoundly reject with the same vigour what others have described, and I have adopted the description, as the black armband view of Australian history. I believe the balance sheet of Australian history is a very generous and benign one. I believe that, like any other nation, we have black marks upon our history but amongst the nations of the world we have a remarkably positive history. I think there is a yearning in the Australian community right across the political divide for its leaders to enunciate more pride and sense of achievement in what has gone before us. I think we have been too apologetic about our history in the past. I think we have been far too self-conscious about what this country has achieved and I believe it is tremendously important that we understand, particularly as we approach the centenary of the Federation of Australia, that the Australian achievement has been a heroic one, a courageous one and a humanitarian one. Any attempts to denigrate that achievement I believe will derive the justifiable ire and criticism of the Australian community; however people may lie in the political spectrum'. John Howard, 'Racial Tolerance', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 30 October 1996, p. 6155.

For Howard, the pairing of the Bush and Hu visits offered proof that Australia need not choose between its history and geography. Howard made this clear in a comment made in the weeks leading up to the presidential addresses:

... it's a wonderful message to communicate to our friends and to our own people that we can be close to the Americans yet develop a very constructive relationship with China, a very different country and one that will be enormously important to us in the years to come.⁶⁰

Plain and measured rhetoric became a hallmark of Howard's governance. Howard was particularly deliberate in the language he chose to describe the Australia–China relationship. Howard claimed, 'I've always sought to build our relationship with countries like China, not [with] overblown rhetoric, but through realistic engagement in areas where we have common interests'.⁶¹ Yet beyond this, Howard created a new vocabulary for describing Australia–China relations. The speech welcoming Hu is flushed with words from Howard's foreign policy lexicon: he claimed that the relationship had a 'commonsense character'; that it was 'practical', 'mature', 'constructive' and 'wholly positive'.

In Howard's terms, plain language helps keep the relationship 'realistic' and 'sensible'. Yet Howard also used plain language to differentiate himself from his Labor predecessors, who he argued have often made inflated claims about the Australia–China relationship. Even where there was little or no difference between Labor and the Coalition's foreign policies, Howard could be found to create a language system that suggests difference. Keating's 'immature' foreign policy was replaced by a 'mature' foreign policy; the Labor Party's 'special' relationship with China was transformed into a 'sensible' relationship and so on. As recently as April 2006, Prime Minister Howard introduced Premier Wen Jiabao by claiming: 'Now I don't seek to invoke language such as special relationships and so forth, but I simply make the point that the transformation of the relationship with China has been remarkable'.⁶²

60. Prime Minister John Howard, Interview with John Laws, Radio 2UE, 13 October 2003.

61. John Howard, 'Press conference announcing the liquid natural gas export deal with China', Sydney, 8 August 2002.

62. 'Joint Press Conference with His Excellency Mr Wen Jiabao Premier of the State Council, People's Republic of China', Parliament House, Canberra, 3 April 2006.

Charm Offensive

Joshua Kurlantzick's *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Changing the World* (2007), argues that as the People's Republic emerges as an international power it seeks to influence nations who are critical to its economic, political and strategic interests, through employing *soft power*. Borrowing from the Harvard academic Joseph Nye's notion that 'soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others ... attracting others to do what you want', Kurlantzick identifies Chinese soft power as:

... anything outside the military and the security realm, including not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more coercive economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations.⁶³

'High' soft power targets elites through exploiting the gravitational pull of the Chinese market, while 'low' soft power targets the public through events like the Olympic Games, the promotion of Chinese language studies, through sponsoring Chinese New Year celebrations and through offering student scholarships.⁶⁴ Within such an argument, these forms of influence or co-option are considered to have replaced past forms of *grey* diplomacy—more explicit in their coerciveness.⁶⁵ Some have argued that President Hu's speech can be read as an example of China's soft power diplomacy,

63. Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Changing the World*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 6.

64. In Australia we have seen Chinese influence emerge through the partial funding of Confucius Institutes at the universities of Western Australia, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Former Australian diplomat to China, Jocelyn Chey, has warned that Australian universities need to understand the political and strategic motives behind the establishment of such institutes, adding that any move by the institutes to promote academic research was 'fundamentally flawed' because of their close association with the Chinese Communist Party. Professor Chey adds that Australia has become a 'special target for soft power diplomacy' because of its large ethnic Chinese community, natural resources and close relations with the United States. As quoted by Tom Hyland, 'Confucius say ... universities at risk in link-up with Chinese Government', *Sunday Age*, 18 November 2007, p. 7.

65. *Charm Offensive* was one of two books Kevin Rudd presented President George Bush during their meeting at APEC in September 2007. Through the gift, Rudd appeared to send a message to the President about the way in which nations like China and the United States are understood to assert their influence. (The other was David Day's biography of John Curtin.)

particularly when juxtaposed against President Bush's uncompromising declarations about war and terror.⁶⁶

Kurlantzick, an American journalist, juxtaposes the parliamentary and community responses to President Bush and President Hu's addresses in October 2003 to develop his argument about the way China's soft power has improved its public image:

Protected by an enormous security cocoon, Bush planned to address the Australian Parliament. Bush could barely get rolling on his speech—in which he planned to tell the story of how American and Australian World War II troops together saved Australia from Japanese invasion—before Australian senators began heckling him. Two senators from Australia's Green Party yelled at Bush, screaming that America should follow international law and stop human rights abuses like those at the US prison compound at Guantánamo Bay ... (Bush quipped) 'I love free speech' as police pushed the senator-hecklers out of the chamber.

Only days later, Australia offered Chinese president [sic] Hu Jintao a vastly different welcome ... Hu toured Australia like a hero ... Even Australian Tibet campaigners, normally angry about China's treatment of Tibetans, went out of their way to be polite to Hu. One Tibetan group purchased a full-page advertisement in a leading Australian newspaper telling Hu, we welcome you to Australia and wish you a successful and pleasant visit ...⁶⁷

In comparing the reception of the two presidents, Kurlantzick overstates the differences—almost to the point of misrepresentation. Kurlantzick's analysis, which does not include any consideration of the welcoming remarks by Prime Minister Howard, also contains numerous interpretative and factual errors. In the above extract, Kurlantzick claims that the two Greens Senators were pushed from the chamber by police. As explained earlier, the Senators defied the orders of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and refused to leave the Chamber—police are not permitted to enter the chambers of the Australian Parliament. Significantly, the Bush and Hu addresses were sequenced to occur on consecutive days—not as Kurlantzick claims, days apart. The toadying 'Tibet campaigners' Kurlantzick refers to are, in actual fact, the Australia Tibet Council—who produced an advertisement that lobbied for dialogue between Hu Jintao and the Dalai Lama and which, as we have seen, included several hundred signatures, including those of a number of federal parliamentarians.⁶⁸ In his attempt to

66. See for example, Paul Kelly, 'Power at Stake', *Weekend Australian*, 25–26 October 2003, *Inquirer*, p. 17.

67. Joshua Kurlantzick, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.

68. Kurlantzick also stretches the results of the Lowy Institute poll to claim that 69% of Australians (rather than respondents) viewed China positively.

expose the transformation that has taken place in the way Australia understands China, Kurlantzick also suggests that as recently as the 1980s, China was a 'pariah' in Australia, 'Australia's responses to the Bush and Hu visits reflected shifts in Australian public opinion. Only twenty years ago, Australia viewed China as coldly as it greeted American [sic] warmly'—a statement clearly at odds with the description of the Hawke Government's China policy in Chapter Two.⁶⁹ Finally, while continuing to be cavalier about political events 'Down Under', Kurlantzick goes on to overstate the closeness of Australian politicians to China by suggesting booming Chinese markets have seen Australian politicians 'back away from ANZUS'.⁷⁰

It is likely that Howard would respond to Kurlantzick by suggesting that he needs to stop seeing China's rise in 'zero-sum terms':

Many of our critics said a closer relationship with the United States would come at a cost to our relationships in Asia. Nothing could be further from the case. Relationships are not a zero sum game. Our relationship with China has flourished at the same time as we have strengthened the US alliance.⁷¹

Yet more than this, in hosting the two presidents on successive days, Howard was seeking to develop a different type of position. In a somewhat clumsy closing statement, Howard—rather ambitiously—suggested that Australia might have a role as a facilitator to promote 'constructive and calm dialogue' between China and the United States:

... it is self-evident that the relationship between Australia, the United States and China respectively, on a two-way basis—that is, our relationship with the United States and then again our relationship with China—will be extremely important to the stability of our region. Our aim is to see calm and constructive dialogue between the United States and China on those issues which might potentially cause tension between them. It will be Australia's aim, as a nation which has different but nonetheless close relationships with both of those nations, to promote that constructive and calm dialogue.

69. Joshua Kurlantzick, *op. cit.*, p. 3. In Chapter Two we observed the way the Hawke Government was committed to growing the relationship and that by the mid-1980s more Ministers were visiting China than ever before. This was also a time when an unprecedented 70,000 Australians—one in every 200—visited China, Peter Cole-Adams, 'China's Favourite Barbarians Need to Avoid Self-delusion', *Age*, 14 September 1985.

70. Joshua Kurlantzick, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

71. Prime Minister John Howard, 'Address to the ASPI 'Global Forces 2007' Conference, Hyatt Hotel, Canberra', 5 July 2007.

Conclusion

Chapter Two examined J. G. Latham's Eastern Mission of 1934, describing it as a key precursor to Australia's engagement with the region. In the report detailing the activities of the Mission which was tabled in Parliament in July 1934, Latham explained that when the President of the National Government of China, Dr Lin Sen, recently visited Canberra, he was accorded a seat on the floor of the House of Representatives.⁷² This was typically the way the Australian Parliament honoured a visit by a foreign head of state at the time. This chapter has observed how, seventy years later, the strength of the Australia–China relationship was acknowledged through an even more significant act of parliamentary diplomacy. In examining this historic moment, this chapter has offered an account of how the bilateral relationship developed under the prime ministership of John Howard. It also gives preliminary consideration to the way the Chinese government manages its international relations. In so doing, the chapter provides context for the following chapter which turns to examine how the bilateral relationship developed during the 41st Parliament of Australia.

72. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', 1934', *Parliamentary Papers* for 1932–34, Number 236, p. 11.

Chapter Four: A Virtuous Circle? The 41st Parliament of Australia and the People's Republic of China

The Governments in both countries are closely working together to achieve a virtuous circle in the Sino–Australia relationship.¹

During the period of the 41st Parliament, November 2004–October 2007, there was considerable growth and diversification in the Australia–China relationship. The economic complementarities which became a hallmark of the relationship during the previous Parliament provided an impetus for the signing of a number of agreements in areas such as the transfer of nuclear materials, mutual legal assistance, extradition and prisoner exchange and cooperative research on bio-security. Such agreements were accompanied by new capacity building projects focusing on water resource management, legal governance and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS in China. High-level bilateral visits were utilised to mark a number of significant landmarks in relations. During a visit to Beijing in April 2005, Prime Minister Howard announced that Australia and China would commence talks with China on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), while in April 2006, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Australia and signed a bilateral safeguards agreement on the transfer of nuclear material between Australia and China.² The Chinese Premier's visit was followed by John Howard's 'important, symbolic visit' to southern China in June 2006, to witness the first delivery of Australian liquefied natural gas. The Chairman of the National People's Congress, Wu Bangguo, also visited Australia during the period to claim, in a speech in the Great Hall at Parliament House, that 'China–Australia relations are in their best shape in their history'.³

The developing multilayered character of the bilateralism was underscored by the agreement signed by President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister John Howard during the

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1. 'Ambassador Fu Ying Addresses Australian Parliament on China's "Anti-Secession Law"', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 22 March 2005, <http://au.china-embassy.org/eng/sgjs/t188395.htm> (accessed 28 July 2007)
 2. Wen Jiabao's visit was followed by the ratification of two nuclear safeguard agreements between Australia and China in January 2007.
 3. This was the first instalment resulting from the single largest trade agreement in Australia's history. John Howard, Doorstop interview, Shenzhen, China, 28 June 2006, Wu Bangguo's comment is found at: 'Australia–China relations are better than ever', *China Daily*, 25 May 2005.

15th Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders’ meeting in Sydney in September 2007 which committed the two nations to an annual senior-level strategic dialogue to facilitate bilateral coordination on important international issues.⁴ The growing closeness between the two countries was further emphasised by President Hu’s four-point proposal for enhancing bilateral relations. Hu’s plan outlined a program for promoting closer high-level exchange between legislative bodies and political parties, building deeper bilateral economic and trade cooperation, increasing people-to-people links and increasing dialogue on regional and international issues.⁵ There was a corresponding shift in the tone of statements made by Prime Minister Howard. No longer preoccupied with the differences between Australia and China, a more comfortable Howard surrendered the shared interests/different values platform, relinquishing the descriptors: mature, practical and sensible. The sense of optimism and goodwill between Australia and China was ultimately consecrated by the loan of two giant pandas—Wangwang and Funi—to a South Australian zoo.⁶ From a parliamentary perspective, the foundations were laid for increased contact between the two legislatures. On 20 August 2006, the Department of the House of Representatives entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National People’s Congress in order to establish a framework of exchange between the two parliamentary institutions. The framework of exchange provided for regular exchanges of information between the legislators and parliamentary officials.⁷

Perhaps the most serious challenge to the relationship over the period of the 41st Parliament was the ‘defection’ of the Consul for Political Affairs at the Chinese

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4. During Hu’s visit the single largest export deal for an Australian company was signed committing Woodside Petroleum to exporting up to \$45 billion worth of gas to PetroChina.
 5. Oxford Analytica, ‘Australia/China: Canberra faces China, US dilemma’, 17 September 2007.
 6. This symbolic gesture surpasses the three-month loan of the pandas Fei Fei and Xiao Xiao for Australia’s Bicentennial celebrations in 1988. In an act which some have described as an act of great obsequiousness—the Presiding Officers of the Parliament, the Speaker of the House of Representatives (David Hawker), and the President of the Senate (Alan Ferguson), called on President Hu Jintao at the Hyatt Hotel, during his stopover in Canberra prior to APEC.
 7. The MOU was signed in Beijing, at the Great Hall of the People, by Sheng Huaren, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), and Mr Ian Harris, the Clerk of the House of Representatives. A delegation from the NPC, led by Mr Sheng Huaren, visited Australia as part of the MOU exchange framework from 28 May to June 2007.

Consulate in Sydney in June 2005. Chen Yonglin's application for political asylum, and his allegations of extensive Chinese espionage activity in Australia, had the potential to seriously damage bilateral relations. Another event that threatened to disrupt bilateral goodwill was Australia's hosting of the inaugural ministerial-level Trilateral Security Dialogue (April 2006) involving Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Aso. China expressed serious concerns about such a dialogue (later renamed the Trilateral *Strategic Dialogue*) taking place and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer regularly sought to reassure Beijing that the talks were committed to discussing general regional concerns, and not the containment of China.⁸ The Dalai Lama's visit to Australia during June 2007 was another subject of possible friction. The visit was accompanied by the Chinese Government's customary expressions of disapproval and by the cautious consulting of diaries by the leaders of the major political parties.

Statements and speeches that were made in Parliament offer a snap-shot of the China-related issues that arose during this period. Some related to themes that had continued over successive parliaments, such as human rights in China, opportunities attached to China's economic development, information about high level visits and matters related to Taiwan.⁹ Emerging concerns focused upon Australia's Nuclear Safeguards Agreement with China and Australia's intention to export uranium to China; the fate of Chen Yonglin and the government's handling of his application for protection; the status of Free Trade negotiations; the effect of climate change and global warming in China and the quality of Chinese exports to Australia. In contrast to some of the China-related debates that took place during earlier parliaments, the character of the debate during the 41st Parliament was largely bipartisan.

This chapter has two primary objectives. Firstly, it offers an analysis of the attitudes of members of the 41st Parliament towards the Australia–China relationship, through drawing upon the results of a questionnaire that was distributed to all members of Parliament during 2007. Secondly, through examining the major China-related outputs of the Parliament—committee and delegation reports, parliamentary debates and policy

8. Patrick Walters, 'Containing China a big mistake: Downer', *Australian*, 16 March 2006, p. 1 and Greg Sheridan, 'Rice contains Downer on handling of China', *Australian*, 17 March 2006, p. 2.

9. In this instance the Governor-General's visit to China and Premier's Wen Jiabao's visit to Australia; Taiwan's application to participate in the World Health Assembly and China's passing of the anti-secession law.

and legislative material—the chapter examines the specific contributions of the 41st Parliament to the development of the bilateral relationship.



15. President Hu Jintao visits Bywong Sheep Station near Gundaroo, north of Canberra, prior to APEC, 5 September 2007, image courtesy Peter West/Auspic.

Parliamentary Questionnaire Methodology

The majority of the twenty-four questions contained in the parliamentary questionnaire were clear and unambiguous ‘closed questions’ which utilised preset response options. Preset response options were chosen in the expectation that the data could be aggregated to reflect cross-party attitudes. Some questions asked respondents to attribute, on a rating scale, the level of importance they attached to a particular issue or

event and in some instances respondents were also given the option of adding comment. Other response options were dichotomous and sought YES or NO answers. On one occasion a dichotomous question was followed by an open question: 'Do you believe that the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy', YES or NO, and if YES could you please provide an example'. A final question asked for additional comment about the Australia–China relationship. While some questions related to Australia's foreign policy priorities, or the influence that the Opposition and minor parties may have on the nation's foreign policy, the questionnaire was primarily concerned with identifying parliamentary attitudes to past, present and future aspects of the Australia–China relationship. Beyond the temporally-specific material, there were numerous questions addressing matters of trade, human rights, the export of Australian uranium to China and the China-related issues that are raised by constituents. Respondents to the questionnaire were instructed that their views would remain confidential and non-attributable.

The response rate to the questionnaire was 26%, with 59 of 226 parliamentarians responding. The majority of respondents represented a self-selected group of parliamentarians who appeared to have an active interest or involvement in the Australia–China relationship. A high proportion had visited the People's Republic (66%) or the Republic of China (58%) and 83% were members of either the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group or the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet.¹⁰ Results from the questionnaire offer useful, balanced and representative cross-party data which has not previously been compiled. The results from the questionnaire can also be read as a useful complement to other recent surveys on Australia's foreign policy: the 2007 United States Studies Centre National Survey Results, 'Australian attitudes towards the United States: Foreign Policy, Security, Economics and Trade' (University of Sydney),

10. 21% belonged to the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group (only); 17% belonged to the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group (only); 3% belonged to the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet (only). In terms of cross or multiple memberships: a further 26% belonged to the Australia–China and the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and 16% belonged to the Australia–China, the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet. An All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet was established in 2005 with Michael Danby as Chair and Bob Brown, Peter Slipper and Natasha Stott Despoja as vice-chairs. The Group supports the Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way Approach' which would see Tibetans holding responsibility for managing internal matters, such as health and education, while China retained control of foreign affairs and defence.

the Lowy Institute polls surveying public opinion and foreign policy (2005 and 2007) and Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley's survey of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) employees, 'The Perception of Australia's Foreign Policy Makers'.¹¹

Overall, 42% of respondents were Labor, 41% were Liberal, 10% were Nationals, 3% were Democrats, and 2% were Greens, while 2% chose not to disclose their party. When matched against party representation in the 41st Parliament, responses were received from 18% of Liberals; 27% of Nationals, 22% of Labor, 50% of Democrats (2 in 4) and 25% of Greens (1 in 4). On a House–Senate comparison, 64% of respondents were from the Lower House and 36% were from the Upper House. As a rule, respondents tended to have longer records of service, for example, 26% had served for more than 15 years while 25% had served between nine and 12 years.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire was supplemented by qualitative data obtained through interviews conducted over the course of 2007. Interviews were conducted with over a dozen parliamentarians with specific interests in the Australia–China relationship. They were conducted with an equal number of Liberal and Labor parliamentarians as well as with representatives from both the Nationals and the minor parties. Interviews were also carried out with relevant parliamentary and government officials. These interviews presented an opportunity to expand upon aspects of the parliamentary questionnaire while also allowing for discussions about the interaction that takes place between the Parliament and the Chinese Embassy, the notion of Chinese 'soft power' and parliamentary perceptions of the future character of the bilateral relationship. In order to preserve confidentiality, the comments of interviewees have not been attributed.

The generally sanguine attitude towards Australia–China relations that emerges from questionnaire data and interview responses appears to be predicated upon a number of features: the benefits that have resulted from a thriving bilateral trade relationship; a continuing period of comparatively stable Sino–United States relations; and the prevailing attitude that the rise of China will be positive for the international community. Each feature has combined to create a period of unparalleled growth, confidence and sense of opportunity for Australia–China relations. Nevertheless, this

11. The two Lowy polls are titled: *Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (2007) and *Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*. Gyngell and Wesley's survey is found in the appendix to *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (2003); Gyngell and Wesley sent their questionnaire to more than 800 DFAT employees and received 242 responses, or approximately 30%.

general sense of optimism does not extend across all areas of the relationship. Some parliamentarians expressed concern about China's human rights record, the export of Australian uranium to China, the potential repercussions of a Free Trade Agreement, relations between the Chinese Government and the Republic of China (Taiwan), and lack of parliamentary attention given to China's military expenditure. However, one of the most emphatic findings to emerge from this research is that there is great diversity in the way Australian parliamentarians view the Australia–China relationship. This diversity operates across the Parliament and within the parties; there is no one parliamentary model, nor one party model.

Parliament and Foreign Policy

There is a dominant perception that the Australian Parliament has an extremely restricted capacity to influence foreign policy.¹² In *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (2003) Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley offer the following assessment:

Under the United States constitution, Congress has important roles in the foreign policy process: treaties made can only be ratified by a Senate vote; Congress has formal roles in the declaration of war and the appointment of diplomatic agents; and both houses have been highly active in setting the parameters for the exercise of executive powers in making foreign policy. The Australian Parliament has none of these formal powers. Rarely does the conduct of Australian foreign policy require enabling legislation; and the debate and discussion of foreign affairs is more often than not relegated behind domestic political issues that call on the legislative powers of both houses of Parliament. Parliamentary debates on foreign affairs are relatively rare, and often scheduled around the discussion of domestic matters ... it is hard to find any significant role played in the formulation of Australian foreign policy by Federal Parliament. In addition to lacking the capacity to contribute or [sic] a formal role in the foreign policy process, Parliament is constrained by the lack of interest (or of incentive to take an interest) in foreign affairs by the majority of parliamentarians.¹³

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12. See John Knight and W. J. Hudson, *Parliament and Foreign Policy*, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Australian National University, Canberra 1983; B. L. Hocking, 'Parliament, parliamentarians and foreign affairs', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 30. No. 2, 1976, pp. 280–303; J. D. B. Millar, 'The role of the Australian parliament in foreign policy', *The Parliamentarian*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1969, pp. 1–6; Kate Burton, *Scrutiny or Secrecy? Committee Oversight of Foreign and National Security Policy in the Australian Parliament*, Australian Parliamentary Fellow Monograph, Parliamentary Library, 2005.
 13. Allan Gyngell & Michael Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 173–177. Following Australia's participation in the invasion of Iraq, Malcolm Fraser called for laws to prevent future governments from going to war without a vote in the Parliament.

Such a statement does not augur well for a discussion of the Parliament and foreign policy; it draws attention to the absence of any parliamentary legislative mandate in foreign affairs while reinforcing that the executive has the prerogative in foreign policy. Moreover, this extract does not simply claim that parliamentarians are estranged from the foreign policy process, but that many are in fact uninterested in foreign affairs matters.

In examining the role of the Parliament in foreign policy formation, Gyngell and Wesley focus on formal legislative power, rather than influence, facilitation, consultation or informal power. It is therefore worth noting other parliamentary activities that, while not directly or immediately contributing to legislated outcomes, can become critical to building parliamentary knowledge of, and influence in, foreign affairs. In addition to the parliamentary activities that Gyngell and Wesley identify—parliamentary debate, Question Time, questions placed on notice and committee work—there are other activities which could be identified: representation at multilateral forums (including forums specifically for parliamentarians, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union), representation at specific issues forums (e.g.: environment, rights or labour forums), and participation in the activities of inter-party parliamentary delegations and parliamentary friendship groups. Then we might also consider non-parliamentary activities such as contributing to public debate on foreign policy or working with non-government organisations in an attempt to influence foreign policy.

The Parliament may also indirectly involve itself in foreign affairs in ways not envisaged by Gyngell and Wesley. Parliamentarians may explain the Australian parliamentary system to members of other legislatures; they may promote an understanding of other nations and other political systems; or alternatively, they may involve themselves in second-track diplomacy—ameliorating against breakdowns in government to government communication, or conversely, discussing difficult bilateral issues at a level below that of head of state or government. As the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Ian Harris, has suggested:

The value of legislator-to-legislator contact is significant, especially in areas where negotiations at officer level have not produced satisfactory results. Occasionally, when there are tensions at a government-to-government level, the contact between parliaments provides a means of continuing communication.¹⁴

14. Ian Harris, 'The Role of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in International Affairs, Globally and in the Asia/Pacific Region', Address to the Canberra Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 19 November 2003, p. 5.

In the above extract Gyngell and Wesley also suggest that few Australian parliamentarians have backgrounds predisposing them to foreign policy work. Such a suggestion is supported by Kate Burton's study of committee oversight of foreign and national security policy in the Parliament, in which she claims that her study of a database of nearly 600 current or former politicians revealed only 6 with diplomatic and foreign affairs backgrounds.¹⁵ While this figure is surprisingly low, if we were to add parliamentarians with academic backgrounds in allied areas such as International Relations or Political Science we would find more parliamentarians with relevant backgrounds. For example, in the 41st Parliament, we find that Kim Beazley was a former Lecturer in Social and Political Theory at Murdoch University and Senator Russell Trood was formerly an Associate Professor in International Relations at Griffith University. Similarly, this number would be higher again were we to include younger generation parliamentarians who hold higher degrees and/or undergraduate degrees in International Relations.

With regard to the matter of parliamentary interest in foreign affairs, it should be noted that the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is the largest committee of the Parliament. As Ian Harris has reflected, 'there is considerable competition amongst our Members and Senators to become members of the committee, reflecting, I think, its importance in their eyes'.¹⁶ It could also be argued that across the Parliament the Australia–China relationship is accorded a great deal of significance and receives regular attention. Many Members and Senators remain well informed about the relationship through their work with committees, through the activities of parliamentary friendship groups, through official parliamentary visits, and in some instances, through leading business delegations to China. Other parliamentarians remain informed about China-related matters through their connection with their Australian-Chinese constituents. One only need consider the interests of constituents in the seats that form the 'China-belt' that fans out around inner Sydney: Watson (Tony Burke, ALP), Bennelong (John Howard, LP), Barton (Robert McClelland, ALP), Lowe (John Murphy, ALP), Parramatta (Julie Owens, ALP) and Reid (Laurie Ferguson, ALP). According to 2001 Census data (with 2003 electoral boundaries) the numbers of

15. Kate Burton, *Scrutiny or Secrecy? Committee Oversight of Foreign and National Security Policy in the Australian Parliament*, Australian Parliamentary Fellow Monograph, Parliamentary Library, 2005, p. 61.

16. Ian Harris, 'The Role of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in International Affairs, Globally and in the Asia/Pacific Region', Address to the Canberra Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 19 November 2003, p. 4.

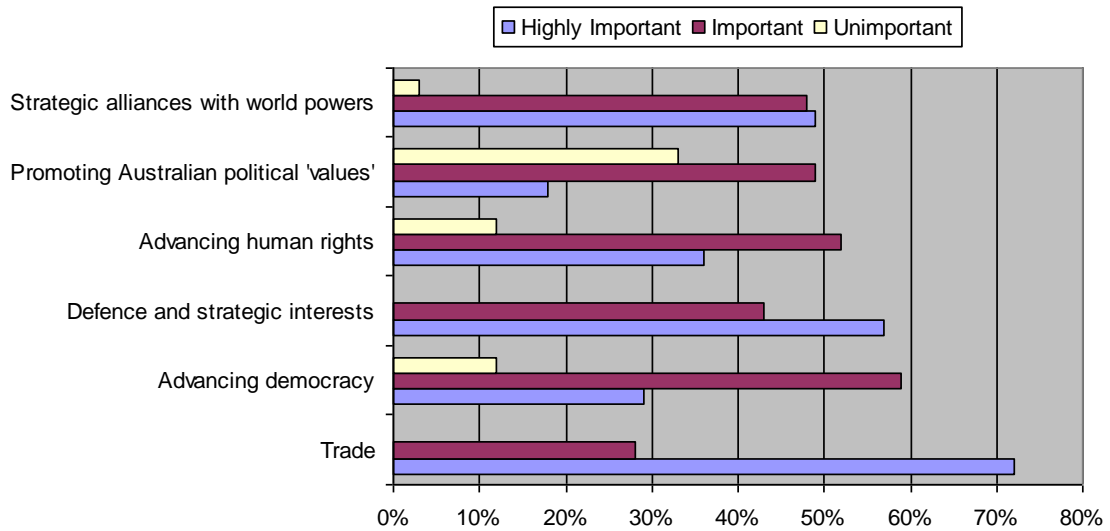
Chinese-born in these electorates are: Watson—9.6%, Bennelong—7.5%, Barton—6.8%, Lowe—6.2 %, Parramatta—6% and Reid—7.5%.¹⁷

41st Parliament and Foreign Policy

The parliamentary questionnaire contained preliminary questions about the Parliament and foreign policy. These contextual questions focused on two areas: Australia's foreign policy priorities and the perceived influence of the Opposition and minor parties on Australian foreign policy. In the first instance respondents were asked what level of importance they ascribed to six different interests or values when determining Australia's foreign policy: trade, defence and strategic interests, the advancement of human rights, the promotion of Australian political 'values' and the establishment of strategic alliances with world powers. Overwhelmingly, priority was given to those matters of national self-interest which maximise Australia's influence and power: trade, defence and strategic interests and the maintenance of security alliances. Correspondingly, less emphasis was given to values-based priorities such as human rights, the promotion of democracy or even the slightly nebulous notion of Australian political 'values'. Advancing human rights and advancing democracy tended to be accorded *important* rather than *highly important* status, while unequivocal importance was placed upon trade, defence and strategic interests.

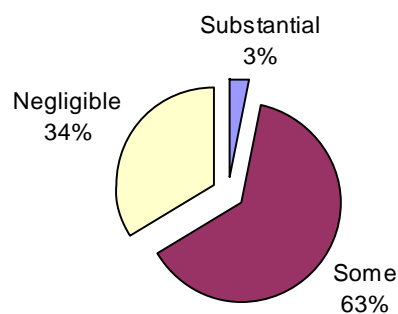
17. Figures include those born in Hong Kong but do not include those born in Taiwan; at the time of writing the results from the 2006 Census were unavailable. I thank Tony Kryger from the Statistics and Mapping Section of the Parliamentary Library for these figures.

Figure 1—Indicate the importance you attribute to the following interests or values in determining Australia’s foreign policy:



Given Australia’s historic reliance upon security alliances, it is surprising that respondents did not attach higher importance to Australia’s strategic alliances with world powers. However, this may be interpreted as representing a high level of confidence in the current state of the alliance with the United States, rather than reflecting any diminution or abrogation of its value.

Figure 2—How much influence do you believe the Opposition and minor parties have on foreign policy?



In turning to the question of what influence the Opposition and the minor parties are understood to have over foreign policy, we observe that the view of parliamentarians is more optimistic than that expressed by Gyngell and Wesley. While as many as 34% of respondents claimed that the Opposition and minor parties had *negligible influence*, the

majority believed that the Opposition and the minor parties could exert *some* influence on foreign policy.

Revealingly, 47% of Coalition respondents claimed the Opposition and minor parties have negligible effect on foreign policy—as opposed to 24% of Labor respondents and 0% of minor party respondents. Several respondents differentiated between the Opposition and the minor parties, claiming that the Opposition has *some* influence but that the influence of the minor parties is *negligible*, while one interviewee, endorsing the comments of Gyngell and Wesley, claimed that when it comes to foreign affairs, ‘The Parliament is merely a spectator’.

The following section of the chapter draws upon questionnaire data and interview responses to five themes: influential historical milestones in the bilateral relationship, economic relations, sources of information about China, travel to China and parliamentary attitudes toward Chinese ‘soft power’. This attitudinal study is followed by an examination of the major China-related committee inquiries that were undertaken during the 41st Parliament.

Influential Historical Milestones in the Australia–China Relationship

Increasingly, both major parties seek to promote the histories of their achievements in foreign policy in Asia.¹⁸ The Coalition does this through promoting John McEwen’s negotiation of the 1957 Australia–Japan Trade Agreement, Malcolm Fraser’s Indochinese refugee policy and the Coalition’s dismantling of the white Australia policy. Similarly, Labor leaders identify the activism of figures like Evatt, Whitlam and Gareth Evans in pursuing multilateral engagement, their commitment to engaging the Asia-Pacific—as well as their contribution to the dismantling of the white Australia policy. In the battle over which side of politics has best negotiated Australia’s foreign policy towards East Asia, China has emerged as a critical battleground. Both sides promote their China credentials—Whitlam’s recognition of China, Hawke’s ‘special relationship’ versus Fraser’s bipartisanship and the development of a ‘mature’ and ‘practical’ relationship under Howard. The increased impetus to claim China for one’s party is reflected in the assertion of one Labor parliamentarian, ‘The ALP’s China credentials are pure—the ALP has always considered Asia our future’.

18. See, for example, John Howard, ‘Australia’s Links with Asia: Realising Opportunities in our Region’, Fifth Asialink Lecture and Asialink Birthday Celebrations, 12 April 1995 and Laurie Brereton, ‘An Outlook for Australian Foreign Policy: a Labor Perspective’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 55, No. 3, 2001, pp. 343–349.

While the ALP appears more proficient at selling the history of their engagement with the region, the ALP also romanticises this engagement. The visit of the ALP Opposition delegation to China in July 1971, Prime Minister William McMahon's claim that Zhou Enlai was playing Whitlam as a fisherman plays a trout, Gough Whitlam's recognition of China in 1972 and Whitlam's meeting with Mao in 1973—each has a central place in ALP folklore. Over time, a narrative about the ALP's custodianship of the relationship has developed. Within such a narrative, and here I paraphrase it, the ALP is on the cusp of recapturing that which is rightfully theirs and the *all-China-knowing* Kevin Rudd will re-deliver China to the ALP. In prophesying a new golden age in Australia–China relations, one adherent to this narrative claims, 'The Chinese are very aware of the history of Labor's engagement with China—they respect it—and they know that Gough went there before any other Western leader'. When a Liberal parliamentarian was asked for an opinion about this ALP China-tenure narrative, he identified it as both 'self-serving and absurd'. Both these responses help to illustrate how China has continually been used within Australian domestic politics for party differentiation.

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked to rate, from an historical perspective, how influential a series of milestones have been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship. The questionnaire was interested in determining the weight accorded to certain milestones, from the Whitlam Government's recognition of China in 1972 to Hu Jintao's recent address to the Australian Parliament in 2003. With regard to the Whitlam Government's recognition of China, 65% nominated this landmark event as *highly influential*, 19% claimed it as *moderately influential* while 10% claimed it as only *marginally influential*. (92% of ALP respondents nominated recognition as *highly influential*.) That 35% regarded recognition as anything other than *highly influential* may suggest that some parliamentarians have very partisan political memories. The liberalisation of the Chinese economy under Deng Xiaoping, an influence that engendered bipartisan response, rated highest.

The importance attributed to the Howard Government's management of the relationship solicited an even more partisan response. While 74% of Coalition respondents identified the Howard years as *highly influential*, only 9% of ALP respondents did the same.¹⁹ Parliamentarians provided more varied responses to the level of importance accorded to Hu Jintao's address to the Australian Parliament in October 2003. The level

19. Correspondingly 23% of respondents from the Coalition attached *moderate influence* to bilateral relations under the Howard Government as opposed to 70% of Labor respondents.

of influence was evenly spread with: 22% *highly influential*, 36% *moderately influential*, 28% *marginally influential* and 14% *not influential*. Overall, however, President Hu's address was considered the least influential historical milestone. See *Figure 6—Influential Historical Milestones*.

Australia–China Economic Relations

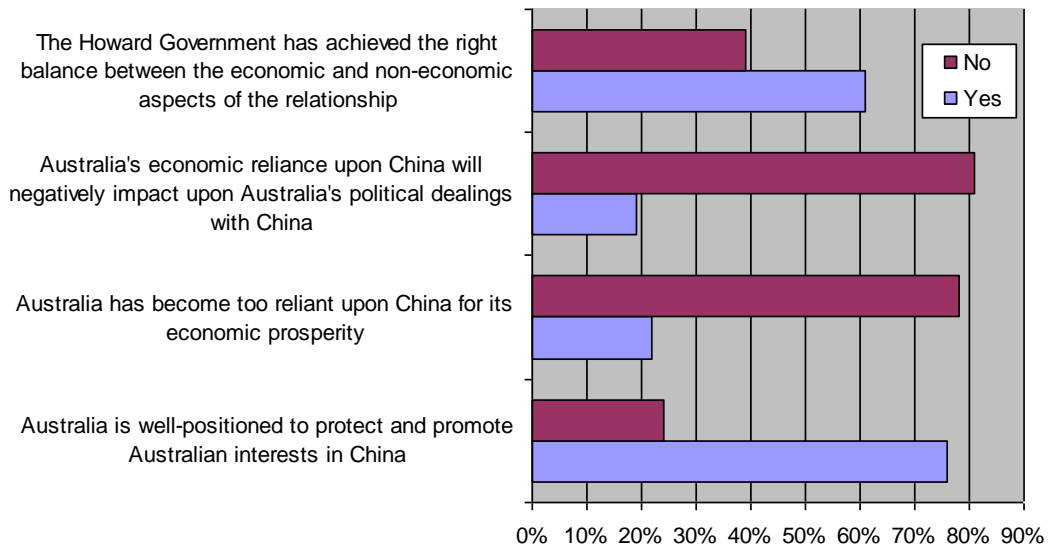
Over the course of the 41st Parliament the bilateral economic relationship developed exponentially. In 2006 China, combined with Hong Kong, overtook Japan as Australia's largest trading partner. By mid-2007, China alone overtook Japan as Australia's largest trading partner, with trade between the two nations exceeding \$50 billion a year. With Australia benefiting from fast-growing commodity demand as a result of simultaneous growth in China and India, one would expect the vast majority of respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire to be extremely optimistic about the status of Australia–China economic relations.

In order to provide some context for parliamentary opinions about the growth in economic relations, respondents were asked two questions about the current status of the economic relationship. These were supplemented by two further questions about the possible effect of Australia's fast-growing economic enmeshment with China. The sense of optimism about the trade relationship was supported by the fact that 76% of respondents considered Australia well-positioned to protect and promote Australian interests in China. Only 22% of respondents believed that Australia has become too reliant upon China for its economic prosperity. Relatively few (19%), felt that Australia's economic reliance will negatively impact upon Australia's political dealings with China. However, there were those who envisaged this reliance resulting in complex challenges for Australian policy makers. One Liberal Senator commented on the possibility of a more coercive China:

Australia has become increasingly economically dependent on Chinese resource imports but the growing power of China will change the geo-political power relationships in this region and Australia may find China demanding that Australia follow their policy objectives in the future.

A Liberal Member of the House of Representatives suggested such reliance has already resulted in political and moral acquiescence: 'We have surrendered our principles because of trade and jobs'.

Figure 3—Given the importance of China to Australia’s economic prosperity, do you feel that:



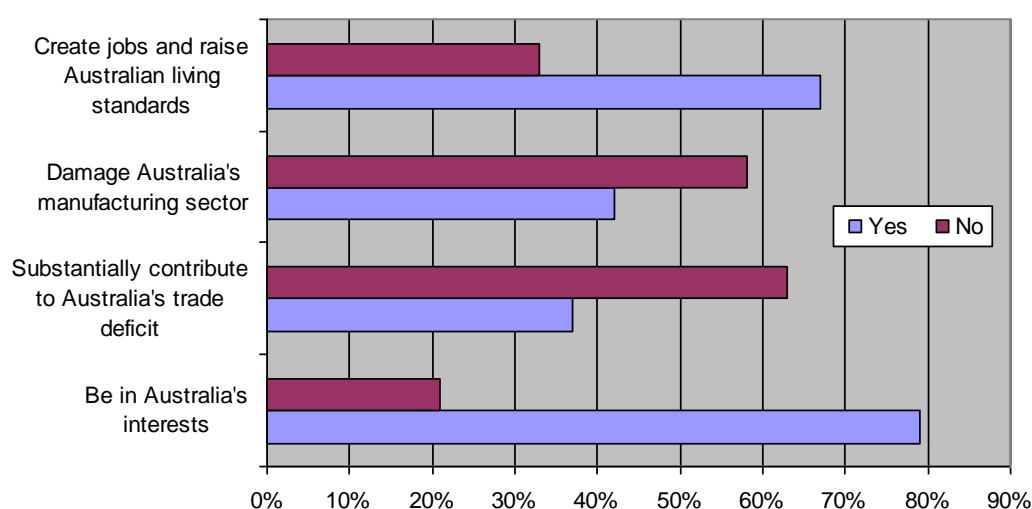
Of these four questions, the one which elicited the greatest disparity in response, on a cross-party basis, was that asking whether the Howard Government had achieved the right balance between economic and non-economic aspects of the relationship—with 61% of respondents suggesting it had. However, any question about the performance of the Howard Government generated extremely partisan data. If we examine this response on a cross-party basis, we find that 96% of Coalition respondents claimed the Howard Government had struck the right balance, as opposed to only 28% of Labor and 0% of minor party respondents.

In May 2005 Australia and China began negotiations on an Australia–China Free Trade Agreement (AUCFTA). While there had been great expectation attached to such an agreement, throughout 2007 the negotiations struck numerous hurdles: Australia’s desire for the Agreement to include access for the service export markets of education (Australia’s leading service export to China), telecommunications and finance; and China’s desire for access for unskilled labour, were among the sticking points. Added to this have been differences in the way the nations approach policy negotiations. Yet, in spite of the limited progress, and the Minister for Trade Warren Truss’ description of the negotiations as ‘tortuous’, parliamentarians were still favourably disposed towards

the prospect of an FTA with China.²⁰ In fact, 79% of respondents claimed that an FTA would be in Australia's interests.

There was generally strong support for the preferential access to Chinese markets that an FTA would deliver. However, concern was expressed over the effect an FTA might have upon Australia's manufacturing sector. 42% of respondents believed an FTA would damage Australia's manufacturing sector while 37% of respondents were concerned that it would substantially contribute to Australia's trade deficit.²¹

Figure 4—Do you believe a Free Trade Agreement with China would:²²

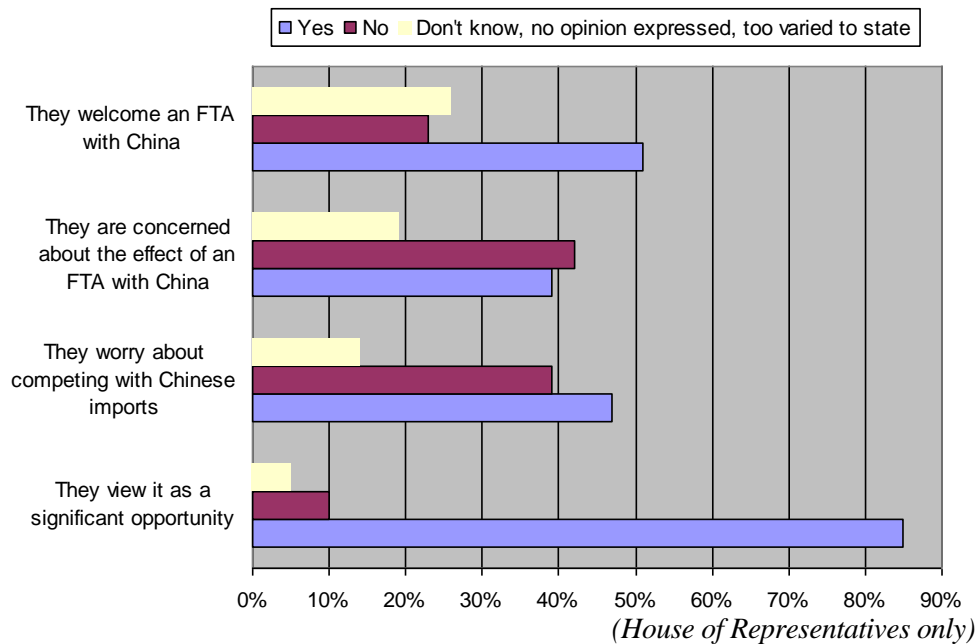


Members of the House of Representatives were asked the associated question of how businesses in their electorate have responded to the economic 'rise of China'. A

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20. Graeme Dobell, 'China Trade Negotiations 'Tortuous' Says Truss', *ABC News*, 16 June 2007, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/06/16/1953209.htm> (accessed 2 August 2007)
 21. China has been negotiating Free Trade Agreements with some of Australia's commercial competitors since 2001 and Australia needs to complete its FTA negotiations if it is to secure some competitive advantage. No respondent made mention of the need to reach agreement soon or before the deadline of April 2008.
 22. The use of closed questions with regard to the FTA did not work as effectively as in other instances. This was largely because the precise terms of the FTA are yet to be decided. 8% of respondents suggested that their answer was dependent on the terms and comprehensiveness of such an agreement. Others qualified their responses by explaining: they were 'wary of all bilateral treaties and trade agreements' or that a 'FTA would change rather than damage Australia's manufacturing sector'.

resounding 85% claimed that the business community in their electorate view it as a significant opportunity, with a clear majority welcoming an FTA with China.

Figure 5—How does the business community in your electorate consider the economic ‘rise of China’?



The data on constituents' attitudes towards the proposed FTA with China is almost identical to the response to a similar question in the Lowy Institute poll, *Australians Speak 2005*. Asked 'On balance, do you think signing a Free Trade Agreement with China would be good or bad for Australia or would it make no difference' 51% thought an FTA with China would be good, 20% thought it would be bad and 29% were either unsure or thought that it would make no difference.²³ However, in contrast with these findings, one Labor parliamentarian claimed that at the ALP state branch level there exists a great deal of discontent over an FTA with China which has been ignored by Caucus members who favour an FTA; he stated—'The further you get away from the Parliament the more concern there is over an FTA with China'. For a more detailed analysis of different sectorial attitudes to the FTA see the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report, *Opportunities and Challenges*. The

23. Ivan Cook, *Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005, p. 2. In the Lowy Institute Poll of 2007 outright support for an FTA with China reduced with 38% identifying it as good, 27% bad and 25% considering that it makes no difference, Allan Gyngell, *Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, 2007, p. 12.

report suggests that while the agricultural sector is supportive of an FTA with China, the horticultural, manufacturing, and textile, clothing and footwear sectors were all apprehensive about an FTA with China.²⁴

The issue of intellectual property (IP) rights has become a significant sticking point in the FTA negotiations with both countries seeking substantially different chapters on IP. In April 2007 the United States filed two WTO cases against China over the inadequate protection of IP rights. While China has made it clear that it would not enter into bilateral discussions with any country that joined the United States in these cases, Canada, the European Union, Japan and Mexico have joined one or both of these cases as third parties. On 7 October 2007 Minister Warren Truss, announced that Australia would participate as a third party in this dispute. However, it should be noted that while IP protection and issues of pirating and the production of counterfeit goods are of concern to Australian business, in contrast with the manufacturing sector in the United States, exporters of minerals and energy in Australia are less affected by matters of intellectual property protection—copyright, patents and trademarks. With regard to the possible influence of IP issues on Australia–China relations into the future, 42% of respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire identified that enforcement of intellectual property rights will be *moderately influential* in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship while 40% identified IP as *marginally influential* (see *Figure 12—Influences on the future character of the relationship*).

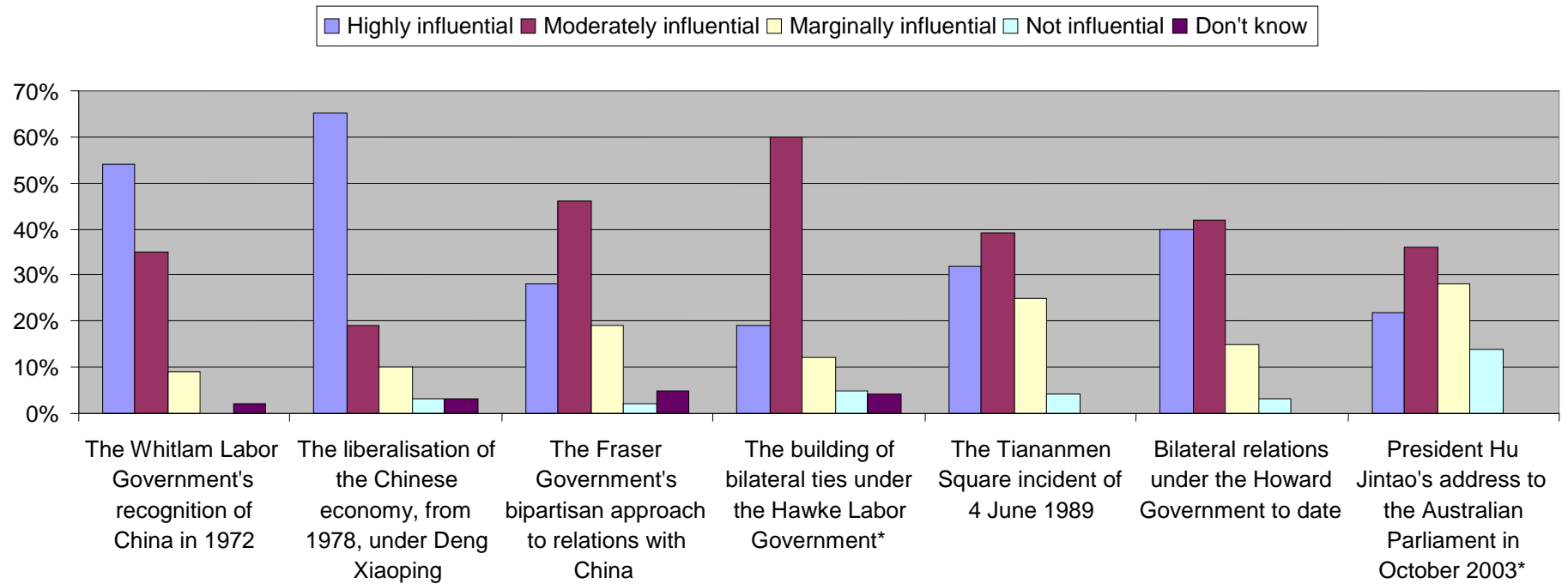
Sources of Information about China

In an attempt to gauge where parliamentarians obtain their information about China, the questionnaire asked which sources parliamentarians accessed for information about China and the frequency of this access. The questionnaire offered fourteen response options ranging from the local media to government departments to the Chinese Embassy. Responses to this question reveal a heavy reliance upon the Australian media and, perhaps unsurprisingly, a very low utilisation of Chinese language materials. Parliamentary activity—committee work and interactions with parliamentary colleagues—also emerge as influential or common sources. Additional sources of information included: state governments, personal and business contacts, visits to China, family, Chinese friends and the Chinese business sector (see *Figure 7—Sources of Information about China*).

24. 'Attitudes to the proposed FTA', Senate References Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Opportunities and Challenges* (November 2005), pp. 209–229.

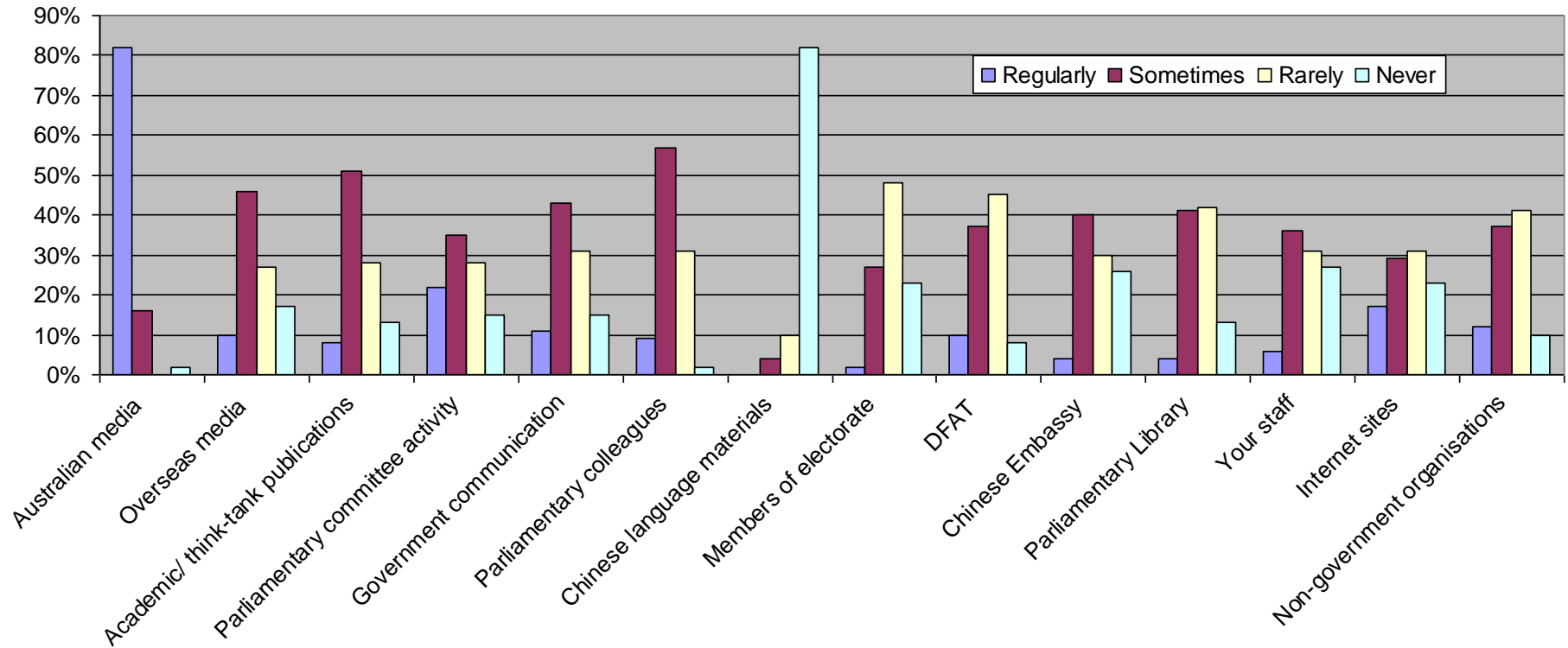
Feedback from interviews suggests that many parliamentarians gain information about China through their involvement in parliamentary friendship groups. Parliamentary friendship groups promote bilateral relations, host delegations, create cross-parliamentary dialogue and provide a network of parliamentarians who can work with ambassadors and other country representatives. While friendship groups do not directly influence policy, they are considered to function as ‘chambers of ideas’ for advancing the bilateral relationship. Friendship groups often gain high level access to foreign leaders—representatives from the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group had the opportunity to meet with President Hu Jintao. The Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group both have extremely high levels of support in the Australian Parliament. At the time of writing, membership of the Australia–China Friendship Group was just short of 100 while membership of the Australia–Taiwan Friendship Group had recently surpassed 100. The role of parliamentary friendship groups is addressed further when the chapter turns to examine whether parliamentarians have observed any discernable change in the way China engages diplomatically.

Figure 6—Influential historical milestones—From an historical perspective rate how influential each of the following milestones has been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship



* At least one respondent marked between moderately and highly influential for these fields.

Figure 7—Sources of information about China—Indicate which sources you access for information about China and frequency of this access



One respondent to the questionnaire claimed Chinese language skills, two respondents identified their staff as having any Chinese language skills and a minority identified themselves as utilising Chinese language resources for information about China.

Travelling to China

Australian parliamentarians are travelling to China and they are doing so with increasing frequency. A high proportion of respondents to the questionnaire had visited the People's Republic (66%) or the Republic of China (58%). Of these, 59% had travelled to the People's Republic during the 41st Parliament, while 41% had travelled to the Republic of China. A total of 68% of those who had travelled to China during the term of the 41st Parliament had done so in an official capacity—either as a member of a parliamentary or party delegation, a parliamentary friendship group, as a guest of the Chinese Government, or as a result of an individual study trip.

Visits to China offer parliamentarians an opportunity to build relationships with members of the National People's Congress; they expose parliamentarians to high-level Chinese perspectives on important local and international issues; they allow for bilateral issues to be discussed at a legislator-to-legislator level, while also exposing parliamentarians to various aspects of Chinese social, cultural and political life. The increased traffic between Australia and China is one of the benefits of a strong bilateral relationship, a benefit that extends beyond the receipts for steel, iron ore or uranium.

During the 41st Parliament two official outgoing delegations visited China. The first visit took place during April 2005 (and was followed by a bilateral visit to Mongolia)—members of the delegation included: the Speaker of the House, David Hawker MP, Senator Nick Bolkus, Luke Hartsuyker MP, Senator Linda Kirk, Margaret May MP, Peter Slipper MP, and Senator Judith Troeth. The second official parliamentary delegation visited China in June–July 2007 and included Peter Slipper MP, Kim Beazley MP, Senator John Watson, Harry Quick MP and Alby Schultz MP. During May–June 2007 Australia also hosted an incoming official parliamentary delegation from the People's Republic.

Many parliamentarians who travel to China do so through the provision of an Overseas Study Entitlement. Senators and Members are entitled to financial assistance to enable them to travel outside the Commonwealth of Australia to undertake studies and investigations of matters related to duties and responsibilities as members of Parliament, after completing three years service.²⁵ Like the official inter-parliamentary delegations, individual parliamentarians who utilise their Overseas Study Entitlement

25. Clause 9.2(b) of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination No. 14 of 2003 requires all parliamentarians to provide a statement reporting on usage of their Overseas Study Entitlement.

are required to report to Parliament on the purposes and outcomes of visits. Overseas Study Entitlement reports are released biannually and tabled in Parliament at the discretion of the Special Minister of State. If we look at 2005, as an example, we find that the following trips were undertaken.

Senator/ Member	Purpose of visit	Place(s) visited
Simon Crean <i>ALP</i> Gavan O'Connor <i>ALP</i> Warren Snowdon <i>ALP</i> Kate Lundy <i>ALP</i>	ALP Trade Delegation to China, hosted by the Chinese Government and focusing on bilateral trade, economic relations and the possibility of a Free Trade Agreement with China (<i>February–March</i>)	Beijing, Qingdao, Shanghai
Peter Slipper <i>Liberal</i>	Travelled to China and Mongolia before and after the Parliamentary Delegation visit to China and Mongolia (<i>April</i>)	Hong Kong, Macau Guangzhou, Beijing
Michael Johnson <i>Liberal</i>	Attended the 2005 Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference (<i>April</i>)	Guangzhou, Hainan Island, Qingdao, Beijing
Duncan Kerr <i>ALP</i>	Minor Overseas Study Entitlement contribution to visit Nanjing to research the Sino-Japanese conflicts over interpretations of the Nanjing Massacre (otherwise privately funded) (<i>May</i>)	Shanghai, Nanjing
Annette Ellis <i>ALP</i>	Attended 88 th Lions Club International Convention in Hong Kong (<i>June–July</i>)	Hong Kong
Trish Crossin <i>ALP</i>	Examining education as an export industry (<i>July</i>)	Shanghai, Chongqing
Harry Quick <i>ALP</i> John Watson <i>Liberal</i>	No report (<i>August</i>) Chaired the Second Asian Conference on Pensions and Retirement Planning in Hong Kong (<i>November</i>)	No report Hong Kong
Peter Slipper <i>Liberal</i>	Discussions on trade and other bilateral issues (<i>December</i>)	Beijing, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong

Of the two official inter-parliamentary delegations that visited China, only one reported to Parliament, the delegation of April 2005. The delegation report, which was written by a parliamentary officer, outlines the delegation's program, offers a synopsis of the activities undertaken and presents a commentary on the observations of the travelling group. Like many of the reports made by official delegations, this report presents as a

wide ranging and erratic amalgam of materials—notes from high-level meetings are accompanied by political and historical descriptions, which are uncomfortably linked by tourist observation and travelogue. This lack of clarity of purpose is also reflected in the speeches that accompany the presentation of reports to Parliament. More often than not such speeches descend into romantic hyperbole about visits to world heritage sites:

As a tourist, I was extremely grateful for the opportunity to view the terracotta warriors, which must be one of the most amazing sights on this earth, as well as parts of the Great Wall of China, one of the greatest engineering feats ever executed by man.²⁶

Parliamentarians who undertake specific issues-based travel are more likely to produce informative reports about economic, political or cultural change in China.²⁷ Nevertheless, many reports are so profuse with traveller's descriptions that it is difficult to determine whether they are written by overzealous tourists or federal legislators on official parliamentary business. (It is interesting that in the above quotation the Senator who participated in an official inter-parliamentary visit, actually refers to herself as a tourist.) Florid descriptions of the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the scenery of Guilin, the experience of visiting the Forbidden City, do not appear to satisfy parliamentary reporting requirements or fulfil any national interest criteria.

In fulfilling their reporting obligations, some parliamentarians risk reinventing themselves as B-grade travel writers, modern-day Marco Polos, regurgitating hackneyed statistics about economic growth, providing potted and arcane histories of tourist sites and even describing the views afforded from the upper terraces of hotels. An extract from a report written by a Senator who participated in the ALP delegation visit to China in 2005 offers a case in point:

The celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year gives a glamorous impression to a first-time visitor to China such as myself. Beyond the visual impact this visit has confirmed to me that China is a truly enigmatic nation, with a cultural mystique and growing economic power ... I have been struck by the sublime symbolism that

26. Senator Judith Troeth, 'Delegation Reports: Parliamentary Delegation to China and Mongolia', Senate, *Debates*, 7 November 2005.

27. Senator Brett Mason offers an informative report about democratisation and legal and judicial independence in Hong Kong; Senator Trish Crossin produces a report on education as an export industry focusing on the vocational and educational sector in China; other meaningful reports produced during this period were by: Byrne, Faulkner, Gash, O'Connor, Payne, Ray and Rudd. See 'Parliamentarians' Overseas Study Travel Reports', Department of Finance and Administration, January to June 2005, July to December 2005, January to June 2006, July to December 2006.

pervades all aspects of Chinese etiquette, social mores and physical environment. It makes one's immediate environment and personal interactions a book to be read. I think being able to read this 'book' and drawing its meaning will help me to understand how things work in China.²⁸

There has long been a deep-seated cultural compulsion for the Western traveller to attempt to speak authoritatively about China. In this manifestation we observe the type of western fantasy that often stands in for China. It renders China a place of the imagination, indeed a 'book', peopled by those who are at once sublimely cultured, mysterious and inscrutable.²⁹

Charm Offensive or Offensive Charm?

The notion of soft power that was introduced in the previous chapter can facilitate a discussion of whether parliamentarians consider China to be exercising a new, sophisticated and nuanced form of diplomacy—or soft power. It can also be employed to ask whether parliamentarians consider this power assists China achieve its *hard* objectives. In an attempt to answer such questions this section of the chapter considers the interaction that takes place between members of the Australian Parliament and the Chinese Embassy. In examining feedback from the parliamentary questionnaire, it turns to examine the types of representations that are made to Australian politicians by Chinese Government officials about social and political events in China and Australia.

In late May 2005 the Consul for Political Affairs at the Chinese Consulate in Sydney walked into the Sydney office of the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and asked to urgently speak to the State Director. Unable to arrange an appointment, Chen Yonglin departed—leaving behind two letters requesting political asylum. In the days that followed, and once the request for territorial (political) asylum was rejected, Chen Yonglin offered his sensational story to the media. He claimed that, for the last four years, he had been responsible for the monitoring and harassment of Chinese political dissidents in Australia, including members of the Falun Gong movement. He also alleged that the Chinese Government had developed a 1000–

28. Senator Kate Lundy, 'ALP Delegation Visit to China', 20 February to 1 March 2005, Parliamentarians' Overseas Study Travel Reports: January to June 2005, pp. 138–148.

29. There is an anecdote that when Henry Kissinger first visited China in 1971, he remarked to Zhou Enlai that he thought it wonderful that he was finally able to visit Zhou's 'mysterious country'. To which Premier Zhou is said to have replied, 'There's nothing especially mysterious about China, Dr Kissinger, once you know a little about it.' As cited by Paul Monk in a Radio National interview, '*China—Thunder From the Silent Zone*', 18 September 2005.

member spy ring across Australia and that these spies were involved in government-sponsored kidnappings.³⁰ Claiming that his life was in danger and that he would be jailed and possibly executed if he was returned to China, Chen applied for Australia's protection.

China's Ambassador to Australia, Madame Fu Ying, emerged to reject Chen's claims that he would be executed if he returned to China. In suggesting that the death sentence in China was reserved for the most brutal murderers she suggested, 'China has moved on. It's not the 1970s. China is not behind the bamboo curtain. I feel very uncomfortable people still think that way. I'm very surprised'.³¹ In response to her handling of Chen's allegations, journalists and China-watchers alike began to talk about a new style of Chinese diplomacy, one which was conciliatory, cooperative, self-confident, tolerant of criticism, even humorous. The *Australian Financial Review* identified Madame Fu as an exemplar of this new diplomacy describing her as 'a paradigm of the new elite Chinese diplomat who has learned from the West the disarming arts of issues management and public diplomacy based on personal charm

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30. The Senate committee that inquired into DIMIA and DFAT's handling of Chen's request for political asylum expressed concern about the allegation regarding Chinese surveillance carried out in Australia. The committee expressed a desire that the Australian government state publicly that it 'takes very seriously its obligations to protect those resident in Australia and will not tolerate its laws being disregarded'. In adding further comment to the report, Senator Bob Brown claimed: 'The overall picture presented to this committee is one of largely unchecked surveillance and, at times, harassment of Australian citizens in Australia by agents of the Peoples [sic] Republic of China. The Australian government is not responding to this unacceptable intrusion of a foreign government into domestic life and freedoms of our country'. Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Mr Chen Yonglin's request for political asylum*, September 2005, pp. 56, 59. Since Chen's allegations there has been widespread concern over the extent of Chinese military, political and economic espionage activity in Australia. China, which relies heavily on human intelligence, is said to draw upon three categories of spy, 'professional spies' paid to collect information, 'working relationship' spies operating in business circles and 'friends', frequently Chinese nationals or expatriates, who operate in less formal networks. In alleging 1,000 spies, Chen is probably referring to this later group.
31. Malcolm Farr, 'Australia can give defector a visa: China', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 2005, p. 2. The sense that China has *moved on* and developed a better sense of its international obligations was reinforced by a statement by Alexander Downer. When asked about the Chinese reaction to street violence in Burma during September 2007, Downer claimed: 'This isn't the China of old. The China of new is a China that listens to its friends and its neighbours, and listens to them a lot'. Alexander Downer, 'Doorstop Interview—Washington DC, United States of America', 27 September 2007.

and the appearance of openness'.³² For those who subscribe to the soft power thesis, Madame Fu emerged as a key instrument in China's charm offensive.³³

Former Ambassador Madame Fu Ying is described by some parliamentarians as having run 'Canberra's most active embassy', one which regularly engaged parliamentarians on a range of issues. Madame Fu is also described as building strong relationships with members of the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group.³⁴ She would invite members of the Friendship Group to 'test' sensitive issues—such as the status of Falun Gong or Taiwan's desire to join the World Health Organization and she would draw on members of the Friendship Group for advice about China's domestic issues: reducing poverty in rural areas, increasing China's environmental protection and energy efficiency. In what may be characterised as a period of openness and exchange between the Embassy and members of Parliament, Madame Fu also built relationships with those outside the Friendship Group and is credited with engaging parliamentarians with whom she differed: friends of Taiwan, supporters of Falun Gong and those lobbying for Taiwanese representation at non-governmental regional forums.

There are also parliamentarians who are considerably less effusive in their praise for the diplomacy of Madame Fu, or for what one parliamentarian described as Madame Fu's 'silken assurances'. Another parliamentarian, critical of the way the Chinese monitor statements made in Parliament, spoke of being 'hauled over to the Embassy for a breakfast with Madame Fu' and 'rapped over the knuckles' for comments made about Taiwan. Another described a similar act of 'robust diplomacy'—being approached by a Councillor from the Chinese Embassy, quizzed on why he visited Taiwan, and told 'to pull [his] head in'.³⁵ Each rebuke suggests that the Chinese Embassy commits substantial diplomatic resources to monitoring the contact that takes place between members of Parliament and the Taiwanese. It is not simply that the Chinese Embassy,

32. Geoffrey Barker, 'Diplomacy personified', *Australian Financial Review*, 10 June 2005, p. 20.

33. Kurlantzick claims, 'China has aggressively wooed Australia, sending its finest diplomats, building up cultural exchanges, offering a strategic partnership, and aggressively promoting the importance of China's demand for natural resources to the Australian economy,' *Charm Offensive*, p. 214.

34. Another interviewee claimed that the Israeli Embassy was the most active, another, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.

35. While there are many friends of Taiwan across the Parliament all parties accept the terms of the 1972 Joint Communiqué or *Paris Agreement*, signed by Australia and China on 21 December 1972 as outlined in Chapter Two.

which sits just 500 meters from Parliament, may reprimand parliamentarians who are supportive of the Taiwanese, or keep updated membership lists for the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, but parliamentarians claim that whenever a motion is raised in the Parliament about Taiwan you can look into the public galleries, in either chamber, and you are guaranteed to be observed by a representative from the Chinese Embassy.

In an environment where an increasing number of parliamentarians may be cautious about adopting positions which may offend the Chinese Government, one would assume that it would be difficult for the Taiwanese to gain the attention of parliamentarians. Friends of Taiwan claim ‘China’s rise is a real challenge for Taiwan’ and ‘it is more difficult for Taiwan than ever before’. Nevertheless, a number of interviewees reported that the Taiwanese had become extremely active and skilful advocates who have been successful in brokering the support of parliamentarians. There is a perception that while the Chinese appear to target foreign policy elites (the executive or certain members of the Friendship Group), the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) is much more successful in building relationships across the Parliament. The success of the TECO is underscored by the fact that there are more members of the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group than the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group.³⁶

It is clear that the Republic of China, through the diplomatic contrivance of the TECO, spends a good deal of money developing sympathetic ears within Parliament House. In fact, to the current generation of parliamentarians, Gough Whitlam’s mantra—‘Never take the Taiwan trip’—appears to have lost its force with many parliamentarians enjoying generously funded trips to Taiwan.³⁷ The friends of Taiwan employ a neutral language to describe the TECO’s ‘skilful advocacy’ or their duchessing of Australian parliamentarians: ‘The Taiwanese work very hard with Australian politicians’, ‘The Taiwanese have a reputation for being very generous towards politicians’, ‘Taiwan has an enormous number of friends in the Australian Parliament’. One interviewee went

36. There is a suggestion, which was both endorsed and rejected by different interviewees, that when parliamentarians are appointed to a position of parliamentary secretary or above, they are tapped on the shoulder by the Prime Minister and told to quit their association with the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group.

37. Rowan Callick claims that when Michael Danby spoke to his then colleagues Laurie Brereton and Mark Latham about visiting Taiwan, Latham related to Danby the advice Gough Whitlam gave him before he took his seat in Parliament—‘Never take the Taiwan trip’, see ‘Caught in the eye of the dragon’, *Australian Financial Review*, 20 August 2005, p. 24.

further to claim, 'Taiwan is a like-minded democracy and the relationship between the Taiwanese and the Parliament is stronger than any other relationship'.

This is not to say the Chinese are not engaged in the same type of diplomacy, albeit more targeted, and one interviewee claimed that while 'The Taiwanese are active lobbyists, the Chinese are more successful lobbyists'. One interviewee claimed that the Chinese aggressively court members of the Government—'they send them to China and give them access at all levels'.³⁸ This is certainly true of the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence Committee, which in undertaking a comprehensive inquiry into the Australia–China relationship, accepted an invitation to visit China as guests of the Chinese Government. In many instances, there is a good deal of hypocrisy at play. For while some parliamentarians are critical of the way the two Chinas conduct their diplomacy in the Pacific, in the local version of cheque-book diplomacy, many parliamentarians enjoy the benefits of generously funded China trips.

In March 2005 China passed an anti-secession law making it 'illegal' for Taiwan to secede from China—and mandating military action by the People's Liberation Army should Taiwan formally declare independence. The passing of this law received little attention in Parliament. While it could be argued that the anti-secession law represented a rearticulation, rather than a change of position, it is possible that any misgivings parliamentarians might have had about the law were shelved by Ambassador Madame Fu Ying, who on 15 March 2005, addressed a cross-party meeting at Parliament House to explain the law.³⁹ On the same day Senator Bob Brown presented a motion opposing the law.⁴⁰ The motion was only supported by 7 Greens and Democrats senators. In the House the only MP to note the passing of the anti-secession law was marked by a

38. Former member of the Victorian Parliament, Victor Perton, indicates that this is also taking place at state level and that many Victorian parliamentarians are seduced by 'lavish' official hospitality and sponsored trips to China, see Tom Hyland, 'Hard Power, Soft Targets', *Age*, 11 November 2007, p. 15.

39. While the Chinese Embassy would later release a statement suggesting that 'The Members of Parliament felt Fu Ying's speech was of great help to facilitate their understanding of China's position in [sic] Taiwan question', White House spokesman Scott McClellan described the law as 'unhelpful and something that runs counter to recent trends toward a warming in cross-strait relations', 'Ambassador Fu Ying Addresses Australian Parliament on China's Anti-Secession Law', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 22 March 2005, and ABC Radio 'China's anti-secession law 'empty': experts', *PM*, 9 March 2005.

40. The motion read, 'That the Senate opposes China's "anti-secession" laws which would mandate the use of military force if the Taiwanese people opt for independence', 'Foreign Affairs: China', Senate, *Debates*, 15 March 2005, p. 50.

speech by Michael Danby.⁴¹ The Chinese were clearly attuned to the parliamentary reaction for when the official Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited China in April 2005, a month later, the Chinese expressed their appreciation that Australia had adhered to the one China policy and it was ‘noted’ that the Senate had rejected Senator Brown’s motion opposing the law.⁴²

The question of Chinese Government *influence* is occasionally given consideration at Senate Estimates, when Opposition and minor party representatives can probe ministers and departmental officials about the interaction that takes place with the Chinese Government. We see an example of this during a hearing in May 2007, in which ALP Senator for New South Wales, John Faulkner, quizzes the First Assistant Secretary of DFAT’s North Asia Division, Peter Baxter, about the representations that were made to the Department in the lead up to the Dalai Lama’s visit in 2007:

Senator FAULKNER—What, if any, involvement has DFAT had in the pending visit of the Dalai Lama? In other words, are officials assisting in organising the Dalai Lama’s visit?

Mr Baxter—No. Officials are not assisting in organising the Dalai Lama’s visit in terms of organising or facilitating his program. The Dalai Lama is visiting Australia in his position as a significant religious leader and his visit is being organised by Tibetan support groups within Australia.

Senator FAULKNER—Are you aware of any engagements that have been made or scheduled with the Prime Minister, ministers or other government officials?

Mr Baxter—I can only speak for our portfolio. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said, a little over a week ago, that he would not be available to meet the Dalai Lama on this visit. In terms of the Prime Minister, that is outside our portfolio responsibilities.

Senator FAULKNER—Was a meeting requested with the foreign minister by the Dalai Lama?

Mr Baxter—Yes, it was. As we understand it, the Tibetan affairs office in Australia has approached a number of political leaders on both sides of politics.

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41. In March 2006, the Chairman of the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, Margaret May, also spoke at a seminar in Taiwan to mark the one-year anniversary of the anti-secession law coming into effect.
 42. *Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to China and Mongolia*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, October 2005, p. 26.

Senator FAULKNER—Yes, I think that is true. Has the government received representations from the Chinese in respect of the Dalai Lama’s visit?

Mr Baxter—Yes, we have.

Senator FAULKNER—Could you indicate the nature of those representations?

Mr Baxter—The Chinese position on the Dalai Lama is well known. The Chinese have raised with us in bilateral meetings their concerns about the visit, and on 17 May in a press conference in Beijing China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson restated Beijing’s well-known position on the Dalai Lama and the Tibet question, opposing meetings by political leaders with the Dalai Lama. In those comments the ministry of foreign affairs in Beijing did not mention Australia specifically, or Australian leaders.

Senator FAULKNER—But in terms of direct contact with DFAT itself, has that been quite substantial?

Mr Baxter—There have been a number of representations made by Chinese representatives in Australia and during visits to China by Australian ministers and officials.⁴³

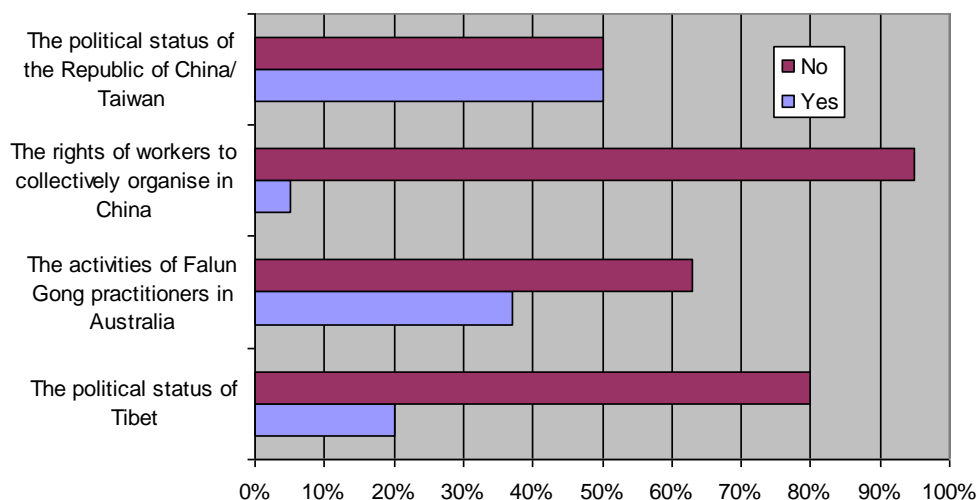
While the matter was not pursued by Senator Faulkner, it would have been interesting to know more about the nature of these representations.

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked whether they had received representations from Chinese officials about the political status of Taiwan, the rights of workers to collectively organise in China, the activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia or the political status of Tibet.⁴⁴

43. Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Budget Estimates*, 28 May 2007, p. 15.

44. In the week prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the Dalai Lama visited Canberra, giving renewed attention to China’s human rights record in Tibet.

Figure 8—Have you ever received representations from Chinese Government officials about:



These responses suggest the Chinese Government, or Chinese Embassy in Canberra, is an active advocate when it comes to the political status of Taiwan and the activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia. When asked if the Chinese engaged parliamentarians any differently from nationals from other countries it was suggested that, with the Chinese (PRC), ‘there is no unofficial line and that the Chinese do not deviate from the set text’; ‘what is reported in the news is what is said in meetings; the message is unchanged’.

While some interviewees consider the notion of Chinese *soft power* an aberration, or the ultimate oxymoron, others feel that some parliamentarians have become so well-disposed towards China that they are no longer objective. It is argued by some that China’s image is now so positive that ‘the message about human rights cannot get through’ or that ‘people with commitments to human rights are losing the battle’. Others claim that China’s image is so positive that Parliament has overlooked China’s rising military expenditure.

The majority of parliamentarians envisage China’s rise as peaceful. By and large it is considered that China’s central concerns are domestic—maintaining growth, dealing with inequities in the distribution of wealth and maintaining internal political stability. A number of interviewees made a point of stating that they did not consider China’s rise a threat and numerous interviewees identified China as a non-expansionary power: ‘Modern China is not a threat, China is now being led by a class of very well-educated

officials'; 'China is primarily concerned with developing standards of living'.⁴⁵ In regard to increased Chinese military expenditure, another interviewee claimed: 'Even if it's increased by 17.6% it is developing from such a low base that it is of little concern'. Some went further and suggested, 'China does not get enough credit for its work as a peacemaker (principally in North Korea)'.

Numerous respondents to the questionnaire offered comment about important collaborative exchanges that have been taking place between the two nations. These extended from the interaction between education sectors (and the positive effect of overseas Chinese students in Australian schools and tertiary institutions), to cooperative endeavours surrounding preparations for the Beijing Olympics, to the contribution being made by CPA Australia to accounting professional services and standards in China/Hong Kong. Another respondent drew attention to the interaction that takes place with China through the United Nations (UN), particularly through the United Nations Security Council.

Committee Work

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked whether they believed that the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade or the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy.⁴⁶ A total of 57% of respondents felt that these two committees can influence policy. Those who held this view were asked to provide an example. Many respondents identified the general capacity of the committees to influence ministerial or

45. However, this sentiment is not universal. Senator Christine Milne claims, 'In my view, we are going to see pressure for territorial expansion from China because of the huge weight of population and the consequent environmental scarcity'. 'Delegation Reports: Parliamentary Delegation to China and Mongolia', Senate, *Debates*, 7 November 2005.

46. In December 2003 the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee released a report titled, *The (not quite) White Paper: Australia's foreign affairs and trade policy, Advancing the National Interest*. The report advocates for the increased parliamentary participation in the foreign policy process through JSCFADT. Recommendation 1 proposed, 'The Committee recommends that upon the commissioning of any future White Paper, the Minister for Foreign Affairs shall refer the proposal to the parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT). The Joint Committee shall undertake broad public consultations regarding the proposed content of the White Paper, and shall report its findings to the parliament. The report shall inform the development, by government, of the White Paper, and shall be published along with the White Paper as an accompanying document'. This recommendation was *not accepted* by the government.

government thinking; alternatively, numerous respondents saw committee work as an opportunity to feed into the policy process. Some cited examples where these committees had contributed to specific policy development: these included areas such as regional security, relations with Latin America, the development of free trade agreements and the cross-referencing of issues with the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. Others suggested that these committees offer parliamentarians an avenue to record human rights concerns or an opportunity to contribute to policy development in less politically sensitive or controversial areas.

During the 41st Parliament the Australia–China relationship often became the object of parliamentary interest and the subject of parliamentary analysis. This interest was demonstrated by the work of parliamentary committees. The major China-related inquiry undertaken during the period was conducted by the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee.⁴⁷ This resulted in a significant two-part report on the Australia–China relationship: *Opportunities and Challenges* (November 2005) and *China’s Emergence: Implications for Australia* (March 2006). Additionally, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources undertook a major inquiry examining the development of the uranium industry and the possibility of exporting Australian uranium to China (November 2006).⁴⁸ As mentioned above, the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee also inquired into the Government’s response to *Mr Chen Yonglin’s request for political asylum* (September 2005) and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Human Rights Subcommittee) inquired into *Australia’s Human Rights Dialogue Process* (September 2005).

The first part of the major Senate report, *Opportunities and Challenges* offers a detailed analysis of trading, commercial, social and cultural links with China. The second focuses on the geo-political and strategic aspects of the bilateral relationship. The terms

47. It should be noted that this committee travelled to China as *guests* of the Chinese Government.

48. Titled, *Australia’s uranium—Greenhouse friendly fuel for an energy hungry world, a case study into the strategic importance of Australia’s uranium resources for the Inquiry into developing Australia’s non-fossil fuel energy industry*. The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties would also go on to ratify a treaty on the transfer of nuclear material between Australia and China: *Report 81—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Transfer of Nuclear Material and the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy* (December 2006).

of reference for the inquiry focused on Australia's economic and political relations with China and Australia's response to China's emergence as a regional power. In keeping with this, the report is largely concerned with examining the bilateral relationship through a trade prism.⁴⁹ The first 245 pages of the 349-page report (part one) examines the incentives and obstacles to trade with China across a number of industry sectors, while the remaining 100 pages focus upon non-economic matters: human rights, the promotion of 'China literacy' in Australia, public diplomacy, science and technology and political links. Part two examines China's foreign policy and China's relationships in East Asia and the Pacific.⁵⁰ In presenting the first of the reports to Parliament, the Chair of the committee, Labor Senator for New South Wales, Steve Hutchins, identified factors that the committee considered possible of derailing China's economic progress:

... the Chinese government's ability to manage effectively a rapidly expanding economy; the potential for social and political unrest as the country opens up to new ideas and its people's expectations change; the gap between rich and poor; China's growing appetite for energy resources; and environmental degradation. There are also external threats that could disrupt China's economic progress, such as the conflict between Taiwan and China over the One China policy; tensions between China and Japan over sensitive issues such as their differing interpretations of history; and the trade deficit with the United States.⁵¹

Drawing from the report, Senator Hutchins identified three further concerns attached to the development of Australia–China relations: corruption in local government and the need for improved corporate governance in China; China's flagrant violation of intellectual property standards; and human rights and labour rights.⁵² These three concerns provided the basis for many of the committee's recommendations.

49. Former China-related Senate inquiries: Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee, *Australia–China Relations* (1996) and the Senate Standing Committee on Industry and Trade, *Australia–China Trade* (1984) took similar approaches.

50. With regard to the Pacific the report recommended that the Australian government, through the Pacific Islands Forum, encourage China and Taiwan to adhere to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) principles on development assistance, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *China's Emergence: implications for Australia*, Recommendation 7, p. 182.

51. Senator Hutchins, 'Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report', Senate, *Debates*, 10 November 2005, p. 16.

52. The committee was concerned that the Australian government 'places too much weight on the trading relationship ... and ignores the human rights abuses occurring in the country'. Senator Steve Hutchins, 'Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report', Senate, *Debates*, 10 November 2005, p. 16.

One of the themes to emerge from the inquiry was that Australia needed to develop experts ready to advise government and business leaders on China-related matters. One professor after another came before the committee and spoke of Australia's limited capacity to deliver China-literacy. Numerous witnesses spoke about a missing generation of Asianists and about the effect that this deficiency would have on Australia's commercial, strategic, security and cultural interests. The evidence received by the committee was embodied in the remark by Professor David Goodman, a remark which shattered the illusion of a China-literate nation: 'We do not have the educational and intellectual infrastructure for dealing with China'.⁵³ As a result of such evidence the committee recommended 'that the Australian government place high priority on encouraging China literacy in Australia by: working with state and territory governments to promote the study of Asia at both primary and tertiary levels; provide more support for in-country language training; establish scholarships for 'double degrees' incorporating language studies; and provide scholarships to encourage Chinese students to apply for courses in Australia in the humanities and social sciences'.⁵⁴ Despite the overwhelming evidence provided, the Government responded to this recommendation by outlining its commitment to Asian language learning in Australia, suggesting that it had done enough to promote Asia/China-literacy in Australia's primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors.⁵⁵

53. Professor David Goodman, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunity and Challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 274. Stephen Morgan claimed if there was 'a crisis in the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, we may find that Australia would not have sufficient people able to provide advice to intelligence agencies, your committees and defence services, let alone provide advice to business and civilian interests', p. 274. Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunity and Challenges: Australia's relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 274. Also see comments from John Fitzgerald and Robin Jeffrey.

54. See 'China literacy', Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Recommendations, 15, 22 and 23.

55. See responses to Recommendation 15 ('ensure there is a pool of highly skilled China experts in Australia ready to advise government and business leaders on developments in that country') in 'Government Response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee's *Inquiry into Australia's Relations with China*', pp. 22–24. http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fadt_ctte/china/govt_response.pdf (accessed 2 August 2007). Kevin Rudd has committed the ALP to investing in Asia-literacy, 'What an enormous badging and branding opportunity for this country in terms of how we market ourselves into the region from Europe and from North America to be able to say: 'We know most about this country and most about this region compared with any other Western culture and Western economy. We have the largest number of Japanese

Exporting Uranium to China

Over the course of the 41st Parliament there was a significant shift in debate about Australia's uranium resources. The decline in global energy security and the growing concerns over the world's rising global greenhouse gas emissions combined to focus attention on Australia's uranium deposits. Following the advice of the *Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy Review Inquiry*, chaired by Ziggy Switkowski (2006), and the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources Inquiry into *Developing Australia's Non-fossil Fuel Energy Industry* (2006), the Howard Government announced a new strategy for the development of uranium mining and nuclear power in Australia. This strategy sought to remove the structural and legislative barriers that would stymie the development of a substantial export industry while seeking to promote uranium for its clean energy capacities.⁵⁶

Prior to this announcement, Australia and China entered into a bilateral safeguards agreement on the transfer of nuclear material (April 2006), an agreement opening the way for the sale of Australian uranium to China. This was followed by the ratification of two nuclear safeguard agreements between Australia and China in January 2007. The 800-page House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources report gives consideration to the practical, strategic, economic, security and

speakers, we have the largest number of Chinese speakers, and we have these deeply inculcated programs in our education and schools system'. Kevin Rudd, 'Australia-Japan Foundation (Repeal and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2006', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 August 2006, p. 160. Before leaving the Parliament to take up her post as Australia's Ambassador to Italy, Amanda Vanstone, called for a nationwide language program that would see every child in Australia learn Mandarin or Bahasa until year 12. The ALP intends to spend \$68 million to promote the study of languages in Australian schools through re-establishing the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools program (NALSAS). The NALSAS program had an intergenerational commitment to equipping young Australians with the Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean linguistic and cultural skills. It was abolished by the Howard Government in 2003. As Stephen FitzGerald, Australia's first Ambassador to China and long-time advocate for Asian studies in Australian schools and universities says, Asia-literacy is about 'changing the intellectual universe of Australians'; it is about developing a psychologically and socio-linguistically deeper and more stable understanding of the societies we are dealing with, from which in turn could come a different kind of foreign policy and a different kind of relationship with Asian countries that would be good for Australia'. Luke Slattery, 'Neighbours we choose to ignore', *Weekend Australian*, 2-3 July 2005, p. 22.

56. John Howard, 'Uranium Mining and Nuclear Energy: A Way Forward for Australia', *Media Release*, 28 April 2007.

environmental debates for the development of a uranium industry, with a section of the report dealing explicitly with the export of uranium to China. The statement of the committee reveals that it did not have substantial concerns about the security of Australian uranium exported to China and it was supportive of the use of nuclear power in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions:

While the Committee understands the concerns expressed by some submitters about the added risks for export of uranium attendant upon the absence of a fully ‘open society’ in China and its allegedly poor proliferation record, the Committee nonetheless concludes that such concerns should not prevent sales of Australian uranium to China ... the Committee’s support for sales of uranium to China is underpinned by the fact that use of nuclear power will aid in China’s development and help to address the global energy imbalance, while also earning export income for Australia. Use of Australia’s uranium will fuel the generation of base-load electricity in China in a manner that is far less carbon intensive than the alternatives and this will be of unquestionable global environmental benefit’ adding that it was confident that ‘sales of uranium will not, either directly or indirectly, contribute to any military purpose in China’.⁵⁷

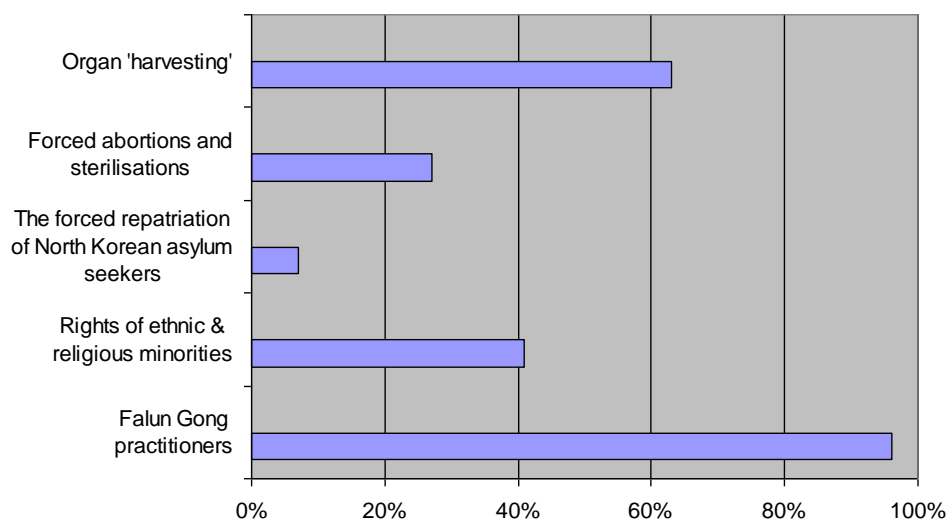
Given the position taken by the committee, and that documented in the Switkowski report, it was surprising that individual members expressed a higher level of concern about the export of uranium in the parliamentary questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether they were concerned about the export of Australian uranium to the People’s Republic. Just under half, or 42%, expressed concern over the effect the export of uranium would have on nuclear proliferation and security. If we look at the responses on a cross-party basis we find that concern was expressed by 100% of minor party respondents, 65% of ALP, 25% of Liberal Party and 0% of the National Party respondents. Respondents were also asked if they had any other concern. Concern was expressed over whether China would honour the safeguard agreements (and not use uranium for weapons), while others questioned how China would manage its nuclear waste. Some parliamentarians raised general concerns about the environmental impact of nuclear power and the effect that uranium exports would have on Australia’s international reputation as a responsible international citizen.

57. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources, *Australia’s uranium—Greenhouse friendly fuel for an energy hungry world, A case study into the strategic importance of Australia’s uranium resources for the Inquiry into developing Australia’s non-fossil fuel energy industry*, November 2006, pp. 469–470.

Human Rights

When concern was expressed over the Australia–China relationship by members of the 41st Parliament, it most often focused on China’s handling of human rights. Of all the unsolicited comments that were offered at the end of the parliamentary questionnaire the most candid focused on the Parliament’s, or the Government’s, position on human rights in China. While one respondent claimed that ‘The rights of Falun Gong practitioners, and others, do not receive enough attention in our bilateral relationship’, other respondents were more vociferous in their criticism of the Howard Government: ‘The Federal Government gives zero significance to human rights and promoting democracy. This is not good enough’ while one member of the ALP claimed, ‘Alexander Downer and Kevin Rudd don’t care two hoots about human rights issues in China’.

Figure 9—Do you receive representations from individual constituents or organisations about any of the following human rights issues:

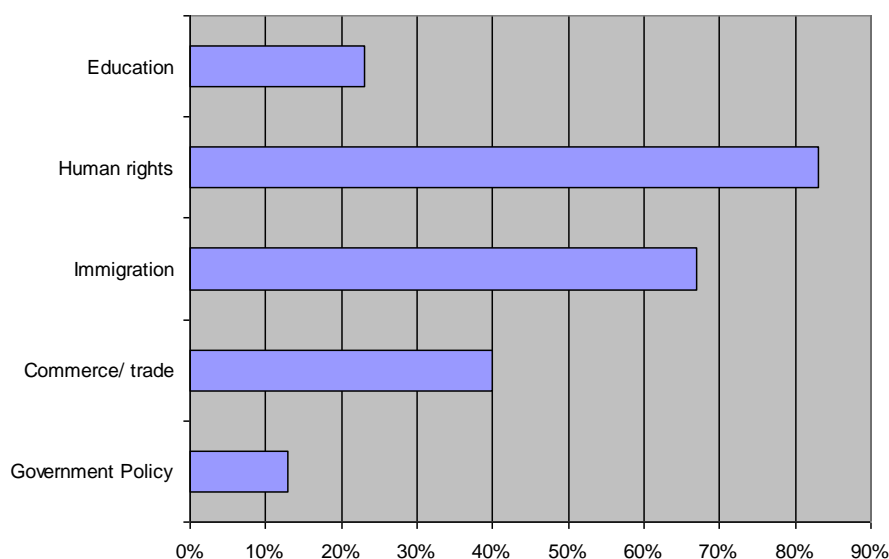


The parliamentary questionnaire sought to identify what representations Australian parliamentarians receive about human rights matters in China. The results reveal the type of issues raised and the reach of different advocacy groups. When compared with the feedback on the question about representations from Chinese Government officials they also illustrate the multiple and often competing representations that are received on politically sensitive matters.

Of the 81% who had received representations from individuals or organisations about human rights issues in China almost all, or 96%, had been approached about the rights

of Falun Gong practitioners. It also appears that the extensive representations from the Falun Gong movement have also drawn attention to the practice of so-called organ ‘harvesting’.⁵⁸ Beyond these five fixed categories respondents were also given the option of specifying any other representations received about human rights. Those included approaches made about the status of Taiwan, or threats made against Taiwan, while a further 8% of respondents identified approaches about Tibet or Tibetans (something which may have been interpreted by other respondents as ‘rights of ethnic and religious minorities’). Other parliamentarians noted approaches about such issues as: employment rights, the death penalty, democracy in China and the fate of pro-democracy advocates, while one interviewee stated their personal concern about the growing incidents of child abduction in China.

Figure 10—The China-related matters raised by your constituents relate to:



A total of 53% of respondents had been approached by their Australian-Chinese constituents about specific China-related issues. Of these, 83% had been approached about human rights, 67% had been approached about immigration matters and perhaps surprisingly, only 40% had been approached about commercial or trade matters.

These results suggest that Australian parliamentarians consistently receive representations about a variety of human rights matters in China. Yet despite the frequency of these representations, few parliamentarians appear committed to

58. In May 2007, after sustained international advocacy over organ harvesting, the Chinese Government introduced new regulations which ban organ trading, requiring all transplant recipients to have the written consent of donors.

highlighting human rights in the Parliament. Those who do include: Senators Bob Brown, Christine Milne and Kerry Nettle (Greens); Senators Andrew Bartlett and Natasha Stott Despoja (Democrats) and Chris Bowen MP, Carmen Lawrence MP, Martin Ferguson MP and Michael Danby MP (ALP). Michael Danby alone spends more time documenting human rights abuses in China, in Parliament, than do the other 225 parliamentarians combined.⁵⁹

A number of interviewees considered that giving voice to such issues was part of their parliamentary mandate—'parliamentarians should focus on the international citizenship; human rights are indivisible and parliamentarians can play a role here'. Similarly, when speaking about raising human rights matters in Parliament, another interviewee claimed—'my role is to put pressure on government, to speak to the people of Australia, and to make Australia's position known to foreign governments'.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, human rights advocates claim to be marginalised from parliamentary debate: 'Those members of Parliament who do not solely focus on the economic aspect of the Australia–China relationship are excluded from the debate'. Another parliamentarian committed to highlighting human rights in China claimed that as a result of the thriving economic relationship, 'an impenetrable wall has gone up around issues of human rights in China'. Some argue that the Parliament is extremely reticent in taking a position which may offend the Chinese and that this results in various acts of self-censorship.⁶¹ One such criticism relates to the failure of the Speaker of the House to formally acknowledge the presence of two visiting dignitaries—Former

59. Michael Danby consistently highlights human rights issues in China through Questions in writing on issues including: Chinese labour camps, conditions for coal mining workers, harassment of Tibetan minorities, Chinese aid to Sudan, democracy in Hong Kong, organ harvesting and the barring of goods manufactured in forced labour camps in China.

60. When discussing human rights abuses in China a number of interviewees suggested that it was important not to be seen as lecturing foreign governments while others were mindful to recognise Australia's own failures in protecting human rights. Another interviewee, who spoke of raising his concerns about the treatment of political dissidents, Falun Gong practitioners and trade unionists during a meeting in the Great Hall of the People, claimed that the Chinese 'anticipated these questions and simply brushed them aside'.

61. Claiming 'fatuousness has always been a strong element of the Australian response to China', Greg Sheridan suggests that senior politicians deliberately avoid issues of human rights abuses in China: 'What's that? Labour rights in China? I think I'm washing my hair. Chinese prison conditions? Not my bailiwick. The future of democracy? What if we talk about the future of trade instead.' Greg Sheridan, 'Agents of change see a free China', *Weekend Australian*, 31 March 2007, p. 29.

Canadian cabinet minister David Kilgour and European Parliament member Edward McMillan-Scott—who were in Canberra in August 2006 to attend a parliamentary forum drawing attention to the alleged ‘harvesting’ of organs from Falun Gong practitioners. Despite the numerous approaches that were made by Carmen Lawrence, Speaker David Hawker, in possible contravention of parliamentary protocol, failed to acknowledge their presence in the public gallery. When quizzed about his actions, the Speaker claimed, ‘While there are not firm guidelines (about recognising the visits of dignitaries), there are clear rules if you like that I try to follow and given the precedents that have been here for many years, I continue to follow those’ ...⁶²

Another way in which human rights matters in China are brought to the attention of the Parliament is through petitions. Petitioning facilitates a direct link between the public and the Parliament and provides the only means by which a citizen can directly place a matter before the Parliament. There were 743 petitions submitted to the House of Representative during the 41st Parliament (to 21 June 2007). If we are to identify these petitions on a portfolio basis, the greatest number related to: Health and Ageing (170), Foreign Affairs (164) and Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (106).⁶³

During the 41st Parliament there was an average of one China-related petition received by the House each sitting week. (There were 53 China-related petitions presented in the House of Representatives over 53 sitting weeks.) Of these, 35 related to Falun Gong and 12 to the alleged practice of organ ‘harvesting’. Other China-related petitions during the 41st Parliament included: Taiwan’s application to be represented in the World Health Assembly and the World Health Organization (four), the treatment of bears in China (one), and a petition alleging the persecution of the Chinese human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng (one).⁶⁴ It is extremely likely therefore that the Falun Gong movement was the single most active petitioner to the 41st Australian Parliament. In terms of the number of signatories they were also extremely well represented.⁶⁵

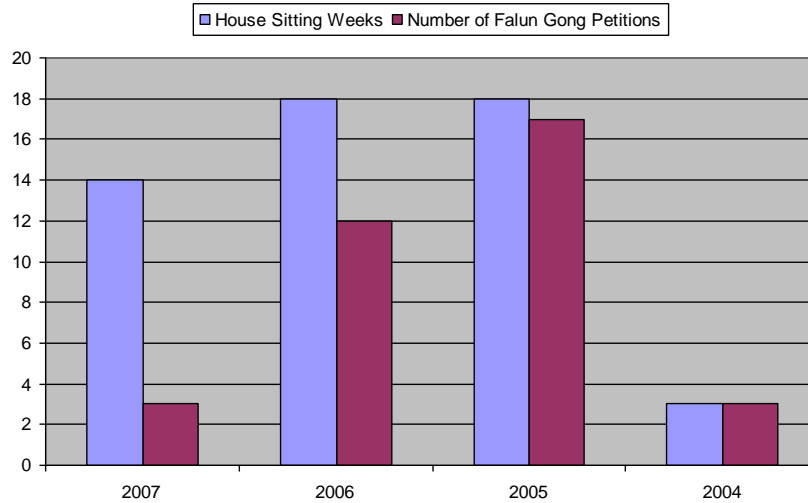
62. Nick Leys and Andrew Fraser, ‘Fragile China’, *Australian*, 17 August 2006.

63. The total number of petitions presented to the House was: 2005—235; 2006—276; as at 21 June 2007—148. *Making a Difference: Petitioning the House of Representatives*, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, August 2007, p. 8.

64. By comparison, eight petitions about Falun Gong and one on organ harvesting were presented to the Senate over the same period.

65. As the petitions about Falun Gong decline there is a commensurate increase in the number of petitions received about organ harvesting. For example, between October

Figure 11—Number of Falun Gong petitions tabled in the House of Representatives during the 41st Parliament:



Human Rights Dialogue

Prime Minister Howard proposed the establishment of a formal high-level bilateral dialogue on human rights with Premier Li Peng on his visit to China in March–April 1997. The first talks were held in Beijing in August 1997 and initially involved officials from the two countries' foreign ministries. Australian participation in the annual meeting has grown to include representatives from the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). A wide-ranging number of issues have been discussed at the annual Dialogue. These include issues such as: freedom of speech and freedom of assembly in China, cultural and religious freedom in Xinjiang and Tibet, China's use of the death penalty, China's ratification of international conventions, China's use of re-education and the rights of people living in China with HIV/AIDS.⁶⁶ In recent times the Dialogue has grown to include discussions about human rights in Australia: the human rights of indigenous Australians and the policy of mandatory detention for all illegal immigrants and asylum seekers.

2006 and September 2007, there were 11 petitions concerning organ harvesting. It could be argued that while petitions may perform an important democratic function, they are more successful in strengthening community views on an issue than they are in bringing an issue to the consideration of the Parliament.

66. See Appendix D—'List of Topics Discussed at Australia's Human Rights Dialogue', Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's Human Rights Dialogue Process*, September 2005.

The Howard Government claimed that the Human Rights Dialogue was fundamental to its engagement with China and that official dialogue is the most practical and effective way of progressing discussions on human rights. The Howard Government was also keen to point out that Australia has the highest level dialogue of any nation—at the Assistant Minister level—and that the United States does not engage in any type of human rights dialogue with China. The Howard Government claimed that the Dialogue is the most effective mechanism for facilitating incremental change. However, critics suggest that Australia has traded the right to publicly criticise China on human rights, in exchange for an official dialogue, which has lacked transparency and failed to deliver any substantive outcomes.⁶⁷ In criticising the Howard Government for its muted advocacy on human rights, numerous respondents to the Parliamentary questionnaire claim: ‘The Human Rights Dialogue is a sham ... China’s role reinforcing external, repressive regimes is of growing concern ...’, while another identifies the Dialogue as ‘a device for obviating any real discussion on human rights’.⁶⁸

67. Journalist Greg Sheridan claims, ‘Our behind-closed-doors human rights dialogue with China has no effect on human rights and is not designed to. It allows us to satisfy our own values by making the representations we should without constant public brawling with Beijing’, ‘Sensible diplomatic approach to China serves our interests’, *Weekend Australian*, 25–26 July 2002, p. 17. Elsewhere Sheridan has written, ‘Our present official human rights dialogue exists solely so the Government will never have to say anything publicly about Chinese human rights’, ‘Shamed by our silence’, *Australian*, 2 June 2005, p. 11. Mike Steketee also claims, ‘The Howard Government has worked assiduously to push human rights to one side in the relationship with China’, ‘The price is rights’, *Weekend Australian*, 1–2 April 2006, p. 20. The Howard Government’s response to these criticisms is that official discussions are a more effective way of engaging China on issues of human rights issues than by attempting to publicly shame China. Moreover, that the process is transparent as press conferences are held after meetings. The above mentioned Senate inquiry found it difficult to assess the effectiveness of Australia’s Human Rights Dialogue with China because a lack of materials on the Dialogue’s outcomes. Deputy Chair and Liberal Senator for Western Australia, David Johnston claimed, ‘the principal thing that I came away from this inquiry with was that China has no real history of transparency’, ‘Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report’, Senate, *Debates*, 10 November 2005, p. 21.

68. The abovementioned allegations by Chen Yonglin were not raised at the Dialogue. Alexander Downer claimed, ‘The law in Australia says that these matters must be considered by the Immigration Department and we wouldn’t be raising the case in human rights talks with the Chinese ...’, ‘Transcript of a doorstep interview of the Minister for Foreign Affairs: Adelaide, 27 June 2005. The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee also received submissions which suggested that the Human Rights Dialogue was inadequate, see *Opportunities and Challenges*, p. 255. Here we find that Chen Yonglin himself describes the dialogue as having failed to make any progress.

In March 2004 the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade referred an inquiry into Australia's human rights dialogue process with China, Vietnam and Iran to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT). The terms of reference required that the committee 'inquire into and report on the human rights dialogue process, with particular reference to: parliamentary participation and oversight; involvement of non-government organisations; the roles and obligations of participating agencies; reporting requirements and mechanisms; and the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes'.⁶⁹ The criticisms of the process, as identified in the submissions received by the committee, focused on three major themes: the lack of transparency and accountability and reporting function in the dialogue processes, that the Dialogue was *process* rather than *outcome* focused and did not deliver substantive outcomes, and the limitations of bilateral as opposed to multilateral dialogue on human rights.⁷⁰

In evidence provided to the committee by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Director of the China Political and External Section, East Asia Branch, Peter Roggero, offered the following assessment of human rights in China:

Regarding human rights in China in the broad, I think our assessment is that the situation has, over a longer period, improved rather than worsened. Obviously there are instances on occasions where you would see two steps forward and one step back ... but in the broad we do see an incremental improvement. I think a lot of that improvement has resulted from China's economic development feeding into legal reforms, which provide people with greater legal protections against abuses, and the growth in China's administrative capability. So there is increasing transparency in the way China is governing itself, and that flows into improvements in the way that human rights are observed in China. In our dialogue with China we try and tap into that improvement generally, point out areas where we think things are not improving or not improving as well as they could be or should be, and, in many cases, through the Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program, directly provide practical assistance to encourage those kinds of reforms and changes.⁷¹

69. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's Human Rights Dialogue Process*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, September 2005, p. xiv.

70. It was also suggested that, because of the dialogue, Australia is less likely to sponsor United Nations resolutions against human rights in China at the Commission of Human Rights in Geneva.

71. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogue Process*, Transcript of Evidence, 14 March 2005, p. 48.

Asked if he could identify any instances where the human rights situation had worsened Peter Roggero replied:

Unfortunately we do not have accurate figures for many issues, including, for example, the death penalty. It is possible that over some years there have been higher numbers of instances of death sentences, but we do not know that for a fact because China does not publish the figures. Some years ago, China devolved the authority for issuing death sentences to below the central level. It used to be the prerogative of only the Supreme People's Court. When they devolved that to the provincial level we fear that there may have been an increase in some of those death sentences being issued. We have raised that on many occasions with the Chinese government, including through the dialogue. I was pleased to hear at the most recent dialogue that China is reviewing that policy and looking at putting that authority back to at least the Supreme People's Court—at the central level, the top level—rather than allowing provincial level courts to make those sorts of decisions. That is an area where it may have become worse over some years. I could not say that for a fact because China does not publish those figures.⁷²

The JSCFADT report made five recommendations for improving the Human Rights Dialogue process (remembering that these also related to dialogues with Vietnam and Iran). Two related to increasing the level of parliamentary participation and oversight of the dialogue process, through formalising the participation of parliamentarians from Government and non-Government parties.⁷³ One recommendation stated that the Government consider further involving NGOs through preceding each meeting (in Australia) with a forum where NGOs could brief members on their human rights concerns. The final two recommendations related to increasing reporting obligation requirements. This would entail the Minister for Foreign Affairs tabling an annual statement in Parliament on the status and proceedings of each meeting and having government departments and NGOs make more effective use of their websites to convey up-to-date information on the Dialogue. The Government accepted three of the five recommendations. Those that the Government did not accept related to preceding each bilateral dialogue with a forum involving NGOs and the recommendation suggesting that the Minister for Foreign Affairs table an annual statement on the status of the dialogue. In the first instance the Government argued that it had already established a number of effective mechanisms through which NGOs are able to relate their concerns. The Government claimed that the formal 'tabling of a report in

72. *ibid.*

73. The Howard Government notes that in the past the Minister for Foreign Affairs has written to the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs to nominate representatives for the dialogue but that the Opposition has never bothered to respond to these invitations.

Parliament would compromise the guarantees of confidentiality that have been so important in ensuring that the dialogues feature frank discussions of sometimes quite sensitive issues'. However, the response also explained that 'The Government is prepared to provide *in camera* briefings to Parliamentarians at their request'.⁷⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a snapshot of the attitudes held by the members of the 41st Parliament towards the Australia–China relationship. It has sought to offer perspectives on issues ranging from where parliamentarians obtain their information about China to what types of China-related issues are raised by constituents. At the same time it has sought to contribute to an understanding of the way the Australian Parliament engages with foreign policy concerns through its committee work and through its interaction with members of other legislatures. Together with the material contained in Chapter Three, the chapter has also offered evidence of the way the Chinese Government and its officials engage in various diplomatic behaviours to influence members of the Australian Parliament on issues sensitive to Beijing.

In concluding this chapter it is worth giving consideration to what respondents to the questionnaire believed to be influences on the future character of the Australia–China relationship. The categories assessed ranged from the economic (China's demand for energy resources), to the environmental (a climate change agreement with China), to the bilateral (Australia's human rights dialogue with China) to the international (China's emergence as a stakeholder in global/regional affairs).

The responses to this question suggest that the greatest threat to the future prosperity of the bilateral relationship relates to the potential for the emergence of a less liberal approach to trade matters: including reduced market access or a stalled program of trade liberalisation. At least for now, China's human rights record, concerns over China's regional relations, or even its 'chequebook diplomacy' in the Pacific—will only become important insofar as they have the capacity to affect either the economic baseline or the Australia-United States alliance. This is reinforced by comments made by interviewees who anticipated that the potential for change in Australia–China relations would likely emerge from a substantial economic downturn within China or

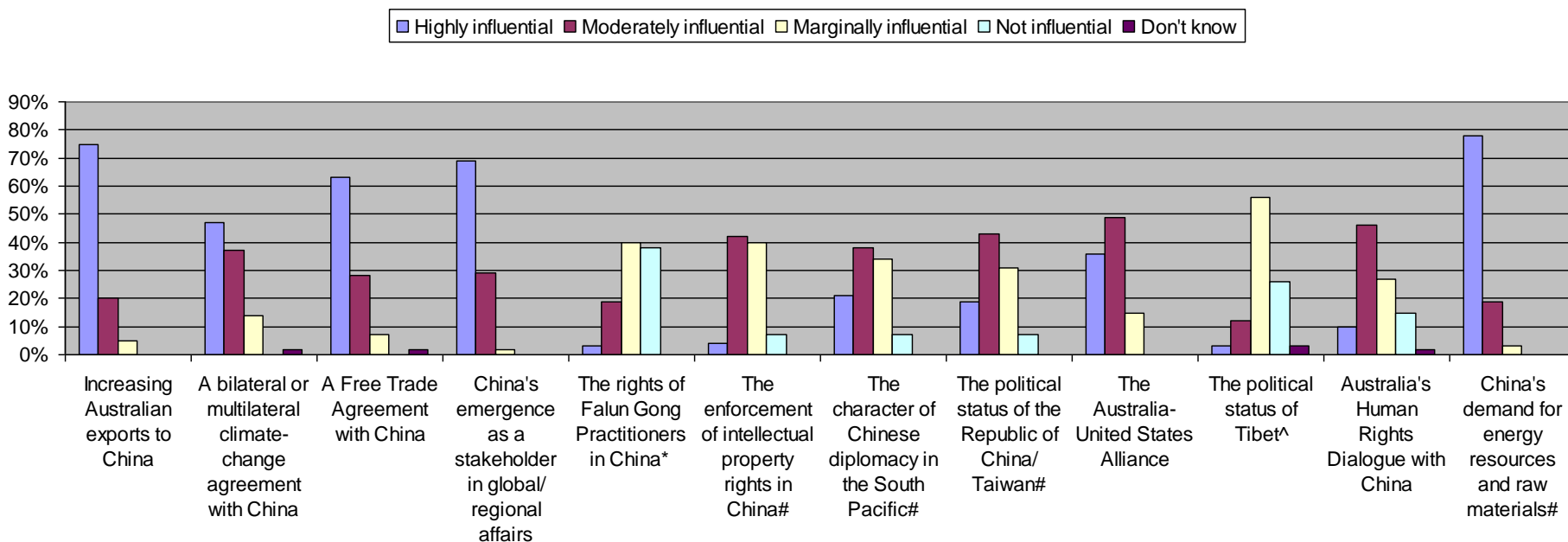
74. Australian Government Response to the Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade,
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/hrdialogue/govtresponse.pdf> (accessed 2 October 2007).

from a fundamental change in the power structure of the Chinese Communist Party. With respect to parliamentary attitudes towards democratisation in China, while there are those who are mindful not to overstate the likelihood of any movement towards democracy, there is a sizable number who believe that market liberalisation and economic growth will result in political change and democratic reform in China.

The other issue most commonly nominated as a potential influence on the future character of the Australia–China relationship was cross-Strait relations. It was suggested that ‘conflict between China and Taiwan is constantly diminishing as the two sides come to better understand one another and they become more enmeshed—both through trade and people to people contact’. Another parliamentarian described the cross-Strait situation as ‘a knot that cannot be untied’. Speaking of the Taiwan Straits and the Korean Peninsula, one Senator stressed how important North Asian security was for Australia, claiming, ‘If there is a crisis in North Asia, Australia will starve!’ Other anticipated areas of difficulty in bilateral relations included: China’s relations with its North Asian neighbours; broader human rights abuses in China; the growing number of Chinese nationals making asylum or protection claims in Australia (and the possibility of an unsuccessful claimant being repatriated and executed⁷⁵); and any incident involving the surveillance and harassment of Australian citizens by the Chinese Government.

75. Australia receives as many as 1000 applications for protection visas from Chinese nationals each year. Between 5–6% of these applications are successful. (See Senator Amanda Vanstone, ‘Questions without notice: Asylum Seekers’, Senate, *Debates*, 12 June 2005, p. 29.)

Figure 12—Influences on the future character of the relationship—Using the contemporary Australia–China relationship as a starting point, indicate how influential you feel each of the following will be in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship.



* At least one respondent marked moderately to marginally influential; # At least one respondent marked highly to marginally influential; ^ At least one respondent marked marginally to not influential.

Postscript

... Every time I'm in China, they say 'We've just had a delegation here from Mr Rudd ... But you know, I wouldn't say that he is doing something that the Prime Minister hasn't done. Or a whole host of Australian leaders. So I mean he's going to China. That's good and I'm not critical of that, but he's not Marco Polo, not the first man to have gone to China. Peter Costello, April 2007⁷⁶

In February 2007, when asked to nominate his greatest strength as an alternative prime minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd emphasised his in-depth knowledge of China. Rudd spoke of having lived in China as a diplomat during the 1980s and of returning more than fifty times; he went on to suggest that this familiarity would be critical to engaging a nation destined to be at the centre of Australia's strategic and economic 'gravity'.⁷⁷ In the following weeks, Treasurer Peter Costello sought to draw capital from Rudd's claim, making Rudd's China-literacy a subject of derision. This was played out in his Marco Polo quip—and here we assume that Costello meant to say Rudd was not the first *westerner* or *western man* to have gone to China—and during Question Time in early March 2007, when Rudd was attacked for meeting with the disgraced former premier of Western Australia, Brian Burke.⁷⁸ To the great mirth of his Liberal and National Party colleagues, Costello rose to parody Rudd's *inadvertent* meeting with Brian Burke. SBS political correspondent, Karen Middleton, described the theatre in the following way:

'Brian Burke!' Costello continued in mock mimicry. 'What a coincidence—down here at Perugino's on the first of August 2005! I didn't know you were going to be here, Brian. And while I'm here I will make a speech on China.'⁷⁹

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76. 'Interview with Peter Costello', *Insiders*, ABC television, 1 April 2007. In response to a caller to John Laws' program on Southern Cross radio in which it was suggested that Julia Gillard—an alleged communist who did not own a skirt—would ultimately run the country while Mr Rudd was off in China 'jabbering' in Mandarin, Rudd claimed, 'If I can use whatever language skills I have got to boost the exports of Australian farmers to major emerging markets like China, let me tell you, I will yabber my way through any lunch speaking whatever language I can', 'Rudd declines comment on Gillard skirt', Australian Associated Press, 15 November 2007.
 77. Christine Jackman, 'ACTU not in control', *Weekend Australian*, 10–11 February 2007 (The Nation, p. 4).
 78. Former Premier of Western Australia, Brian Burke was imprisoned in 1994 for rorting travel expenses and again in 1997 for misappropriating campaign donations. For years Burke had exercised influence both within the ALP and broader parliamentary circles.
 79. Karen Middleton, 'Labor's wild west trips Rudd', *Canberra Times*, 3 March 2007, p. 7.

In what followed, the triumvirate of Costello, Abbott and Howard were vicious in their attack: Rudd was derided for supping with the devil; accused of entering into Faustian pacts with convicted felons; and lampooned for his snooty prolixity on China. For the first time since his election as Leader of the Opposition, Rudd encountered the full force of an acerbic Coalition struggling in the polls. And, after initially feigning disinterest, Rudd eventually recoiled from the venom that tacked its way across the chamber.⁸⁰

Having been variously labelled an ‘elite’ and a ‘Manchurian candidate’, unable to disagree with the latest dictum from Beijing, Rudd’s China-literacy was put in the closet, where it remained until September 2007. Then, in something akin to a political coup, Rudd stood before the Chinese delegation at the 15th Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders’ meeting in Sydney, on the eve of the 2007 Federal Election, and offered a narrative about his family’s affection for China, in Mandarin. As the first Australian political leader to address a visiting head of state in a language other than English, Rudd stole the show from Prime Minister John Howard; Rudd won praise from the Australian and Chinese language media and he received, from President Hu Jintao, a personal invitation to attend the Olympic Games in Beijing. Above all, however, Rudd’s diplomacy strengthened his credentials as a new generation leader and future prime minister of Australia. As News Limited’s Doug Conway suggested, the effect of Rudd’s address—so different from the one offered by John Howard in October 2003—‘could not have been greater had the family’s precocious nine-year-old played a Chopin prelude perfectly for the visiting relatives after Christmas lunch’.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the praise was not unanimous and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer labelled Rudd a ‘parading’ ‘show-off’ before going on to promote his credentials as a speaker of French and student of Latin.⁸²

80. Ultimately the attack backfired resulting in the resignation of Liberal Senator Ian Campbell, who had also met with Burke.

81. Doug Conway, ‘Rudd addresses Chinese President in fluent Mandarin’, 6 September 2007, news.com.au. Rudd’s address also resonated with Liberal Senator for New South Wales, Bill Heffernan, who in the following days, when quizzed about challenges to John Howard’s leadership, curiously retorted, ‘I’m not speaking in Manchurian or Mandarin or anything else, I’m speaking in bush language. It’s bullshit’, Ben Worsley, ‘Liberal MPs back Howard for PM’, ABC, *Lateline*, 11 September 2007.

82. See Caroline Overington, ‘I can speak French, says Downer’, *Weekend Australian*, 8–9 September 2007, p. 11; Clinton Porteous, ‘For clever Rudd, it’s Chinese checkmate’, *Courier Mail*, 8 September 2007, p. 5 and Malcolm Farr, ‘Achievements shouldn’t be overlooked’, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2007, p. 8.

In an interview conducted with journalist Greg Sheridan shortly after APEC, Kevin Rudd outlined his foreign policy vision for Australia and sought to make it clear he does not view China through rose coloured glasses:

Everyone knows Rudd's personal and political investment in China. But the view he expresses of China is balanced.

'I've been studying China for 30 years. Over that time the transformation has been great. It is much more liberal than it was domestically, but human rights abuses continue. On the economic front, the statistics speak for themselves'.

Rudd is concerned, however, by China's military force modernisation and he suggests the Asian power and the US begin nuclear strategic arms talks 'on the future of their strategic nuclear weapons programs'.

'I don't view China through rose coloured glasses but I am fully prepared to accept, recognise and be positive about the changes that have occurred', he says. 'Any student of the Chinese cultural revolution, contrasting 40 years ago with today, understands we're dealing with chalk and cheese'.

Rudd rejects the idea that he will be excessively sensitive to Chinese concerns or unable to disagree with Beijing. He points out he has twice met the Dalai Lama: 'This would not have been entirely welcome in Beijing'.

On human rights diplomacy, he says: 'When representations need to be made to the Chinese on human rights abuses I'll be making them'.

The advantage of his knowledge of China, he believes, is that it helps allow robust differences to be expressed within a framework of mutual respect.⁸³

On his first visit to China as Prime Minister, in April 2008, Kevin Rudd put '(t)he advantage of his knowledge of China' and his commitment to human rights diplomacy into practice. In a speech to an audience at Beijing University, Rudd stated that while Australia recognises China's sovereignty over Tibet, Australia also believes that there are 'significant human rights problems in Tibet'.⁸⁴ In again using his China-literacy to great strategic effect, Rudd sought to position his remarks as those offered from a friend, with a long-standing interest in Chinese history and culture. After citing the contributions of Beijing University's alumni (Lu Xun, Cai Yuanpei and Chen Duxiu et al.) to the May 4 Movement, Rudd situated himself as a *zhengyou* to China—a sincere

83. Greg Sheridan, 'Rudd the Rationalist: Rudd's Global Vision', *Weekend Australian*, 22–23 September 2007, p. 19.

84. 'A Conversation with China's Youth on the Future', Peking University, 9 April 2008, http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2008/speech_0176.cfm (accessed 15 April 2008).

friend who is prepared to offer ‘unflinching advice’, a true friend who is prepared to disagree.⁸⁵ In publicly criticising China, from within China, *zhengyou* Rudd had differentiated himself from those *friends of China* who, for the sake of harmony and self interest, turn a blind eye to subjects which may provide grounds for disagreement.

In locating the expression *zhengyou* within the context of modern Chinese friendship politics, China scholar Geremie Barmé explains:

... ‘friendship’ (*youyi*) has been a cornerstone of China’s post-1949 diplomacy ... To be a friend of China, the Chinese people, the party-state or, in the reform period, even a mainland business partner, the foreigner is often expected to stomach unpalatable situations, and keep silent in face of egregious behaviour. A friend of China might enjoy the privilege of offering the occasional word of caution in private; in the public arena he or she is expected to have the good sense and courtesy to be ‘objective’, that is to toe the line, whatever that happens to be. The concept of ‘friendship’ thus degenerates into little more than an effective tool for emotional blackmail and enforced complicity.⁸⁶

Rudd’s comments were made within the context of the international Olympic torch relay. While the opportunity to host the Olympic Games was intended to symbolise China’s modernisation, its global reach and its emerging status as a responsible member of the international community, in the lead up to Rudd’s address, the preparations for the ‘Friendly Games’ had degenerated into farce. As it moved across the cities of the world, the torch relay became synonymous with violence as protesters battled flag-bearing Chinese students and the blue track suited ‘guardians of the flame’. Moreover, in mobilising its citizens as part of the counter-demonstration, the Chinese Government reverted to the bellicose rhetoric of the Cold War era, speaking of a ‘reactionary clique of Dalai splittists’, ‘the infiltration of anti-China elements’ and the ‘Western spoilers and enemies of the Games’.⁸⁷

85. *ibid.*

86. Geremie Barmé, ‘Rudd rewrites rules of engagement’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 2008, p. 35. Liberal Senator for Queensland, Russell Trood, also noted: ‘The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, deserves considerable credit for the forthright way in which he has raised concerns about human rights abuses in China, and more especially in Tibet, during his visit to Beijing’, ‘Hasten slowly on China human rights’, *Canberra Times*, 17 April, 2008, p. 19.

87. For examples of such rhetoric see Rowan Callick, ‘Inflamed passions’, *Weekend Australian*, April 26–27, 2008, p. 20 and Rowan Callick, ‘Forbidding city’, *Australian*, 6 May 2008, p. 11. During the Canberra leg of the torch relay, there were accounts of flag-smothering Chinese students intimidating Australian nationals who were lawfully exercising their right to protest. Some 10,000 Chinese students came to Canberra

At a time when many were beginning to question—thirty years after Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms—the extent to which China had completed the transition to becoming a responsible member of the international community, Rudd used the speech at Beijing University as an opportunity to reiterate that he believed that ‘the Olympics are important for China’s continuing engagement with the world’. In so doing, he suggested that those in the audience, the educated youth of China, should look to facilitate China’s integration into global society.⁸⁸ Yet, in seeking to develop a position which allows Australia to speak openly to China about matters of pressing international concern, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also demonstrated a belief that Australia has an active role to play in facilitating China’s engagement. In taking such a position Rudd gestures towards a new and significant chapter in the Australia–China relationship.

equipped with five-starred red flags, as part of a government bankrolled counter-demonstration. Canberra resident Annie Acton reports ‘I attended the torch relay in Canberra carrying a small sign saying *China sends weapons to Robert Mugabe*. I was harassed by a group of Chinese students, in particular a tall man who followed me around trying to drape a large Chinese flag over me. I walked to another part of the relay route and stood by myself with my sign. A large group of Chinese students surrounded me and nearly smothered me with their flags. I tried to run away from them but they wouldn’t let me go, they just made a tighter circle around me. In the end a policeman had to rescue me from them ...’, ‘Seeing red: freedom of speech under attack from Chinese’, *Canberra Times*, 26 April 2008.

88. ‘A Conversation with China’s Youth on the Future’, Peking University, 9 April 2008, http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2008/speech_0176.cfm (accessed 15 April 2008).

Conclusion

This monograph has explored the historical, political and cultural foundations of the Australian Parliament's dealings with China. In so doing, it has offered an account of the profound transformation that has taken place in the way Australian parliamentarians have viewed 'China'. The anxieties about economic competition and genetic corruption that prompted the first Parliament to pass legislation that sought to exclude the Chinese and other non-Europeans from Australia, was eventually replaced by one in which 'China' emerged as an indispensable economic and strategic partner, positioned near the centre of Australian's foreign policy. The monograph has sought to account for this transformation by exploring a series of landmark events in the development of bilateral relations, among them: J. G. Latham's visit to China in 1934, the Parliament's reaction to the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, the Whitlam Government's recognition of China in 1972 and Hu Jintao's address to the Australian Parliament in 2003.

The full extent of the change in parliamentary attitudes towards China can be evidenced by contrasting the material that appears at both ends of the monograph. At Federation, one of the nation's first parliamentarians spoke of eschewing contact with the Chinese, for fear of electoral loss. Just over one hundred years later, the then Leader of the Opposition demonstrated his credentials—as a new generation leader and future prime minister of Australia—by addressing a visiting Chinese head of state in a Chinese language. Similarly, while Federation parliamentarians proclaimed that the more educated the 'Oriental', the worse man he was likely to be, education has grown to become Australia's largest service export to China with some 90,000 Chinese nationals currently studying in Australia. Chapters Three and Four also demonstrate stages of development in Australia's relations with China that would have been unimaginable to the members of the first Parliament of Australia. They do this by considering the two addresses by the President of the United States and the President of the People's Republic; the commitment of the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group to strengthening bilateral relations; the inquiries of the committees of the Parliament; and the recent initiatives that have created linkages between the two national legislatures.

Beyond seeking to examine the way the bilateral relationship has been advanced through the processes, practices and outputs of the Parliament, the monograph has located the changes in parliamentary attitudes within a broader social, political and national context. It has identified the role the Parliament has played as an important

knowledge producing institution, one which has variously come to reflect and affect community understandings of China. The study has also documented the role China has played, in both times of fear or friendship, in Australia's domestic politics. The calls for the containment and isolation of China which dominated Australia's experience of the Cold War; the spectre of international communism which helped consign the Australian Labor Party to decades in opposition; and the role that the recognition of the People's Republic played in the Whitlam Government's reformist policy agenda, each testify to the place accorded to China in Australia's post-War domestic politics.

The second half of the study has outlined some of the social, economic and political transformations that have recently taken place within China. Chapters Three and Four have documented the way that such transformation has been accompanied by suggestions that China has altered the way it manages its external relations. Former Ambassador Madame Fu has been quoted suggesting that China has 'moved on' from the 1970s; that it is no longer 'behind the bamboo curtain', and that China has developed new ways of dealing with points of view with which it disagrees. Such comments have been supported by the former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, who suggested that China has become a responsible international citizen which listens to members of the international community: 'This isn't the China of old. The China of new is a China that listens to its friends and its neighbours, and listens to them a lot'.⁸⁹

By contrast, however, the monograph has also suggested that this transformation is not as complete as these comments suggest. It has observed the way Chinese officials have attempted to influence the Australian media and transgress international standards of diplomacy by attempting to influence the operations of the Australian Parliament. Added to this have been examples of how the Chinese Government responds to statements made in the Parliament about the Republic of China (Taiwan); a critique of the way that the Chinese Government seeks to 'duchess' Australian parliamentarians; and the extraordinary reaction of the Chinese to protests against the Olympic torch relay in March–April 2008.

There is broad agreement across the Parliament that China will continue to change and change quickly. However, there is less certainty about the character of this change. Some parliamentarians interviewed for this study suggested that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will embark upon a program of major liberal political reform.

89. See discussion in Chapter Four and specifically footnote 31.

Some suggested that without liberal political reform the CCP may go into crisis. Others were more circumspect about predicting China's future political character. However, in spite of this divergence in opinion, there was agreement that managing the Australia–China relationship would continue to be something of a balancing act for Australian legislators.

When asked how they would like to see the bilateral relationship change or develop in the future, parliamentarians surveyed for this study made the following suggestions:

- increasing cooperation between the two nations to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and the environmental impact associated with China's development;
- improving the capacity of Australian educators to understand the needs of Chinese students;
- using 'sports diplomacy' to facilitate deeper cultural and business links;
- formalising the role of the Australia–China Friendship Group to involve the Group in matters of policy (possibly through developing specific sector-based study tours that focus on matters such as trade, education or the environment);
- increasing parliamentarians' knowledge of China (this may be done through sending an annual delegation to China, possibly when the National People's Congress is meeting; or through encouraging parliamentarians to visit areas outside Beijing, Shanghai, Xian and Guilin);
- giving 'adequate' attention to alleged human rights abuses taking place in China;
- developing more exchanges between the two legislatures and other policy makers; and
- establishing a 'more realistic' approach to China which does not result in the neglect of other North Asian relationships.

In closing, it is also worth returning to J. G. Latham's caution to the House of Representatives in 1934. While Latham's comments are confined to matters of trade, they gesture towards developing a specialised knowledge which would facilitate Australia's engagement with China:

Conclusion

It has been usual in Australia to regard China as offering great potentialities for the marketing of Australian goods. This arises, no doubt, from our habit of thinking of China in terms of China's population ... But perhaps no other market offers more difficulties, and no other market requires such specialized knowledge of local conditions and sales procedure. It can also be said that in no other eastern market is competition so keen, or is there such a concentration of international commercial representation, both business and official. Most countries have recognized the necessity for official trade representation, and the trade representatives are, generally speaking, men of extraordinary ability and acumen.⁹⁰

90. J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission, 1934: Report of the Right Honourable J. G. Latham', *Parliamentary Papers for 1932–34*, Number 236, p. 12.

Appendix 1: Address by the President of the People's Republic of China

Mr Howard (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (10.08 a.m.)—Mr Speaker and Mr President of the Senate, on behalf of the government and on behalf of all members, I extend to His Excellency Hu Jintao, the President of the People's Republic of China, a very warm welcome to our national parliament. I extend that welcome to his wife, Madame Liu, and to all the other members of the Chinese party.

It would be no exaggeration to say that 10 years ago an event such as this would have been seen as not only unlikely but indeed highly improbable. Equally, I would not have thought 10 years ago that as Prime Minister of Australia and as the leader of a Western, Centre Right political party I would have—as I did in 2002—addressed the cadres of the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing. I think that says a number of things. It says something of the way in which our world has changed. It says something of the commonsense character of the relationship between Australia and China, because that event in 2002 occurred and this event today occurs without either of our two nations in any way abandoning their distinctive but different traditions.

I would characterise the relationship between Australia and China as being both mature and practical and as being a relationship that is intensely built on growing people-to-people links. We are different societies. We have different cultures, we have different traditions and we have different histories. No purpose is served in pretending otherwise. But might I say that that has never blinded successive Australian governments of both political persuasions to an endeavour to draw from the relationship those things that can be of great and enduring mutual benefit to our societies. So in those senses it is a very mature and practical relationship.

The people-to-people links are immensely important. I can describe it this way: the most widely spoken foreign language in Australia today is a dialect of Chinese, and three per cent of the Australian population, no fewer than 550,000 people, claim Chinese ancestry. Speaking personally, 13.3 per cent of my own electorate of Bennelong in Sydney claim Chinese ancestry. There are 34,000 students from China studying in Australia. China is now Australia's third largest trading partner. Last year the signing of the natural gas contract for the supply, over 25 years, of natural gas to the Guangdong province was a veritable landmark in the evolution of the economic

relationship between our two nations. Two-way trade between Australia and China has trebled since 1996.

Let me take the opportunity today of recording, on behalf of the government, our appreciation for the constructive, practical and wholly positive approach that China has taken in helping, in partnership with others, to resolve the challenging issue of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. No nation has more influence on North Korea than China. The resolution of that issue, which must necessarily involve other nations as well, is very important to the stability and the peace of our region.

Finally, it is self-evident that the relationship between Australia, the United States and China respectively, on a two-way basis—that is, our relationship with the United States and then again our relationship with China—will be extremely important to the stability of our region. Our aim is to see calm and constructive dialogue between the United States and China on those issues which might potentially cause tension between them. It will be Australia's aim, as a nation which has different but nonetheless close relationships with both of those nations, to promote that constructive and calm dialogue.

Mr President, you and your wife are greatly welcomed to our country. We thank you for coming. We wish you well. We know that you will receive a warm reception from many people in this country who will demonstrate their affection for the important relations between our two peoples.

HIS EXCELLENCY Mr Hu Jintao (PO) (10.21 a.m.)—(Translation) The Hon. Neil Andrew, Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Paul Calvert, President of the Senate, the Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister, distinguished members of the federal parliament, ladies and gentlemen: I am delighted to have this opportunity of coming to the Parliament House of Australia to meet with you and address such a distinguished audience.

Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Chinese government and people, my best wishes to you and, through you, to the courageous and hardworking Australian people. Though located in different hemispheres and separated by high seas, the people of China and Australia enjoy a friendly exchange that dates back centuries. The Chinese people have all along cherished amicable feelings about the Australian people. Back in the 1420s, the expeditionary fleets of China's Ming dynasty reached Australian shores. For centuries, the Chinese sailed across vast seas and settled down in what was called 'the southern land', or today's Australia. They brought Chinese culture here and lived

harmoniously with the local people, contributing their proud share to Australia's economy, society and thriving pluralistic culture.

More than three decades have passed since China and Australia established diplomatic relations. Our bilateral ties have stood the tests of time and international vicissitudes and made steady headway. To consolidate and develop its all-round cooperation with Australia is a key component of China's external relations. We have always viewed our friendly ties with Australia from a strategic and long-term perspective. To cultivate a deeper and all-round cooperation between the two countries is the common aspiration of the two governments and peoples.

This afternoon I will have an in-depth exchange of views with Prime Minister Howard on bilateral ties and regional and international issues of mutual interest. We will also sign a series of bilateral documents on cooperation. This shows that China-Australia cooperation in various fields is going deeper and broader. I am convinced that China and Australia will shape a relationship of all-round cooperation that features a high degree of mutual trust, long-term friendship and mutual benefit—a relationship that makes our two peoples both winners.

How should countries go about their relations with one another in this complicated and diverse world? It is a question that is very much on the minds of many people. We are of the view that, for smooth conduct of state-to-state relations and for lasting peace and common prosperity, all countries should act in compliance with the following principles. First, politically they should respect each other, seek common ground while putting aside differences and endeavour to expand areas of agreement. Our world is a diverse place, like a rainbow of many colours. Civilisations, social systems and development models, different as they may be, should respect one another, should learn from each other's strong points, amid competition and comparison, and should achieve common development by seeking common ground while shelving differences. By mutual respect politically we mean that the political system and the path of political development chosen by the people of each country should be respected.

Democracy is the common pursuit of mankind, and all countries must earnestly protect the democratic rights of their people. In the past 20 years and more since China embarked on a road of reform and opening up, we have moved steadfastly to promote political restructuring and vigorously build democratic politics under socialism while upholding and improving our systems of people's congresses, multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party, and regional ethnic autonomy. We have advanced the process of scientific and democratic decision

making and promoted grassroots democracy, protection of citizens' rights and freedoms, democratic elections, and democratic decision making, democratic management and democratic supervision by the people in our country's political, economic, cultural and social life according to law.

We have stepped up the building of the legal system in China, making sure that there are laws to go by, that the laws must be observed and are strictly enforced and that violators must be prosecuted. As a result, the enthusiasm, initiative and creativeness of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups have been galvanised, providing an immense driving force for the country's development. In future, we will continue to move forward our political restructuring in a vigorous and cautious manner as our national conditions merit, improve our democratic institutions and legal system and build a socialist political civilisation.

True, China and Australia are different in social systems. This is the result of different choices made by our people in light of their national conditions and the two countries' different historical evolution. As China-Australia relations prove, so long as they understand and treat each other as equals and respect their respective national conditions and circumstances, countries with different social systems may very well become partners of friendly cooperation with constantly increased common ground.

Second, economically they should complement and benefit one another, deepen their cooperation and achieve common development. With economic globalisation developing in such depth, no country can expect to achieve economic development goals without going for effective economic and technological cooperation with other countries and actively participating in international division of labour, bringing in capital knowledge, technology and managerial expertise needed for development at home and in return providing products and know-how with comparative advantages for the development of others. This is how countries achieve common development through mutually beneficial cooperation.

Right now, China has entered into a new stage of building a well-off society in an all-round way and accelerating the socialist modernisation drive. We are engaged in developing a socialist market economy and opening the country still wider in more areas, with a higher level of sophistication. While speeding up strategic economic restructuring, we are vigorously implementing the strategies of revitalising China through science and education, of sustainable development, of development of the west and of renewal of the old industrial base of north-east China. China enjoys a vast market, abundant labour, social and political stability and a vibrant momentum for

development. A stronger and more developed China will bring growth opportunities and tangible benefits to other countries in the world.

China and Australia are highly complementary economically. Blessed with vast territory and rich resources, Australia boasts economic and technological successes. The potential for China-Australia economic cooperation is immense. Past, present or future, we see Australia as our important economic partner. China-Australia trade has grown rapidly in recent years, from \$US87 million in the early years of our diplomatic relations to \$US10.4 billion in 2002. China has become Australia's third largest trading partner and fourth largest export market and, in fact, the fastest growing one. Australia is China's ninth largest trading partner and biggest supplier of wool. Over the years China has purchased large amounts of iron ore and aluminium oxide from Australia, which has such energy and mineral riches. Last year the two countries signed a 25-year, \$A25 billion deal on the LNG project in Guangdong, thus laying a solid foundation for our bilateral energy cooperation.

Also expanding steadily are the bilateral exchanges and cooperation in science and technology, agriculture and animal husbandry. By June 2003 Australia had invested in a total of 5,600 projects in China, with an actual investment exceeding \$US3.1 billion. China has invested in 218 projects in Australia, with a contractual value of \$US450 million. We are ready to be your long-term and stable cooperation partner, dedicated to closer cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit. The trade and economic framework between China and Australia which will be signed today will mark the beginning of a brand-new stage of our trade and economic cooperation. I am convinced that this framework will help steer our bilateral cooperation in economic, trade and other fields to continuous new highs.

Third, culturally countries should step up exchanges and enhance understanding and mutual emulation. Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world, as we see today. The proud history, culture and traditions that make each country different are all part of human civilisation. Every nation, every culture, must have its strong points and advantages. All should respect one another, draw upon each other's strengths and strive to achieve common progress.

China has a 5,000-year civilisation. Its people, of 56 ethnic groups, have worked together to shape the magnificent Chinese culture. The Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese but also to the whole world. It has flourished not only through mutual emulation and assimilation among its various ethnic groups but also through

interactions and mutual learning with other countries' cultures. With reform opening up and a modernisation drive pressing ahead in full swing, we are all the more eager to draw upon the useful achievements of all civilisations. We stand ready to step up cultural exchanges with the rest of the world in a joint promotion of cultural prosperity.

Cultural pluralism is a distinctive feature of Australian society, a feature that embodies ethnic harmony in this country. Just as the national anthem goes, Australian people have come across the seas. Cultural exchanges have long served as important bridges for enhanced understanding and deepened friendship between our two peoples. Last year was the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Australia. While Celebrate Australia 2002 delighted Shanghai citizens, Chinese performing artists had their debut in the famous Sydney Opera House. In recent years people-to-people exchanges between our two countries have grown rapidly, with annual visits well over 100,000. China is the biggest source country of foreign students in Australia now. We should continue to expand our cultural exchanges, giving fuller play to culture's role as the bridge and bond in the building of friendship between the two countries and their peoples.

Fourth, in security, countries should strengthen mutual trust, cooperate on an equal footing and endeavour to maintain peace. Peace and development remain the dominant themes of our times. Uncertainties affecting world peace and development have been on the rise. Traditional and non-traditional threats to security are mixed together, rendering some regions unstable and turbulent. Terrorism attacks from time to time and cross-boundary crimes have become more pronounced. How to meet these challenges, secure peace and development in the world and create a stable and harmonious homeland for all is a critical question that calls for serious consideration and effective solution.

China advocates a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation and strives to resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue and cooperation. We believe in democracy in international relations. The affairs of the world should be handled through consultation on an equal footing by all countries. Members of the international community should reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and give full scope to the important role of the United Nations and its Security Council in maintaining world peace and security.

China and Australia respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and they stick to noninterference in each other's internal affairs and enjoy a growing mutual trust in the security field. Recent years have seen increasing exchanges between the two

militaries, as evidenced by the annual defence strategic dialogue for six consecutive years and frequent port calls by naval ships of both countries. China and Australia have shared interests in keeping the South Pacific and Asia-Pacific stable, easing regional tensions and promoting peaceful settlement of hot-spot issues. We are both against terrorism and hope for stronger counter-terrorism cooperation. We are both key participants in the ARF and other regional security mechanisms. China welcomes and supports a constructive Australian role in regional and international affairs. We, on our part, will stick to our independent foreign policy of peace, acting forever as a strong defender of world peace and a persistent proponent of common development. We are ready to join Australia and other countries in cultivating a secure and reliable international environment of lasting stability.

Ladies and gentlemen, Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. The complete reunification of China at an early date is the common aspiration and firm resolve of the entire Chinese people. A peaceful solution to the Taiwan question serves the interests of all the Chinese people, including our compatriots on Taiwan. It also serves the common interests of all countries in the region, including Australia. The greatest threat to peace in the Taiwan Straits is the splittist activities by Taiwan independence forces. We are firmly opposed to Taiwan independence. The Chinese government and people look to Australia for a constructive role in China's peaceful reunification.

Ladies and gentlemen, there have been frequent exchanges between our two legislatures in recent years. The Speaker, the Hon. Neil Andrew, and many law-makers here have visited my country and have seen China's changes and progress first-hand. Here I would like to extend this invitation to all of you: we look forward to receiving more of you in China. Looking back, I am gratified to see the fruitful past of our relations. Looking forward, I feel confident in where the relationship is headed. Let us join hands in writing a more luminous new chapter of the China-Australia relationship of all-round cooperation. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Parliamentary Questionnaire: Australia's Relationship with China

As the 2007 Australia Parliamentary Fellow I am conducting research on the ways the Australian Parliament views, or has viewed, the relationship between Australia and China. As part of this project, I am sending a questionnaire to all Senators and Members of Parliament.

The following questionnaire seeks your response to a range of questions about the nature of the Australia–China relationship, Australia's foreign policy priorities and the China-related matters that are raised by your constituents. Your participation is important to the success of this project and the representativeness of the data. The questionnaire should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. In order to facilitate the compilation of data please complete and return the questionnaire by **13 July 2007**.

Your responses are confidential, non-attributable and will only be presented as aggregated data.

Data from the questionnaire will be published by the Parliamentary Library as a component of the 2007 Australian Parliamentary Fellow monograph.

Please return this questionnaire in the reply paid envelope that has been supplied.

1. Please indicate the political party of which you are a member (if any):

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Liberal Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Labor Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) National Party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Democrats | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Greens | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Family First | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Prefer not to disclose | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Years of parliamentary service:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Under 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) 3–6 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 6–9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) 9–12 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) 12–15 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Over 15 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |

China questions—sources of information

I am interested in determining which sources you use to gain information about the People's Republic of China and how influential each source is in contributing to your understanding of China and the Australia–China relationship.

3. Please indicate which sources you access for information about China and the frequency of this access (please circle).

	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) The Australian media	1	2	3	4
b) The overseas media	1	2	3	4
c) Academic/ think-tank publications	1	2	3	4
d) Parliamentary committee activity	1	2	3	4
e) Government communication (eg: cables, intelligence, press statements)	1	2	3	4
f) Parliamentary colleagues	1	2	3	4
g) Chinese language materials	1	2	3	4
h) Members of your electorate	1	2	3	4
i) Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade	1	2	3	4
j) Chinese Embassy	1	2	3	4
k) Parliamentary Library	1	2	3	4
l) Your staff	1	2	3	4
m) Internet sites	1	2	3	4
n) Non-government organisations	1	2	3	4
o) Other, please specify: _____	1	2	3	4

China questions—travel to China

4. (a) Have you ever visited the People’s Republic of China (not including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region)?

Yes
 No (Please go to question 5)

If YES:

(b) How many times: _____

(c) Did you visit during the term of the current 41st Parliament? (16 November 2004–present)

Yes
 No

(d) If you did visit during the term of the 41st Parliament, in what capacity did you visit? (Please select all that apply)

Personal/private (eg: holiday)
 Business/ trade representation
 Official (Please go to question 4(e))

(e) If you visited in an official capacity, please tick the most appropriate category (if more than one, please select all that apply):

- As a member of an official Parliamentary delegation
- With a Parliamentary Friendship Group
- As a member of a party delegation
- Individual study trip
- As a guest of the Chinese Government or a Chinese Government agency

5. (a) Have you ever visited the Republic of China/ Taiwan?

- Yes
- No (Please go to question 6)

(b) Did you visit the Republic of China/ Taiwan during the term of the 41st Parliament?

- Yes
- No

6. Are you a member of any of the following groups?

- a) The Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group
- b) The Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group
- c) The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet

China questions—Chinese language skills

7. Do you have any Chinese language skills?

- Yes
- No

8. Do any of your staff have any Chinese language skills?

- Yes
- No

China questions—the character of the Australia–China relationship

9. From a historical perspective, please rate how influential you feel each of the following milestones have been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship (please circle the relevant number for each event):

	Highly Influential	Moderately Influential	Marginally Influential	Not Influential	Don't Know
a) The liberalisation of the Chinese economy, from 1978, under Deng Xiaoping	1	2	3	4	5
b) The Whitlam Labor Government's recognition of China in 1972	1	2	3	4	5
c) The Fraser Government's bipartisan approach to relations with China	1	2	3	4	5
d) The building of bilateral ties under the Hawke Labor Government	1	2	3	4	5
e) The Tiananmen Square incident of 4 June 1989	1	2	3	4	5
f) Bilateral relations under the Howard Government to date	1	2	3	4	5
g) President Hu Jintao's address to the Australian Parliament in October 2003	1	2	3	4	5

10. Using the contemporary Australia–China relationship as a starting point, please indicate how influential you feel each of the following will be in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship? (please circle the relevant number for each item)

	Highly Influential	Moderately Influential	Marginally Influential	Not Influential	Don't Know
a) Increasing Australian exports to China	1	2	3	4	5
b) A bilateral or multilateral climate-change agreement with China	1	2	3	4	5
c) A Free Trade Agreement with China	1	2	3	4	5
d) China's emergence as a stakeholder in global/ regional affairs	1	2	3	4	5
e) China's role in arms control negotiations with North Korea	1	2	3	4	5
f) The rights of Falun Gong practitioners in China	1	2	3	4	5
g) The enforcement of intellectual property rights in China	1	2	3	4	5
h) The character of Chinese diplomacy in the South Pacific	1	2	3	4	5
i) The political status of the Republic of China/ Taiwan	1	2	3	4	5
j) The Australia–United States alliance	1	2	3	4	5
k) The political status of Tibet	1	2	3	4	5
l) Australia's Human Rights Dialogue with China	1	2	3	4	5
m) China's demand for energy resources and raw materials	1	2	3	4	5
n) Other(s), please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

11. (a) In January 2007 Australia ratified two nuclear safeguard agreements in Beijing. These agreements were signed in preparation for the export of Australian uranium to the People's Republic. Are you concerned about the export of Australian uranium to China?

Yes
 No (Please go to question 12)

- (b) If YES, please indicate which, if any, of the following issues reflect your concern (select all that apply)

(i) Effect on nuclear proliferation/ security
 (ii) Effect on Australia's international reputation
 (iii) Other (please specify):

12. Do you believe a Free Trade Agreement with China would:

a) Be in Australia's interests
 Yes
 No
 b) Substantially contribute to Australia's trade deficit
 Yes
 No
 c) Damage Australia's manufacturing sector
 Yes
 No
 d) Create jobs and raise Australian living standards
 Yes
 No

13. China recently overtook Japan as Australia's largest trading partner. Given the importance of China to Australia's economic development, do you feel that:

a) Australia is well-positioned to protect and promote Australian interests in China
 Yes
 No
 b) Australia has become too reliant upon China for its economic prosperity
 Yes
 No
 c) Australia's economic reliance upon China will negatively impact upon Australia's political dealings with China
 Yes
 No
 d) The Howard Government has achieved the right balance between the economic and non-economic aspects of the relationship
 Yes
 No

14. Have you ever received representations from Chinese Government officials about:

- a) The political status of Tibet
Yes
No
- b) The activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia
Yes
No
- c) The rights of workers to collectively organise in China
Yes
No
- d) The political status of the Republic of China/Taiwan
Yes
No
- e) Other domestic political events in China (please specify):

Foreign policy questions

The following questions seek to determine what you believe Australia’s foreign policy priorities to be and the degree to which, you believe, the Opposition and the minor parties can influence Australian foreign policy.

15. Please indicate the importance you attribute to the following interests or values in determining Australia’s foreign policy:

	Highly Important	Important	Unimportant
a) Trade	1	2	3
b) Advancing democracy	1	2	3
c) Defence and strategic interests	1	2	3
d) Advancing human rights	1	2	3
e) Promoting Australian political ‘values’	1	2	3
f) Strategic alliances with world powers	1	2	3

16. How much influence do you believe the Opposition and the minor parties have on foreign policy?

- Substantial
- Some
- Negligible

17. The Opposition and the minor parties can best influence foreign policy through (select all that you think apply):

- Parliamentary debate/ questions
- Policy
- Committee work/ reports
- The media/ public awareness
- Non-government organisations

18. a) Do you believe the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade / Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy:

Yes
 No (Please go to question 19)

b) If YES, could you please provide an example: _____

Constituent matters

19. *Members of the House of Representatives only, Senators please go to question 22)*

The number of Chinese-born people in any one Australian electorate may be as high as between 10–15%. Are you aware of the percentage of Chinese-Australians in your electorate?

Yes Could you please provide that percentage: _____%
 No

20. Are the Chinese-Australians in your electorate largely (select all that apply):

Australian-born Chinese
 Mainland (PRC)-born Chinese
 Hong Kong-born Chinese
 Ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia
 Don't know

21. How does the business community in your electorate consider the economic *rise of China*?

- a) They view it as a significant opportunity
 Yes
 No
- b) They worry about competing with Chinese imports
 Yes
 No
- c) They are concerned about the effect of a FTA with China
 Yes
 No
- d) They welcome a FTA with China
 Yes
 No

22. a) Have your Chinese-Australian constituents raised China-related issues with you?

Yes
 No (Please go to question 23)

b) If YES, do the China-related matters raised by your constituents relate to:

- Policy
- Commerce/ trade
- Immigration
- Human rights
- Education
- Other (please specify): _____

23. a) Do you receive representations from individual constituents or organisations about human rights issues in China?

- Yes
- No (Please go to question 24)

b) If YES, do these representations relate to any of the following (select all that apply):

- (i) Falun Gong practitioners
- (ii) Rights of ethnic and religious minorities
- (iii) The forced repatriation of North Korean asylum seekers
- (iv) Forced abortions and sterilisations
- (v) 'Organ harvesting'
- (vi) Other (please specify): _____

24. Would you like to make any additional comments; do you feel that there are important aspects of the Australia–China relationship that have not been mentioned?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire—please return the questionnaire in the reply paid envelope that has been supplied.

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