Extreme Allies: Australian-American Relations in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001

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September 11 was 'a purifier of alliances'.
Jacques Almaric (2001)

'In an increasingly globalised and borderless world, the relationship between Australia and the United States will become more and not less important.'
John Howard (2003a)

The dramatic impact of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington sharply intensified relations between Australia and the United States. In the aftermath the bilateral relationship was reconfirmed, as the two states joined in war against an elusive, and unexpected, enemy. As the war on terrorism broadened, Australia enthusiastically joined the so-called 'Coalition of the Willing', sending troops to fight in Afghanistan and, more controversially, deploying forces alongside the US in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. From late 2001, commentary in Australia invariably accepted that 'relations with the US dominated Australian foreign affairs,' or more subtly observed that 'the central dynamics of Australian foreign policy revolved around the issue of relations with the superpower, and the implications of this relationship' for the broader exercise of Australian foreign policy (O'Connor 2004; McDonald 2005). This deepening bilateral association hinged on the level and character of Australia's role in the United States-led and defined 'war on terrorism'. Yet the Howard government had also to manage Australia's interests in a variety of other areas especially in East and Southeast Asia where US leadership or identification with American policy, were widely understood as undermining Australia's pursuit of its separate regional interests. Surprising, Australia's anxious and seemingly unqualified embrace of the American alliance against terrorism complicated, but did not permanently compromise Australia's complex multi-layered relationships with other states in the Asia-Pacific region, including Indonesia, China and Japan.

As global geopolitical architecture was redrawn in unexpected ways by the war on terrorism, Australia's regional ties surprisingly strengthened and it played a growing role as a political interlocutor for the US with a variety of states in Asia, including the crucial Muslim state in the region, Indonesia, and the fast growing giant in the region, China. As the US struggled to sustain viable anti-terrorist coalitions of so-called 'willing' nations – drawn from Europe, Asia and the Middle East – the international status and leverage of Australia increased, as did its authority within the bilateral alliance.

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In 2001 Prime Minster John Howard visited each of Australia's major international partners: the United States, Japan, China and Indonesia. While anxious to maintain strong relationships with East Asia and to rebuild relations with Indonesia in the wake of the East Timor dispute, Washington remained at the centre of Howard's foreign policy agenda. Australian strategic planning complemented US planning under the so-called Powell Doctrine: it expected that regional allies contribute 'on the ground' to any United States-led coalition, and sought to ensure that the US had the strategic capacity to successfully wage war in two regional

conflicts simultaneously (Hartcher 2001). Consistent with this doctrine Colin Powell had, before the Senate committee responsible for his confirmation as Secretary of State, praised Australia's 'role in Indonesia' [East Timor 1998-2000] and anticipated an expanded regional role for the junior alliance partner: 'And so we will coordinate our policies, but let our ally, Australia, take the lead as they have done so well in that troubled country' (BBC 2001). The Howard government was acutely aware of the lessons of the East Timor operation for the American alliance. Its 2000 Defence White Paper stressed the need for a balance between self-reliance and maintenance of ANZUS; between sustaining a capacity to deploy ground forces in relatively low-level crises in Australia's immediate region and supporting expensive high-tech weapons systems and intelligence cooperation sufficient to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the US alliance as well as multilateral operations internationally (Department of Defence 2000).

Immediately the Bush administration came to office it elevated Australia's status as a partner in the Asia-Pacific. At the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) talks in July 2001 the two powers agreed to further extend intelligence sharing and strengthen interoperability of their defence forces. These decisions foreshadowed, and made more effective, military and covert security cooperation between the two nations in the immediate aftermath of September 11. If Australia accepted that military-strategic-intelligence planning must be more closely dovetailed with American planning, it was publicly unenthusiastic about US suggestions for a more elaborate alliance structure in East Asia. The new Bush administration's efforts to strengthen and coordinate its three key bilateral Asia-Pacific alliances – those with Japan, Korea and Australia – were carefully deflected by the Howard government. Dubbed the 'Asian NATO' (Tow 2003), this proposal was not promoted – in the public arena at least – by the Howard government. Sensitive to China's fears of containment by a web of United States-dominated regional alliances, and aware of regional disquiet about its so-called role as Australia's deputy sheriff in the Asia-Pacific, Australia let the American proposal evaporate. At the same time, however, Canberra exhibited renewed enthusiasm for negotiating a bilateral free trade agreement as the US explored the prospects for a series of trans-Pacific free trade arrangements to balance a Free Trade Area of the Americas (Higley 2001).

September 11, 2001
More than any crisis since war in Vietnam, the cataclysmic events of September 11, 2001 exposed Australia to the implications and obligations of its long-standing security alliance with the US under the ANZUS agreement. Coincidentally, Howard was in Washington, DC, on an official state visit, at the time of the attacks on New York and Washington. On September 10, in what had become a bilateral ritual over five decades, the Australian Prime Minister and the US President reaffirmed the 'strength and vitality' of the enduring alliance. In contrast to his uncomfortable association with President Bill Clinton, Howard was at ease with and warmly welcomed by the conservative new Republican President, George W. Bush and senior administration officials, including Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Howard reasserted the importance of the bilateral relationship in words that were to be immediately tested by the dramatic terror attacks the following day. 'Of all the nations that we value and whose friendship we cherish,' the Prime Minister stated, 'there's no relationship more natural, more easy and one more deeply steeped in shared experience in common aspiration for the kind of world we want our children to grow up in than the relationship between Australia and the United States' (Shanahan 2001).

INSERT Figure 1 HERE

Figure 1: Throughout 2001-2005 the Howard government was widely portrayed as a uniquely compliant unequal partner in the bilateral relationship with the Bush administration.

The events of September 11 curtailed Howard's official visit. On his return to Australia, Parliament invoked the ANZUS treaty. For the first time since it was agreed fifty years earlier, the now bilateral treaty was activated. The traumatic events of September 11, the Australian Parliament proclaimed, 'constituted an attack on the US of America within the meaning of the ANZUS treaty' (Kelly 2001b). Bush observed dramatically: 'The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today'. Foreshadowing a broad, global response to terrorism, Bush pointedly advised that his administration 'will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them'. At a press conference the following day, the President's language was even less restrained: 'The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war' (C|Net 2001). America's closest allies quickly adopted similar language – although they were not aware of the scope of the military response being planned by the so-called neo-conservatives who dominated the Bush cabinet and administration. Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that September 11 'marked a turning point in history' and foreshadowed a broad international alliance centred on the European Union and NATO that would 'strike at international terrorism wherever it exists' (Blair 2001). Howard spoke of the 'terrible moment' and 'its implications for nations' other than the United States. No society was immune from the possibility of a terrorist attack, Howard warned: 'regrettably we now face the possibility of a period in which the threat of terrorism will be with us in the way that the threat of a nuclear war was around [sic] for so long before the end of the Cold War (Mottram 2001).'

America's traditional allies responded immediately to the events of September 11, 2001, The NATO treaty was invoked. ANZUS, a less precise treaty, was also invoked. Articles IV and V of the (now) bilateral treaty[1] declared that the alliance partners 'would act to meet the common danger' in the event of an armed attack on a nation that was party to the agreement. Parliament's action was largely symbolic, as ANZUS could be activated without formal parliamentary approval. In no previous crisis had obligations under ANZUS been explicitly used to sanction Australian participation in combat alongside the United States. War in Korea, Vietnam and the First Gulf War did not result from attacks on either alliance partner. Despite strong bipartisan support within the Australian parliament for explicitly invoking ANZUS, the Howard government carefully argued the wider legal basis for joining with the United States. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, promptly cited Article 51 of the UN Charter, which reads in part: 'Nothing in the present charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the UN'. And the government also cited a UN Security Council Resolution of 13 September that condemned 'these terrorist attacks' and called 'upon all states to work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organisers and sponsors of the attacks'. The UN resolution also held accountable for the acts of terror 'those responsible for aiding, supporting or harboring the perpetrators' (Kelly 2001b).

The form and impact of terrorism signalled by the September 11 attacks expressed radical shifts in global politics and conflicts. At the beginning of the 21st century, international politics were shaped overwhelmingly by three broadly related developments – 'globalisation',

American hegemony, and an unexpected upsurge in extra-state violence or terrorism. The dynamics of the Australian-American relationship after 2001 were embedded in these fundamental shifts in global politics. Globalisation increasingly made the world's people and regions interdependent, precipitating new fault lines of conflict. In this newly complex international environment, conventional state power did not guarantee security at home or supremacy abroad. Despite the unprecedented power of the US and strength of many other Western states, new technologies gave radical ideological groups, as well as so-called rogue states, unprecedented and largely unanticipated capacities to wage terror campaigns across national borders.

In the decade after the Cold War it became routine for analysts to write of an imperial and hegemonic America. In Michael Ignatieff's words: '[the US] is the only nation that polices the world through five global military commands; maintains more than a million men and women at arms on four continents; deploys carrier battle groups on watch in every ocean; guarantees the survival of countries from Israel to South Korea; drives the wheels of global trade and commerce; and fills the hearts and minds of an entire planet with its dreams and desires' (Ignatieff 2003). Announcing the 'new era' in US national security strategy in December 2002, the State Department noted routinely: 'Today the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence' (and, in language consistent of official claims in the American Century it added: 'we do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage'). Yet the Bush Doctrine articulated in response to the September 11 attacks put unilateralism at the very centre of American policy: it unambiguously asserted that 'the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others'. The deeply asymmetrical and fluid global geopolitical environment of the early 21st century was characterised by new adversaries and combat strategies, 'against which the old, static, reactive and geographically constrained alliances offer only limited capacities'. In this environment, pragmatic alliances of 'the willing' coalesced for specific and limited purposes. The United States-led response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, was built on such alliances – even as it soon proclaimed its right to respond unilaterally and pre-emptively. Australia's immediate response promised to 'provide all the support that might be requested of us in the United States in relation to any action that might be taken' (Harries 2004).

At War in Afghanistan
In the immediate wake of September 11, Powell and Rumsfeld warned other nations, including close allies, that they would be judged in Washington by their willingness to support an alliance against the perpetrators of the attacks. In Powell's words such support 'has become a new way of measuring what we can do together in the future…and we deem unresponsiveness to be contributing to additional terrorism' (Smith 2001). Yet Washington's initial military response to the September 11 attacks was essentially unilateralist, building on plans hastily conceived by the inner circle of the Bush administration – Rumsfeld, Powell, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, CIA Director George Tenet, and the President – and sanctioned by the National Security Council. The response was drafted amidst outpourings of shock, support and sympathy around the world. *Le Monde* famously declared: *«Nous sommes tous Americans»* [We are all Americans now]. NATO states offered to join any collective action against the new enemy. Washington declined this offer, fearing that a multilateral military response might delay and unduly complicate operations. The Bush administration was also determined to identify the 'American' nation as the heart of the military reaction. Wolfowitz's reply to NATO's offer shunned multilateralism and was bluntly unilateralist: '…if we need collective action, we'll ask for it. We don't anticipate that at the moment' (Wolfowitz 2001). However, Washington's

distaste for alliance support was qualified: after considerable debate it accepted commitments of military forces from two enduring allies: the UK and Australia.

At the same time, as it rejected broader involvement of NATO forces in operations planned for Afghanistan, the US continued to seek commitments from NATO and other allies to assist with peacekeeping and long-term recovery of the region. Detailed plans for Afghanistan's postwar reconstruction were not developed and the possible role of allied nations not addressed. Rather, the National Security Council agreed on details for an attack on the Taliban and against Powell's advice, the President authorised the Pentagon to develop plans for future operations against Iraq. The Blair and Howard governments were locked into US operations in Afghanistan. More importantly, as willing allies in the initial United States-led assault on the Taliban, the two close allies were conspicuously implicated in subsequent US efforts to fundamentally expand counter-terrorism, under the controversial Bush Doctrine. A week after the September 11 attacks, Bush anticipated a broad war on terrorism, telling a specially convened joint session of Congress that nations harbouring terrorists would be held responsible for their actions and 'will be regarded…as a hostile regime' (Bush 2001).

The United States-led 'Operation Enduring Freedom' against Taliban forces in Afghanistan commenced on 7 October 2001. Ten days later, Bush officially accepted an Australian commitment of 1550 military personnel to the Operation – a contribution centred on the deployment of a Special Air Service (SAS) regiment of 150 personnel. Australia joined with the UK and the US in early assaults against the Taliban. A total of 26 additional nations subsequently contributed forces, although most were deployed in recovery and peace-building operations. Australia's military contribution to the war in Afghanistan was essentially symbolic. Officially, between 850 and 1300 Australian Defence Force personnel were serving in operational areas in Afghanistan, Krygyzstan and the Persian Gulf at any one time, from late 2001 (Hibberd 2002). It seems that no more than 150 members of its Special Forces Task Group served 'on the ground' at any one time. By 10 November 2001, United States-led forces supported by the local Northern Alliance had driven the Taliban from power. In late 2002 Australia withdrew its SAS forces from Afghanistan, leaving one mine-clearing expert as its total acknowledged public contribution to the fragile society's security (Grattan 2005; The Australian 2005). Given Howard's very public attempt to use the deployment as evidence of loyalty to the bilateral alliance, many observers were surprised when the Australian forces were withdrawn. Equally surprising was Australia's very limited presence in the protracted multinational peacekeeping efforts in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Criticism of Australia's withdrawal intensified amidst mounting evidence from international agencies, the UN and the World Bank of deepening hardship and continuing violence, and recognition by occupying forces that remnants of al-Qa'ida remained, warlordism had resurfaced, and that security had not been established beyond the borders of Kabul (Skelton 2003). In the immediate aftermath of September 11, the Australian public had strongly supported a military role in Afghanistan, accepting it as a necessary and appropriate action for a genuine ally of the United States.

Four years later the promise of counter terrorist success in Afghanistan remained frustratingly unfulfilled as the US and its allies waged a protracted war in Iraq while deploying less than 20,000 troops and international security forces in Afghanistan. The initial 'immense fund of goodwill' for US retaliation against al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in Afghanistan quickly dissipated as the justifiable initial retaliation was deflected into the controversial invasion of Iraq. On 11 September 2003 *The Sydney Morning Herald* expressed widely held dismay with the failures of the American alliance in Afghanistan: 'When the Taliban was defeated, America's friends shared its hope of a new beginning for the people of Afghanistan' – a hope

not yet realised. And, in words that echoed declining public support for the Bush Doctrine's widening definition of rogue states, it concluded, 'America's definition of the war on terrorism and diversion into broader conflicts has strengthened neither its own nor global security' (The Sydney Morning Herald 2003b).

A chorus of international opinion also called on the Bush administration to refocus on Afghanistan's reconstruction and more successfully wage war on terrorist groups in Afghanistan's south and east along the border with Pakistan. Regardless of how successfully the War on Terrorism is fought on other fronts, critics argued, it could not be won until a viable central government could exert genuine authority over a cohesive Afghanistan state. Expressed more broadly, it was argued from 2002 that the US must (re)define its interests in Afghanistan, reinvigorate its nation building efforts, and match both its strategic and humanitarian goals with the appropriate resources.

Critics of Australia's limited role in Afghanistan's reconstruction voiced parallel arguments. They argued that Australia's shallow military effort sent a cynical political message to its alliance partners, and implied that the Howard government's deeds did not match its words. Conservative commentators expressed unease that during 2002-2005, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, Australia's military contributions had been more symbolic than substantive. Michael Duffy, for example, claimed 'Australia's contribution to the war against terrorism so far has been so modest it's dishonourable….We left most of the hard work – and the dying – to American and British soldiers' (Duffy 2005b). Commenting more broadly on Australia's limited contribution of troops to the war on terrorism, Duffy drew attention to the curious workings of the bilateral relationship with Washington: 'America's acceptance of the gap between Australian rhetoric and participation is interesting,' he wrote in March 2005. 'It's as if there was a deal, whereby President George Bush had accepted token military effort as long as it was preceded by prompt and unstinted diplomatic support' (Duffy 2005a). Another conservative commentator Gerard Henderson bemoaned 'the ADF's evident lack of capacity to project even limited force on the ground…' (Henderson 2002).

Howard was well aware of this criticism and of Pentagon disquiet with Australia's limited efforts. Earlier in 2005 he acknowledged: '…for the last two years, since the end of the major combat phase at a military level from time to time both the Americans and the British…have expressed to their counterparts in the Australian Defence Force, a desire for further Australian contributions' (Howard 2005). Australia defended its minor role on the grounds that key elements of the ADF were deployed in establishing regional security on low-level operations in East Timor and the Solomons, and that SAS forces (and unspecified covert operations groups) in the Middle East were elite groups playing an extraordinary operational role in the coalition. Unwilling to commit substantial forces to security or reconstruction in Afghanistan, Australia was unable to influence the US or coalition policy in the difficult country that remained the centre of the war on terrorism, even after reconstruction authority was transferred to NATO in August 2003. In contrast to Australia, many states unwilling to join the US in Iraq participated in Afghanistan under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that comprised service personnel from 30 countries, including 15 members of the NATO alliance. For the first time in its 54-year history, the NATO alliance acted beyond Europe's borders. *The Wall Street Journal Europe* observed that this marked 'a[n] historic as well as [a] strategic watershed' (The Wall Street Journal 2003).

Four years after the first assault against the Taliban its influence was again spreading, especially in the south and eastern provinces of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan. And the

wider war on terrorism, like the occupation of Iraq, made little progress. Terrorism was increasingly defined in Western societies as a global divide, the war against it unwinnable in conventional military-strategic terms. Belatedly, in July 2005, Howard announced that 'a team of 150 SAS troops and supporting officers will be 'on the ground' in Afghanistan within two months' – for a 12 month deployment – at an estimated cost of $A50 to $A100 million. The forces operated under the control of US officers, with 'a separate Australian national command – as required under Australian military law. The SAS would return home in 2007 to provide security for the OPEC meeting in Australia. Howard conceded that the decision followed a request 'at a military level' by the US 'and others' [allies] 'amidst a resurgence of violence and renewed efforts by the Taliban to undermine the country's new government'. Critics said the 2005 commitment was 'better than nothing, but not much better' (William Maley quoted in Banham and Peatling 2005). Howard also announced he would 'explore options' for sending a 200 personnel provincial reconstruction team in April-May-June 2006. In contrast, New Zealand, Canada, and Italy had committed provincial response teams that contributed effectively to the reconstruction effort. By late 2005 Canberra had not yet established full diplomatic relations with Kabul.

It was commonly argued by Howard and supporters of Australia's public commitment to the shifting coalition against terrorism that internationally Australia continued to 'punch well above her weight' (John Howard quoted in Duffy 2005b). Answering criticism over Australia's limited commitment of forces to Iraq, Howard was adamant that 'we should not leave it to the US to do all the heavy lifting' (Howard 2002). However, most defence experts interpreted Australia's troop deployments in the war on terrorism as little more than symbolic expressions of support for its alliance partners – as 'too little too late'. Michael O'Connor (quoted in Duffy 2005a), former Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association stated: 'To consider ours a militarily significant commitment is just ludicrous'. Hugh White interpreted the limited troop numbers as marking 'the final demise [sic] of Howard's original concept for fighting the war on terrorism'. This strategy was built around short-term deployment of elite forces, rather than long-term commitment of troops appropriate for a sustained occupation, peacekeeping or nation building. White perceptively summarised the Howard government's dilemma as it fought alongside American and British forces in Afghanistan, and later Iraq. Once committed to action in these difficult theatres, 'there could be no quick victories, no limited commitments, no swift or easy exits', White observed. The Howard government eventually agreed to American requests 'to put the troops back in the front line of an escalating conflict' that, as White (2005b) pointed out, was not like Iraq 'where Australian forces [could be used in] relatively peaceful tasks'.

The alliance against the Taliban brought unexpected irritants into the Australia-American relationship. Two Australian citizens, David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib, were detained by US special forces, and interned with more than 600 other detainees in an isolated US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they were denied the usual protections and judicial processes of the US legal system. Detainees were to be tried, eventually, by special US military tribunals, although some were sent clandestinely to so-called 'third countries' like Egypt and Uzbekistan – under a policy euphemistically labelled 'rendition' – and detained without regard to established conventions or international law (Mayer 2005). Australia was the only foreign nation that consented to its citizens being tried before a US military tribunal. Great Britain and a number of European governments successfully repatriated their nationals. Following the release of Habib in 2004 Hicks remained in detention as an 'illegal enemy combatant', and was deemed by US authorities to have forfeited rights that might apply under the Geneva Convention. He was also excluded from legal protections normally available to

US citizens or those detained in the United States. America's self-proclaimed 'war' in Afghanistan did not lead it to accept that those detained in combat were 'prisoners of war'. After more than three and a half years in custody, Hicks was to be brought before a military tribunal – despite the fact that three US military prosecutors had withdrawn from his case on the grounds that the tribunals established to try him and others had been 'hand-picked to ensure convictions'. Throughout Hicks's ordeal, newspaper opinion in Australia strongly supported his right to a fair trial, and questioned the failure of the Howard government (in contrast to the Blair government) to leverage its alliance with the US to protect the fundamental human rights of an Australian citizen. 'There may be little public sympathy for Hicks,' *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised: 'The toughest test of a democracy, however, is its willingness to uphold the rights of its least popular citizens. Hicks should be properly tried or brought home' (The Sydney Morning Herald 2005c).

Collaboration on the ground in Afghanistan marked the beginning of an increasingly intimate and complex relationship between Australia and the US – a relationship made far more complex when generalised to Iraq. As terrorist acts proliferated, and American allies as diverse as Saudi Arabia, Spain and Indonesia became targets, along with Britons, Australians and Americans abroad, the character and implications of the bilateral alliance changed. Intelligence sharing, personnel exchanges, and covert security operations increasingly defined the relationship. As one enthusiastic supporter of ANZUS noted the alliance was based 'upon a level of intelligence collaboration that is hidden from Australian citizens (Scanlan 2003). Agents and agencies in both Washington and Canberra worked unacknowledged, covertly, with unexpected partners – including Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, China, the Philippines, and Russia – against a common enemy that was ill defined, elusive and essentially state-less. Despite massive international expenditure and effort, those nations engaged in the so-called war on terrorism could not anticipate a decisive victory. Three years after September 11, Bush conceded (quoted in Stewart 2004) that 'I don't think we can win it' (before adding that he meant there would be no formal peace settlement between the combatants).

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Figure 2: Australian commentary on the failures of coalition policy in post-Taliban Afghanistan and occupied Iraq 2005

Towards Iraq: Allies under the Bush Doctrine
The attacks of September 11 did not initiate a new kind of international violence. As Peter Rodgers (2003) and others have correctly pointed out: 'the methodology and scale of Islamic anti-American violence changed, but the shift was incremental, not fundamental. In 2000, the State Department's annual report on global terrorism identified more than 400 incidents over the previous decade, slightly fewer than half of which were directed at US citizens or facilities. State Department officials detected a disturbing pattern of anti-Americanism from the World Trade Centre bombing of 1993 through the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 to the attack on USS *Cole* anchored in Aden, Yemen, on 12 October 2000. Public and private anxiety increased. Secretary of Defense William Cohen wrote in *The Washington Post* (1999) of the 'grave new world of terrorism'. Richard Clarke (1998), Clinton's co-ordinator for counter-terrorism, painted an equally disturbing picture and spoke publicly of the possibility of 'an electronic Pearl Harbor'. Rather than attribute terrorism to a clash of ideologies, Clinton and his Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, identified globalisation as the root cause of a new kind of internationalised violence. 'The very openness

of our borders and technology', Clinton proclaimed in 2000, 'also makes us vulnerable in new ways'. In words that were to be constantly repeated by Western leaders, Albright (1998) claimed prophetically: 'Twenty-first century threats know no boundaries'. By 1999, in a statement that anticipated the Bush administration's controversial response to September 11, Clarke (quoted in Diamond 1999) declared a basic tenet of US counter-terrorism strategy. 'We may not just go in and strike against a terrorist facility', he said: 'We may choose to retaliate against the facilities of the host country, if that host country is a knowing, cooperative sanctuary'. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, this policy was resuscitated and extended.

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush identified the new enemy of the West as an 'Axis of Evil' comprising Iraq, Iran and North Korea. No longer could US policy be defined as a retaliatory response to specific terrorist threats linked directly to al-Qa'ida. Now, 'rogue states' – those which harboured terrorists or were developing weapons of mass destruction – were joined in Administration rhetoric as imminent threats to global order and the security of the United States. Washington's 'new thinking' on international relations now explicitly incorporated unapologetic unilateralism, 'pre-emptive strikes' and military intervention abroad to achieve so-called 'regime change' and protect the global interests of the United States. It would be misleading to overstate the revolutionary nature of the new Bush foreign policy doctrine, just as it would be misleading to exaggerate the long-term consequences of September 11 on global affairs. Key elements of the Doctrine were evident in US policies before September 11.

This 'new' direction was most bluntly expressed by the influential columnist and advisor Charles Krauthammer before the Twin Towers shock: 'The new unilateralism seeks to strengthen American power and unashamedly deploy it on behalf of *self-defined* global ends.' In the late 1990s, the very neo-conservatives who became so influential in the Bush administration identified the removal of Saddam Hussein as vital to US interests (Krauthammer 2001). The Bush Doctrine is widely interpreted as expressing the long-frustrated ideas of the so-called neo-conservatives in Bush's administration and those linked to 'The Project for the New American Century' – notably Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Donald, William Kristol, and Lawrence F. Kaplan. However, its origins can also be traced to the greatly expanded non-combative role of the American military from the end of the Cold War and the decline of the State Department as the principal source of international policy.' 'The United States government has grown increasingly dependent on its military to carry out its foreign affairs', Dana Priest (quoted in Powers 2003) concluded in her study *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*: 'The shift was incremental, little-noticed, de-facto…the military simply filled a vacuum left by an indecisive White House, an atrophied State Department, and a distracted Congress'. The 'set of convictions that came to dominate' the Bush Doctrine, Samuel (Sandy) Berger observed (2003) were starkly obvious: 'That the requirements of United States national security profoundly have changed. That in a Hobsian world, American power, particularly military power, is the central force for positive change; that it is more important to be feared than admired; that 'root cause' is dangerous, moral relativism: evil is evil and can never be justified. In the period before the Iraq war, the Administration exhibited absolute confidence in America's massive military advantage and ability to promote American values as universally appropriate.

As its forces won initial successes against the Taliban, the Bush administration prepared for a broader assault on so-called rogue states that, it argued, sanctioned and supported terrorism.

Increasingly, throughout 2002 it argued that new weapons technologies and radical terrorist groups presented the 'civilised world with the gravest danger' (Bush 2003). The 2002 US 'National Security Strategy' was underpinned by the belief that 'in an age where the enemies of civilization openly and actively seek the world's most destructive technologies, the US cannot remain idle while dangers gather' (United States, National Security Council 2002). Bush spoke even more directly: 'Terror cells and outlaw regimes building weapons of mass destruction are different faces of the same evil. Our security requires that we confront both' (Bush 2002c).

The Bush Doctrine was further elaborated during 2002, as the administration refined plans to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Speaking at West Point on 1 June 2002, Bush explicitly rejected the use of containment and deterrence against 'shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend' or against 'unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction':

> America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists – because the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization…

Most controversially, Bush offered a detailed defense of the right of the US to take pre-emptive military action against such enemies:

> While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise out right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against out people and our country…
>
> We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends…(United States, National Security Council 2002).

Very few traditional allies of the US accepted the rationale for pre-emption advanced by the President. Important NATO allies, most prominently France and Germany as well as other major global powers including Russia and China, were disturbed by the implications of American policy. The Howard government did not share such concerns, although Australia had not been touched directly by acts of terrorism. From mid-2002 Howard, Alexander Downer and Robert Hill separately defended a state's right to strike pre-emptively against a possible enemy. Hill (2002) stated in June, for example: 'A key lesson of the events of September 11 is that when a threat is seen to be emerging…you don't wait for the attack before you respond'.

The Howard government's commitment to the bilateral alliance was expressed unambiguously in its embrace of the United States-led, and defined, war against terrorism under the Bush Doctrine. As the Bush administration controversially placed Saddam Hussein and Iraq at the centre of its planned assault on terrorism, Howard travelled to Washington and confirmed that Australia was steadfast in its support of the United States. In recognition of the vitality and importance of ANZUS, Howard was invited to address a joint meeting of Congress on 12 June 2002 – a rare privilege for a foreign leader. 'America has no better friend anywhere in the world than Australia', he stated (Howard 2002a). Downer repeated this

claim a few weeks later before a very different audience in Dallas, Texas, 'reaffirming Australia's commitment to the dynamic and diverse relationship with the United States' (quoted in White 2003).

These expressions of solidarity were made as the war against the Taliban and al-Qa'ida shifted from open military operations centred on Afghanistan to less overt work by special forces and covert security and intelligence cooperation embracing, in particular, Pakistan. As early as January 2002 reports received from Afghanistan disturbingly confirmed earlier intelligence that affiliates of al-Qa'ida operating in Southeast Asia were planning to attack so-called 'Western' targets in Singapore. At the same time, Australia was explicitly listed as a target of al-Qa'ida in the first media message by Osama bin Laden released after the September 11 attacks: Australian intelligence was also aware of extremist Islamic terrorist groups in Indonesia, centred on Jama'ah Islamiyah, and linked informally to broader jihadist recruitment networks. Given deep disquiet expressed in parts of Indonesia and Muslim Southeast Asia over Australia's role in East Timor from 1998, and the Howard government's uncritical embrace of the Bush Doctrine, Australian anxieties about terrorism in the region were not without foundation. Along with the UK, as a Western society with a very high profile in the American alliance and the war in Afghanistan, Australia was identified by some radical Islamic groups as an important symbol of Western power and culture. If the US saw the war on terrorism in global terms, Australia was increasingly concerned with the more regional implications of terrorism. It recognised that Islamic radicalism based especially in Indonesia and Mindanao in the Philippines constituted a genuine if unpredictable threat to both Australian and broader Western interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

The initial statement of the Bush Doctrine, in January 2002, surprisingly identified Iraq as one of three partners in an 'Axis of Evil' – states allegedly united in their quest for weapons of mass destruction and support of terrorism. 'The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons,' Bush proclaimed (Bush 2002a). Throughout the following year the US attempted to link Saddam Hussein's regime with support for acts of terror, and implied frequently that the September 11 attacks had Iraq's knowledge and support. Increasingly, as the US military developed its plans to overthrow Saddam, and the Bush administration attempted to cultivate willing allies for this action, public rhetoric justifying an attack on Iraq shifted to its alleged development of weapons of mass destruction. Increasingly, public discourse justifying military intervention against Saddam's regime conflated Iraq, WMD and terrorism. In Australia, at least, the language of the Bush Doctrine became the explanation for pre-emptive war. In August 2002 – before the provocations of the Bali bombing – Howard proclaimed:

> The ultimate nightmare must surely be the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorist groups. That is a powerful additional reason why a country such as Iraq, which has previously been willing to maliciously use weapons of mass destruction, should have those weapons denied to it (Howard 2002c).

Congress took a giant step towards invasion of Iraq on 10-11 October 2002, authorising the use of force by the President, and accepting that action could, if necessary, be conducted unilaterally.

Bali Bombing

As the Bush administration attempted to gain broad international support for acting against Iraq, a series of bombings in the Philippines and Indonesia (Bali) confirmed the global dimensions of the new terrorism. On 10 October 2002 a bomb in a bus station in Kidapawan City in the southern Philippines killed eight people, and wounded many more. The following day, a joint United States-Philippines military exercise – 'Talon-Vision 2' – commenced in Luzon. On 12 October two massive bombs exploded in the Sari Nightclub in Kuta Beach, Bali, killing 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 26 Britons, and seven Americans. In all, citizens from 21 countries were killed in the blasts (British Broadcasting Corporation News 2003).

This was the largest single terrorist act against Western interests since September 11. Bush immediately expressed his nation's sympathy to Howard and the Australian people, stating that the attack must strengthen international resolve to defeat terrorism. It is clear that the Bali attack strengthened the Australian government's support for US action against Iraq. On the eve of the Iraq war Howard listed Iraq, Bali and September 11 as evidence 'that we are living in a world where unexpected and devastating terrorist attacks on free and open societies can occur in ways that we never before imagined possible' (Howard 2003a).

The Bali bombing was initially attributed to Jama'ah Islamiyah, a militant group that intelligence sources believed had links to al-Qa'ida. This suspicion was later sustained, as a number of perpetrators were found guilty of the offence in Indonesian courts. However conclusive proof of connections to al-Qa'ida was not established. Nonetheless, Osama bin Laden promptly voiced the reasons for the attack on Westerners in Bali (although many Balinese Indonesians were also victims). 'We warned Australia before to join in (the war) in Afghanistan, and (against) its despicable effort to separate East Timor,' he claimed via global media. 'It ignored the warning until it woke up to the sounds of explosions in Bali' (The Sydney Morning Herald 2002). Bin Laden's claims were later used by the Howard government to deflect criticism that its very prominent role in the invasion of Iraq made Australia an important terrorist target. Conveniently, Australian government spokespeople ignored Afghanistan and ANZUS, and argued that involvement in Iraq and close relations with the US had not brought Australia to the attention of international terrorist networks.

The Bali bombing greatly accelerated emerging agreement on the need to strengthen regional counter-terrorist cooperation and the desirability of improved cooperation with the United States. However, the Bush Doctrine, and its radical revision mid-2002, undermined regional support for a pre-emptive war on terrorism. And, as removal of Saddam Hussein became the centrepiece of US strategy, regional support was further muted. Yet the Bali bombing did oblige the government of Megawati Sukarnoputri to acknowledge the presence of al-Qa'ida linked networks in Indonesia, centred on the radical group Jama'ah Islamiyah, and to agree to deeper counter-terrorist cooperation with the US and other nations in the region, including Australia. Secretary of State Powell immediately authorised $US47 million in anti-terrorist assistance for Indonesia, and cooperation with the government of the Philippines and Malaysia was strengthened.

In October the APEC forum issued a special – if ambiguously worded – 'Leaders' Statement on Fighting Terrorism and Promoting Growth'. In early November military representatives from 22 regional states met in Singapore to further develop counter-terrorist cooperation. This was the focus of ASEAN discussions in Phnom Penh in November, resulting in a Declaration on Terrorism as well as explicit agreement to enhance cooperation between some key regional

states, including Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Amidst this enhanced regional cooperation, the diplomatic missions of Australia, Canada, and the European Union in the Philippines were closed indefinitely in response to reports on imminent terrorist attacks.

Shortly after the Bali bombing Howard clumsily proclaimed his government's right to take pre-emptive action against terrorist bases in other countries. Howard stated: 'We know that a failed state in our region, on our doorstep, will jeopardise our own security. The best thing we can do is take remedial action and take it now.' Linking Australia's intervention in the Solomons to the war on terrorism, Howard emphasised: 'Rogue and failed states become the base from which terrorists and transnational criminals organise their operations, train their recruits and manage their finances' (ABC 2002; Flitton 2003).[2] Downer echoed Howard's claim, albeit in more subtle language. '…Sovereignty in our view is not absolute,' he told the National Press Club in a speech critical of the role of multilateral institutions (The Weekend Australian 2003). In the face of ALP claims that regional pre-emption had become the 'new Howard doctrine', the Prime Minister suggested that international law had not kept pace with the 'new realities' of global tension (Grattan 2002; Kirk 2002). Not until 2005, as Australia attempted to lever its way into new regional associations independently of the United States, did the Howard government qualify its alleged right to pre-emptive action in its region.

Howard's pre-emption declaration provoked criticism that, like the Bush Doctrine, it was an attack on the principles of international law and the authority of the UN. Local commentators, as well as many in Southeast Asia, interpreted Howard's ill-chosen words as reflecting Australia's role as regional deputy sheriff to the United States. Official government responses from Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia were more considered and disturbed, and included claims that such action by Australia could constitute an 'act of war' (Holloway 2002).

Iraq: Invasion and Occupation

By mid-2002 the Bush administration was determined that Iraq was to be invaded, Saddam overthrown, and the nation occupied until a representative government could be established. Throughout 2002 and early 2003 the President and others of his inner circle consistently claimed that any action on Iraq was contingent on Saddam's response to demands that his regime rid itself of weapons of mass destruction. However, a range of evidence later became available that demonstrated that the Bush Administration had decided to go to war regardless of the presence of absence of WMD in Iraq. As early as 2002, John Scarlett, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in the UK advised Prime Minister Tony Blair that in the Bush administration and 'military action was now seen as inevitable'. Scarlett's briefing was based on meetings with CIA Director Tenet and other high-ranking US officials, and shared United Kingdom-United States intelligence (Danner 2005). Scarlett advised Blair that 'Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD'. Tenet later advised Bush that proving Saddam had WMD was 'a slam dunk'. Most significantly, in the light of later claims that the UK had 'sexed-up' intelligence reports to justify war, Scarlett advised Blair:

> But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after [sic] military action (Rycroft 2005).

By August 2002 the US Department of Defense had already commenced 'spikes of activity' against Saddam's regime, and had developed two broad military options for invasion of Iraq (the second of which, 'Running Start', underpinned the invasion in March 2003).[3]

If UK and, it seems, Australian government leaders were indeed aware of US plans, they did not strongly caution their powerful ally against war. Indeed, in the months before war, both governments joined broad diplomatic efforts led by the US in the UN and beyond to 'justify' war and portray Iraq as a threatening 'rogue state' that fitted the definition of such states under the Bush Doctrine. Australian and British officials were conscious that while the use of force, could in some circumstances, be justified under international law, the desire for regime change was 'not a legal basis for military action' (UK Foreign Minister Jack Straw and Attorney General Lord Peter Goldsmith quoted in Daniszewski 2005). Despite public rhetoric to the contrary, coalition officials accepted that since the first Gulf War Saddam's regime had not threatened its neighbours' sovereignty, and its WMD capacity although imprecisely known was less than that of other 'rogue states', including Libya, Iran or North Korea. The UK and Australia clearly understood that any invasion should be based on one of three possible legal claims: humanitarian intervention, UN Security Council intervention, or self-defence. Eventually, however, both governments joined the assault on Iraq in support of the US alliance, aware that war was not justified by any established international legal conventions or sustained by accurate intelligence. Their decision to join the invasion, and the rationale for action offered by them, drew strong criticism domestically. Additionally, many traditional US allies – including key NATO members – condemned both the decision to invade and the rationale on which it was justified.

A day after the anniversary of September 11, and apparently in response to expressions of disquiet from its closest allies, Bush told the UN General Assembly: 'we will work…for the necessary resolutions' to enable use of international sanctions and international institutions against the Iraq regime (Bush 2002b). Increasingly, America's references to the UN were seen as efforts to make war more acceptable internationally, not as a genuine strategy for avoiding war. Nonetheless, an elaborate series of UN weapons inspections took place under Hans Blix, as prominent members of the Security Council – including Russia and France – insisted that war was not an appropriate, acceptable or legal way for disarming Iraq. Ultimately, the secretly planned date for a US invasion of Iraq – January 2003 – passed, and no convincing evidence that Iraq harboured WMD was uncovered. Nor was any convincing evidence available to confirm links between Saddam's regime and the September 11 attacks or al-Qa'ida.

Like the Blair government's 'inner circle', key members of the Howard cabinet were doubtless aware from at least mid-2002 of Bush administration plans to overthrow Saddam, regardless of evidence confirming his weapons program. By September 2002, Howard fell publicly into line behind Washington: 'I would have thought that the proposition that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction is beyond argument,' he stated in words that echoed through government rhetoric in the following months as the US searched desperately to justify its planned invasion of Iraq (Howard 2002b).

Supporters of ANZUS, on all sides of Australian politics, have long argued that it permits the very junior alliance partner the privilege of sharing detailed, sophisticated intelligence with the most important world power. For example, as early as 1987 *The Defence of Australia* White Paper argued, in words often reiterated on both sides of the Pacific:

> …Australia has access to the extensive US intelligence resources. This information is not confined to global superpower competition; it also complements Australia's information on political and military developments in our own region (Beazley 1987).

Many analysts agree, to cite Desmond Ball in 2001, that the 1947-1948 United Kingdom-United States intelligence agreement 'remains the most important international agreement to which Australia is a party' (Ball and Richelson 1985). Yet, as the US canvassed allied endorsement of its plans for war against Iraq, the politics of the bilateral alliance not the veracity of intelligence underpinning it, dominated Australian policy. ANZUS includes no guarantee of US support in the event of conflict: like Australian governments in Korea, Vietnam and the first Gulf War, Howard government policy was nonetheless premised on a belief that Australia must openly support the US to ensure a reciprocal commitment to defend Australia. Thus, in the lead-up to war in Iraq the Howard government agreed to make a specific military commitment in the event of conflict. It did resist US pressure to make a larger contribution, one more commensurate with its enthusiastic public embrace of US objectives (White 2003). And, working with the UK, it initially encouraged the Bush administration to seek UN authorisation, and the broadest possible multilateral support, for any precipitous action. The Bali bombing strengthened Australia's commitment to the war on terrorism while highlighting the importance of covert regional intelligence cooperation. It also reignited claims that Australians were a target of terrorists because of their government's close identification with American interests and policies. Such criticism strengthened in November 2002, when US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick announced that the US and Australia would begin formal negotiations of a Free Trade Agreement, a decision that foreshadowed even deeper integration of the alliance partners.

Despite exhaustive and inconclusive negotiations centred on the UN during late 2002 and early 2003, the determination of US to bring about regime change in Iraq did not waver. In early November the UN Security Council unanimously resolved (Resolution 1441) that Iraq acknowledge its weapons programs and disarm, or face 'serious consequences'. France and Russia accepted this resolution on the understanding that Iraq's failure to comply would constitute a 'material breach' and provoke further UN consideration: failure to comply did not automatically authorise the use of force. International legal opinion overwhelmingly accepted this interpretation of Resolution 1441. Furthermore, UN weapons inspectors repeatedly failed to uncover evidence that Iraq possessed WMD (and, of course, no credible evidence had linked Iraq with international terrorism). Yet American policy was unmoved by such complications (See Blix 2003 and Urquhart 2004). As the US moved towards an invasion Howard again visited the White House. In early February 2003 Australia moved cautiously towards contributing to the 'Coalition of the Willing' in the event of war. At the same time, DFAT issued a White Paper that stressed: 'Australia's links with the United States are fundamental to our security and prosperity and…the strengthening of our alliance is a key policy aim' (Australia. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2003). On 26 February 2003 Bush stated unequivocally that Saddam's regime would be removed from power. As Washington and its two principal allies, the UK and Australia, planned the military assault they rejected the need for further consultation with – or authorisation by – the UN. Now Bush – and with somewhat less public enthusiasm Blair and Howard – argued that Resolution 1441 authorised war (quoted in Bumiller 2003).

On 17 March 2003 (US Time) Bush's blunt 48-hour ultimatum on Iraq was issued:

> Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing (Online NewsHour 2003).

Shortly before delivering the statement the President telephoned Howard, formally requesting military support in the initial invasion. Before the ultimatum to Saddam had expired, Howard advised the Australian public that General Peter Cosgrove, Chief of the Australian Defence Forces, was authorised:

> To place the Australian forces already deployed in the Gulf region as part of any US-led coalition operation that may take place in the future, directed in accordance with existing authority under UN resolutions to disarm Iraq (The Sydney Morning Herald 2003a).

It was a measure of Australian-American intimacy and agreement that Australian special (SAS) forces were the first coalition troops to engage in combat against Iraq forces, and that this engagement took place many hours before Bush's ultimatum was publicly scheduled to expire. On 17 March Howard publicly pledged Australian military support in 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' – a pledge made after SAS forces had entered Iraq. On 20 March Australia committed 2,000 Defence Force personnel to the invasion, including a Special Forces Task Group, Navy frigates, and aircraft. The decision to act without UN sanction and with qualified international involvement precipitated strong public protests, including a series of anti-war rallies reminiscent of those staged throughout Australian cities during the Vietnam War a generation earlier (Kevin 2002; Eccleston 2004; Woodward 2004 quoted in Eccleston 2002).[4]

Washington's traditional allies had little impact on the direction or conduct of US policy in the months before the invasion of Iraq. Nonetheless, key Bush administration officials worked closely with Canberra and London, sharing intelligence, explaining US policy and seeking commitments of troops and peacekeeping forces in the event of war, and from July 2002 planning joint operations through military-to-military discussions. Joint preparations, premised on joint military involvement in Iraq took place on many levels. Howard maintained publicly that Cabinet had not committed Australian troops to any United States-led operations in Iraq, and emphasised throughout late 2002 that war could still be avoided. However the official Department of Defence Booklet, *The War in Iraq: Operations in the Middle East in 2003*, later conceded that close military collaboration implied a joint commitment to war: 'Perhaps influenced by Australia's successful and professional contribution to Operation Slipper in Afghanistan, US staff consistently indicated they would welcome any Australian contribution including intelligence support, air and sea transport, warships, combat aircraft, air-to-air refuelling or special forces' (Australia. Department of Defence 2004). When war came, Australian Special Forces stationed in the Middle East were well prepared for combat and were immediately deployed. This rapid initial contribution to the invasion made concrete the Howard government's unswerving public support for the controversial Bush Doctrine.

Four weeks after the coalition forces crossed into Iraq the invasion was over. Baghdad had fallen, and Saddam's regime was destroyed. Against a staged military background set-up for maximum television effect, Bush famously proclaimed the coalitions' 'mission accomplished' (cnn.com 2003). However, the occupation, reconstruction, and democratisation of Iraq were to prove far more difficult than the removal of Saddam's brutal regime. And, in the wake of the invasion, the claims on which it had been justified were exposed as without foundation. The discredited Iraq regime did not possess WMD. Nor were any links with al-Qa'ida

demonstrated. Claims by the US and its supporters that invasion constituted a just war to disarm Iraq and establish a free society were exposed as hollow. Iraq descended into a prolonged period of bloody civil violence that occupying forces proved unable to contain. And, as violence escalated and commentators spoke of civil war in an increasingly factionalised Iraq, new rationales were offered by the Australian government to justify its role alongside the United States. In particular Howard claimed that involvement in Iraq would 'make it less likely that a terrorist attack will be carried out against Australia' (Howard 2003b). At the same time his government introduced extreme security measures and legislation against this very possibility.

While unqualified in its rhetorical support for the United States-led invasion of Iraq, Australia's military contribution was relatively small. Howard remained sensitive to the possible political implications of the war and announced that Australian forces would not contribute to long-term reconstruction or peacekeeping operations. Events on the ground, and American difficulties in occupied Iraq gradually obliged Howard to reconsider this decision. Australia's role was designed to identify it prominently with the initial assault, while minimizing casualties and avoiding protracted involvement in post-war security arrangements or reconstruction programs. In announcing Cabinet's decision to send troops to the front-line of the 'Coalition of the Willing', Howard implicitly accepted that without UN approval such action lacked majority support at home. Thus he downplayed the possibility of mass civilian casualties, defined tight rules of engagement for Australia's forces, and emphasized that troops would operate under a separate command structure with 'targeting' rules more restrictive than those for US troops. Howard's careful announcement, most commentators agreed, was designed to allay 'fears' that Australian forces 'may be ordered by United States military commanders to undertake operations with high risk to [Iraqi] civilian lives' (Kitney 2003; Riley 2003). As one of only three nations participating in the initial military invasion, Howard sought to balance support for the US alliance with domestic disquiet over the reasons for war against Iraq.

Many of Australia's troops were withdrawn soon after the fall of Baghdad. In the words of one Australian newspaper two years later, 'Australia has played a minor post-invasion role'. Some who had supported, albeit reluctantly, Australia's military role in the initial assault, were nonetheless disturbed by its limited contribution to securing peace and helping with reconstruction. Australia's participation in the United States-led invasion of Iraq', *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised, 'carried a legal and moral obligation not to "cut and run"'. In domestic political terms, however, Howard's strategy had succeeded it claimed: 'That Australians in Iraq have remained virtually unscathed is due mainly to our small deployment and the coincidence of good security and good fortune.' Australia retained a 'disproportionately small force' in occupied Iraq – a politically astute policy given domestic disquiet over the ethics and efficacy of the invasion and occupation (The Sydney Morning Herald 2005a). This concern intensified during 2005 when it was revealed that the Australian Wheat Board funnelled bribes of $AUD290 million to Saddam's regime during 1999-2003 in contradiction of the UN Oil-for-Food Program, as the Howard government publicly embraced US plans to overthrow this very regime (The Sydney Morning Herald 2006).

In April 2003 Howard rejected US requests for a significant increase in Australia's deployment in Iraq. Throughout the bloody previous year of the occupation, Howard, Downer and Minister for Defence Robert Hill consistently defended Australia's military role as more than a 'token force' designed to show solidarity with Washington (Wikimedia Foundation Inc. 2005). Howard's announcement of Australia's military commitment was unapologetic about

its relationship to the alliance. 'The Americans have helped us in the past and the United States is very important to Australia's long-term security', Howard said: 'It is critical that we maintain the involvement of the United States in our region'. As in the case of Afghanistan, Howard (2003b) defended Australia's limited involvement in Iraq as evidence that Australia was prepared to assist with the initial 'heavy lifting' but was obliged in the longer-term to deploy the bulk of its forces closer to home, to ensure security in its 'troubled immediate region'.

The State Department (2003) advised in August, that in addition to the US force of about 140,000, 27 countries 'have contributed a total of approximately 21,700 troops to ongoing stability operations in Iraq'. As 'reconstruction' stalled, the US sought new coalition partners and to encourage wider participation sought UN authorisation for the US-led military stabilization force. In October 2003 the UN Security Council, under Resolution 1511, authorised formation of a United States-led multinational stabilization force for Iraq. Australia, along with 32 other nations contributed. Resolution 1511 recognised Iraqi sovereignty, and sought formation of an interim government or council charged with responsibility for drafting a constitution and holding democratic elections. Yet the role of the UN remained ambiguous and limited, as the United States-led and dominated multinational force grappled with escalating violence and factionalism.

Resolution 1511 provided a degree of international respect to security operations in Iraq. In December 2003, Howard declared ambiguously that Australians had 'largely moved on from Iraq.' Four months later, amidst escalating violence, instability and reports of a Shi'ite uprising (Rothwell 2004), Howard acknowledged that Australian troops would not be withdrawn 'until the job is done'. His pledge echoed Bush's reaffirmation that US forces would 'stay the course', if necessary beyond the planned June 30, 2004 handover of authority to a new interim Iraqi administration. As Bush requested more Australian troops, additional US forces were committed.

INSERT Figure 3 HERE

Figure 3: Australian commentary on the failures of allied policies in occupied Iraq, early 2004.

Australia's actual contribution to the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq was relatively insignificant. Two thousand Australian troops already in the Middle East were promptly committed to the initial assault. As early as May 2003, with the overthrow of Saddam effected, some Australian forces – 250 air force personnel – were withdrawn. By mid-July, 1370 ADF personnel were stationed in Iraq, including the recently deployed Al-Muthanna Task Group near the southern border, and the Australian government now accepted that it should play an identifiable role in Iraq's recovery. By July 2004, 1000 Australian personnel were stationed on Iraqi soil – 880 troops and a security detachment of 120. Hill (2004) defended this deployment in words welcomed by the Bush administration: 'Our commitment obviously is to remain [in Iraq]…until the job is done.' By August-September 2005, the total number of acknowledged Australian military personnel 'in the region' had reached 1370 (Australia. Department of Defence 2005), boosted by the deployment of 450 troops to protect Japanese forces carrying out humanitarian work at Al-Muthanna (Alford 2005). Again, as commentators were quick to point out, this Australian deployment was 'less risky than the frontline role of US and British troops" (The Sydney Morning Herald 2005a). Despite the conspicuous role played by the UK, other prominent members of the British Commonwealth

refused to participate in Iraq – including Canada and, initially, New Zealand (which later sent a non-combat force of about 60 personnel in 2004). In the 12 months to March 2004, the number of nations sending military or security-related personnel to Iraq rose from 27 to 34. The number of troops provided by each state ranged between 135,000 and 35 (Stanley 2005).[5] Expressed in relative terms, as a proportion of a nation's population, or overall troop numbers, the US contribution was far greater than that of any other state. Australia's contribution was relatively small, far exceeded by the United Kingdom, as well as a variety of European states, including Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Denmark.

Australia, Iraq and the Bilateral Alliance
Throughout the engagement in Iraq, the Howard government proclaimed that is strategy had confirmed and strengthened the American alliance. However, this sentiment was not always shared at top levels of the Bush administration. Referring to the gap between Howard's public rhetoric and military commitment, Hugh White (2005a) commented that:

> …alongside the understandable gratitude for Howard's political support in the early days, many in Washington – and London – have been sourly conscious that Howard has put very little substance between his strong rhetorical support for Bush's policy in Iraq since Saddam's statue fell in April 2003.

As he authorised participation of Australian forces in Iraq, Howard stated publicly that he had received no advice suggesting that this military action would increase the threat posed to Australia by terrorism. He indicated he was 'very comfortable' with his decision to order Australian forces to join the invasion as it was based on the authority of 17 UN security Resolutions taken over many years relating to Iraq's failure to disarm (Sheridan 2005a; Riley 2003). However, the bombs that exploded near the Australian embassies in Jakarta and Baghdad during 2003-2004 made Howard's argument more difficult to sustain. The massive Madrid bombing indicated strongly that involvement in the 'Coalition of the Willing' brought increased risks of terrorist attack for prominent allies of the US. Reflecting on the Madrid attack, Howard dutifully reiterated Washington's rhetoric, branding the newly elected Spanish government's decision to withdraw its troops from Iraq as a 'concession to terrorism.' He repeated the claim that 'a very bold and courageous attempt is being made to establish democracy' in Iraq (quoted in Shanahan 2004). More broadly, however, the Australian government justified joining the United States-led actions in Iraq in familiar terms – as essential to preserving the American alliance (Camilleri 2003; Hartcher 2004; McDnald 2005). As evidence mounted in occupied Iraq of civilian deaths, human rights abuses (including torture and so-called 'rendition'), and ongoing 'insurgency' and terrorism, the Australian government struggled to defend its role. Amidst protracted factionalised and criminalised violence public support for the occupation declined – in both Australia and the United States.

Critics of Australia's support for the invasion argued that it was unprovoked, unnecessary and unlawful. Iraq's supposed arsenal of weapons did not exist, and Australian intelligence had established this fact before the invasion began. Like the Bush and Blair governments, the Howard government's public interpretation of intelligence greatly exaggerated the threat allegedly posed by Saddam's regime, and ignored compelling evidence that Iraq did not constitute a threat to international peace or was complicit in international terrorism. Howard relied heavily on US and UK interpretations of shared intelligence, and like these governments, largely ignored UN findings such as the evidence reported by Hans Blix and

UNMOVIC. On 4 February 2003, for example, Howard asserted that there was 'compelling evidence…within the published detailed dossiers of British-American intelligence' that '…Iraq's current military planning specifically envisages the use of chemical and biological weapons…Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program…; All key aspects – R&D, production, and weaponisation – of Iraq's offensive biological weapons programme are active and most elements are larger and more advanced that they were before the Gulf War' (United Kingdom. UK Joint Intelligence Committee 2002; United States, Central Intelligence Agency 2002; Howard 2003a; for a clear and carefully argued discussion of the full report and its implications see Garran 2004).

As early as June 2003, a special Parliamentary Joint Committee of ASIO, ASIS and DSD, was appointed to assess *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Its carefully understated findings acknowledged that the justification for war by Australian leaders was not supported by evidence known at the time of the invasion: '…The case made by the government was that Iraq possessed WMD in large quantities and posed a grave and unacceptable threat to the region and the world, particularly as there was a danger that Iraq's WMD might be passed to terrorist organizations', it concluded: 'This is not the picture that emerges from an examination of all the assessments provide to the Committee by Australia's two analytical agencies'. Equally difficult for the Howard government, the special Parliamentary report found no justification for pre-emptive war or disregard of UN procedures (Australia. Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD (Jull Report) 2004; Manne 2005).

Deference to its great and powerful friends warped Australia's interpretation of shared intelligence. It was generally accepted by informed opinion within Australia that the Office of National Affairs (ONA) and Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO) 'overstated Iraq's WMD threat, but were more cautious than their US and British counterparts' (Allard 2004a). Ultimately, the Howard government went to war despite the fact that it was aware that the decision was not convincingly supported by intelligence on Iraq. Defending the decision, Downer conceded that refusal to join the war would have weakened 'very substantially' bilateral ties with the United States. 'It wasn't a time in our history to have a great and historic breach with the United States', he observed pragmatically (Allard 2004b).

The government's public rationale for embracing US counter-terrorism constantly reiterated conventional claims about the value of ANZUS as a defence guarantee for its junior partner. Yet the government's oft-cited Defence White Paper 2000, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, had emphasised local self-reliance and conceded that US forces would not necessarily act to protect Australia from attack: 'a healthy alliance should not be a relationship of dependency but of mutual help' (Australia 2000; Kelly 2001a; Ball 2001; McDonald 2001). Paradoxically, Australian self-reliance and its capacity to act independently in so-called regional crisis management was predicated on Australia's continuing access to advanced US information and weapons technologies, as well as continuing privileged access to United States-United Kingdom intelligence. Deepening integration with US weapons technologies, security planning and intelligence – not ambiguous reciprocal obligations under ANZUS – increasingly underpinned the bilateral relationship. Australian defence preparedness was linked deeply and routinely to technologies and planning developed through the US Department of Defense. In effect, this reduced Australia's capacity to act independently along lines anticipated by the Defence White Paper published before September 11, 2001. Recognition of the changing character of the bilateral alliance came in

2005 through a special Presidential decree that gave Australia privileged access to new levels of US intelligence (Sheridan 2005b).

Given the failure of US intelligence before September 11, failures in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, manipulation of intelligence to justify invasion of Iraq, and the bloody stalemate in occupied Iraq, enhanced bilateral intimacy might have been interpreted as, at best, ambiguous confirmation of the value of the NAZUS alliance to the junior partner. Nonetheless, some commentators shared the Howard Cabinet's view that this 'unprecedented access to US intelligence and tactical planning' made the alliance a 'global partnership' (Sheridan 2005b). Cooperation against terrorism was but one factor underpinning deeper bilateral cooperation: important also was cooperation anticipated before September 11, 2001, that centred on the controversial US missile defence program, efforts to restrict proliferation of nuclear weapons to unpredictable regimes, shared refusal to support the Kyoto protocols, and participation in a range of initiatives as diverse as the US Joint Strike Fighter project, on-the-ground combat cooperation in the Middle East, and the bilateral FTA.

Deeply embedded in intelligence sharing and committed to sheltering under the umbrella of the bilateral alliance, Australia was implicated routinely in American policy and action. Australia's prominent military role in the invasion and occupation of Iraq fell outside the conventions of international law, especially as interpreted and invoked by the UN. Australia's willingness to promote the right of a state to engage unilaterally, or collectively, in pre-emptive military action against another state pointedly contravened these conventions. Australia's public acceptance of United States-defined rules of engagement, as well as the practices of imprisonment, interrogation, torture and 'third' country secret interrogation ('rendition'), many argued, also placed Australian behaviour outside agreed norms of international law and human rights protection.

Most Australians accepted that their nation's involvement in Iraq made Australia a more likely terrorist target (despite the fact that the invasion came shortly after the Bali bombing) (Gregory and Wilkinson 2005).[6] Critics of the alliance argued pragmatically that it more deeply implicated Australia in US policies and actions that ultimately undermined Australia's security and in the words of the former Liberal Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Fraser, made 'America's enemies…Australia's enemies' (Fraser 2003). In September 2004, a major explosion at the gates of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta delivered, in the words of John Howard 'a chilling reminder that the terrorist threat to Australians remains very real' (The Australian 2005a). Two years after the Bali attack, Australia publicly acknowledged that counter-terrorism arrangements in Southeast Asia must be further strengthened. Most observers accepted that as a central ally to the United States, an unqualified public supporter of the invasion of Iraq, and a Western society with deep links to Southeast Asia, Australia remained a prominent potential target of terrorism. By early 2005, Howard accepted that Australians had 'fallen victim to terrorist attacks' in the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Indonesia, but the nation had 'avoided a terrorist attack on our soil' (Walters et al. 2004; The Australian 2005a).

INSERT Figure 4 HERE

Figure 4: Public scepticism about US hegemony and its implications for Australian independence was widespread by 2003.

Throughout 2003-2005 the occupation of Iraq was understood by many Australians as unnecessary and flawed, attracting and encouraging terrorism to Iraq and exacerbating anti-Americanism throughout the region and amongst Islamic communities more broadly. As opposition to the war in Iraq grew internationally and anti-war sentiment escalated within the United States, the Lowy Institute's *Australian's Speak 2005* poll indicated that 'Australians are as divided now about our military contribution to Iraq as they were about the war itself, and have remained largely consistent in their views over the past two years' (Cook 2005a). Australian opinion was evenly divided over Australia's continued involvement: 'Of those who said they supported the Iraq War at the time, 78 percent support our continued military involvement. Of those who opposed going to war at the time, 76 percent are against our continued military involvement', the report concluded (Coultan 2004 for changing US opinion; Cook 2005a). Opinion polls conducted in September 2004 suggested that a majority of Australians were opposed to unilateral US action against Iraq, but would strongly endorse multilateral action under the auspices of the UN. Polling also indicated that opposition 'to involvement in' Iraq was much stronger than opposition to maintaining the bilateral alliance (McDonald 2005). Both major political parties gave the alliance strong and continuing support, although periodically the ALP argued for greater independence in Australian policy and expressed disquiet over Howard's refusal to plan an exit strategy or timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq.

Lowy Institute polling in 2005 also highlighted widespread pragmatism and inconsistency in Australian opinion. Almost 75 percent of those polled viewed ANZUS as very important or fairly important for Australia's security. However, only one in five said that Australia should follow the US should war erupt with China over Taiwan. Two thirds of the survey sample group believed Australian foreign policy should be decided more independently of the US. And, while between 83 percent and 95 percent of respondents felt 'positively' about NZ, the UK, Europe, Singapore and Japan, only 52 percent felt 'positively' about the US – a level shared with Indonesia. Reflecting, perhaps, short-term disquiet over the Bush Doctrine and longer-term fears of so-called Americanisation, 56 percent of those polled ranked 'United States foreign policies' and 'Islamic fundamentalism' equally as 'potential threats' to Australia – a result one commentator labelled 'a startling equivalence' (Cook 2005a, 2005b; Parkinson 2005).

A Bilateral Free Trade Agreement
Bilateral relations centred on counter terrorism were paralleled in the international economic arena as the alliance partners conducted protracted negotiations to secure a bilateral Free Trade Agreement. Preliminary bilateral discussions of an FTA began under the Clinton administration. They were accelerated by the new Bush administration, guided by the zealous Robert Zoellick. Under Bush, bilateral free trade arrangements became instruments of alliance politics. Official rhetoric during negotiations emphasised mutual benefit to old friends and strong allies. Obstacles at the centre of the negotiations grew out of Australia's reluctance to compromise protection of secondary industry and cultural production, and fears that more open borders would accelerate Americanisation and erode national identity. Sectional interests in the United States long beneficiaries of massive farm subsidies feared open competition from agricultural imports, especially on sugar. Objections raised both in Australia and the United States had deep historic and economic roots as trade and investment issues had, for decades, conflicted bilateral relations.

Approved by the US Congress and Australian Parliament in August 2004, the FTA came into effect on New Years Day 2005. Mark Vaile, the Australian Minister for Trade welcomed the agreement as 'the commercial equivalent of the ANZUS Treaty' (Banham and Garnaut 2005). Downer (2004) suggested that United States acceptance for the agreement was encouraged by Australia's unwavering support for the ANZUS alliance.

Ignoring the fact that Washington was happy to promote bilateral trade agreements with many countries, Vaile saw the agreements as a reflection of the special historical qualities of wider Australian-American relationships. His hyperbole was unrestrained: 'The things that unite our two great nations have endured the test of time', Vaile (2004) asserted: 'The blood of young Australians and Americans has been shed on most continents of the world in defence of our shared ideals of freedom and democracy'. Some mainstream commentary was convinced that Australia had 'extracted' the agreement from the US 'in return' for 'dutiful soldiering' in Iraq. Some commentary ignored the hard realities of the FTA negotiations, and the determination of each side to promote its particular interests throughout. Exploratory negotiations were well advanced before Australian troops were sent to Iraq. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the FTA was a generous concession to a loyal ally. Rather, under Bush and Powell, US trade policy and negotiations were already separated from the politics of United States foreign or strategic relations. The bilateral agreement was secured because United States interests were – on balance not threatened and because it was an important spoke in a wheel of such agreements being pursued by Washington (Hartcher 2004).

The agreement did not immediately or completely eliminate barriers to trade. Australian tariffs on many US imports were removed, although tariffs on imported cars, footwear and clothing were to be reduced gradually. US trade barriers to many Australian products were removed, although tariffs on sugar remained and reduced tariffs on beef and dairy imports were to be phased-in over eighteen years. The US did not grant Australia most-favoured nation status on agriculture. The FTA was represented officially as a breakthrough agreement – 'a world precedent' – because the two large developed economies negotiated a broad agreement that included changes in domestic regulations of important industries and services – notably copyright law, electronic media, pharmaceutical delivery and quarantine regimes and investment rules (Banham and Garnaut 2005).[7]

Reconciling Alliance Politics and Regional Engagement
Immediately the Coalition won government, Howard argued that it would rebalance Australia's external relationships: it would give greater attention to North America and Western Europe without undermining relationships with its Asian neighbours. Yet Canberra accepted, in the words of Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fisher, that 'Australia's most important strategic and economic interests lie in the Asia-Pacific' (Henderson 2000). Despite economic integration, Australia's regional ambitions were constrained as it was refused membership of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) group (ten ASEAN states, plus Japan, South Korea and China), and excluded from ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting, the bi-annual discussions between ASEAN Plus Three nations and those from the European Union). At the same time, despite Australia's initial hopes, APEC failed to emerge as a pivotal regional forum. It was widely argued that Australia's uncritical embrace of the American alliance worked against its unqualified acceptance in the Asia-Pacific community and against its membership of regional forums.

Australia's role in the war on terrorism had unexpected consequences for its complex regional relationships and broader regional engagement. During 2002-2005 the number of terrorist incidents increased, as did the range of societies targeted. Bombings linked specifically to al-

Qa'ida and Jama'ah Islamiyah, or broadly attributed to Islamic fundamentalists, violently disrupted a range of societies, including Indonesia (Bali – 12 October 2002), Spain (Madrid – 11 March 2004), Indonesia (Jakarta – 9 September 2004), Pakistan (Quetta – 19 March 2005), United Kingdom (London – 7 July 2005), Turkey (Cesme – 10 July and Kusadasi – 16 July 2005), Egypt (Sharm el-Sheik – 23 July 2005). In the altered strategic environment signalled by these attacks, international cooperation increased. While the war in Iraq fractured an informal coalition of states centred on Afghanistan, it did not end their shared resolve to confront terrorism separately and collectively. In this changed, more fluid global environment, Australia's capacity to balance the American alliance with regional integration was strengthened.

Increasingly 'terrorism' became a central concern of governments in Europe, the Middle East and much of Asia. Thus an increasing number of states collaborated, if often covertly, in a broadening informal alliance against domestic and international terrorism. Many governments introduced anti-terrorist security laws that echoed the US Patriot Act. This common focus of a broad range of governments brought Australia into complex, covert international security regimes built around shared intelligence and shared security concerns. Australia's relationships with nations as diverse as the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Indonesia, as well as the United States, were reshaped in central ways by cooperation against a common enemy – albeit one that was ill defined and elusive. Rather than submerge Australia within a complex of multilateral arrangements, these developments increased its international visibility and deepened its working relationship with the United States. Australia's cooperation with the government of Indonesia and ties to the UK and British Commonwealth states elevated Australia's importance to the US as did growing political *rapprochement* and economic ties with ASEAN and China.

In October 2003 the US and Chinese Presidents were honoured by the Howard government in ways that signalled Australia's efforts to balance old alliances with new global realities. Bush and Hu Jintao, separately, addressed the Australian Parliament – an honour never extended to a British or Japanese leader. The significance of the equal courtesies granted each was not lost on the local press, with Paul Kelly suggesting it 'will be seen as a symbolic turning point in our history' (Kelly 2005).

INSERT Figure 5 HERE

Figure 5: The difficulties confronting the bilateral alliance by the rise of China was widely understood in Australian political culture

Throughout 2001-2005 it was routinely claimed that the bilateral relationship confronted deep challenges as – in the words of Rowan Callick (2005) – the junior partner made 'new best friends in Asia'. 'The rise of China will test Australia's strong alliance with the United States', he concluded. It was widely asserted that the Howard government's conciliatory policies towards Beijing on such sensitive issues as human rights, the future of Taiwan, and North Korea, were dictated by economic interests and uncomfortably out of step with US policy. This view was strengthened as Australia's deepening economic ties to China had, by 2005, led to preliminary discussion of a free trade agreement.

The conduct and public rationale for Australia's China policies diverged significantly from those of the Bush administration, particularly during 2004-2005. While the President's

rhetoric on China was publicly constrained, administration officials including Rice and Rumsfeld warned of the dangers of a Chinese military build-up, stressed that the US remained committed to Taiwan's separate national status, and cautioned Beijing over its associations with North Korea. At the same time, the US struggled to reign-in a massive trade deficit with China. United States policies were built on efforts to manage China's influence as it rapidly emerged as a global economic giant and the dominant power in Asia. The Bush administration no longer spoke of China as a 'strategic competitor'. Yet in broad terms, the US sought to contain China. Australian policies favoured cooperative engagement. In 2004 Downer provoked disquiet in Washington when he stated on a visit to Beijing that the terms of the ANZUS treaty did not obligate Australia to aid the US in the event of a conflict centred on Taiwan. While some US experts continued to warn that 'the greatest threat to alliance is the absence of a common approach to Beijing', the Howard government agreed that China be permitted to purchase Australian uranium and accepted Beijing's assurances that uranium use would be restricted to peaceful purposes (Don Blumenthal quoted in Sales 2005).

Canberra accepted that China's rise would be peaceful not expansionist, and that China's economic power would not translate into irresponsible or precipitous international behaviour. The Bush administration was far more circumspect. As Randy Schriver, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs observed in May 2005 'We are trying to both shape China's direction and hedge against bad outcomes' (sales 2005).[8]

Washington's desire to influence the Australia-China relationship led in 2005 to the upgrading, to ministerial level, of the United-States-Australia-Japan Trilateral Security Dialogue. Yet Canberra's close 'relationship' with Beijing also provided Washington with important, if indirect, policy advantages. As an intimate bilateral ally, Washington welcomed Australia's entry into the East Asia Summit. Similarly, as discussions of a Free Trade Agreement between Australia and China expanded, they became for Washington a window into China's wider trade policy and willingness to commit to genuine economic reform.

By late 2005, the United States-Australian alliance was increasingly interpreted as a vehicle for cooperative diplomacy in Asia, rather than a wedge between the Western alliance partners and their Asian regional neighbours, especially China. The hawkish Richard Armitage (2003), former US Deputy Secretary of State, claimed as early as August that both nations wanted 'to see a world where Australia is an Asian power, closely integrated in regional partnerships'. His statement implicitly conceded the limits of unilateralism and Washington's revived acceptance of the value of multilateralism and institution-building in the face of a changing configuration of global power centred on China. It also acknowledges Australia's success in developing deeper partnerships throughout Asia, despite its undiluted commitment to the American alliance.

Canberra's regional links were gradually accepted in Washington as complimenting US interests in the Asia-Pacific. Referring to America's 'complicated relationship with China', as it translated its expanding economic power to increased military power, Bush told Howard in July 2005 that their two governments should work more closely on China: 'I know that Australia can lend a wise message to the Chinese about the need for China to take an active role in the neighbourhood to prevent, for example, Kim Jong-il from developing nuclear weapons' (Metherall 2005). Howard's carefully worded indirect response addressed wider alliance issues: the misapprehension that Australia could not simultaneously manage relationships with the two great powers in the Asia-Pacific – the US and China – without inevitable 'conflict' and damage to ANZUS. At a time of intense anti-Chinese sentiment in

the US Howard also downplayed the negative regional implications of China's rising influence. 'China is a country that is growing in power and economic strength but understands that military conflict of any kind is not conducive to her medium or long-term goals' (Davis 2005). Howard described his government's ability to balance relations with Asian neighbours and China while working more closely with its American ally than at any time since World War II, as a 'pivotal' point in Australian history (Shanahan 2005).

In mid-2005 Australia's regional diplomatic efforts were rewarded: it was invited to join the first East Asian Summit, held in Malaysia in December 2005, a grouping that included the ten ASEAN members, plus China, Japan and South Korea. Downer observed that 'for the first time ever Australia will be involved in the evolution of an East Asian community' (Banham and Levett 2005). Membership of this association was conditional. Reluctantly, Australia agreed to sign the ASEAN-sponsored regional Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). As this treaty stressed 'non-alliance' of member states, it appeared to contradict Australia's relationship under ANZUS. It also contradicted the Howard government's controversial assertion of its right – echoing the wider Bush Doctrine – to engage in pre-emptive military action in the region. Such inconsistencies were formally resoled to the satisfaction of all parties by a carefully worded (unpublished), appendix to the TAC, along with Australia's qualified public rejection of the right to act pre-emptively (ABC 2002).[9] At the same time, Australia continued negotiations for free trade agreements with ASEAN and China – negotiations that further symbolised deepening regional linkages.

Australia was accepted as an East Asian partner in an association that excluded the United States. Australia was now accepted within ASEAN, and locked increasingly into an economic and political community influenced by China. At the same time Australia was, with the United Kingdom, a forthright ally of the United States, locked into America's Asia-Pacific alliance strategy, along with Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and in more ambivalent ways, India – an alliance system designed to manage China's rising power.

Australia's entry into important regional organisations coincided with negotiations of a United States-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership, and US efforts to revitalise the ASEAN Cooperation Plan established in August 2002 and to strengthen the work of the 2003 'United States-ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Work Plan'. As the US searched for closer cooperation on counter terrorism, terrorist investigation and prosecution, it sanctioned Australia's collaboration regionally on counter terrorism, security cooperation and intelligence sharing. Indeed, even as Australian policies in Asia reflected greater diplomatic independence and economic self-interest, they indirectly reinforced US efforts to strengthen ties with the ASEAN states, and better manage relations with China.

For both Australia and the US the inconclusive war on terrorism gradually re-emphasised the importance of alliance-building and patient diplomacy. Australia's expanding regional linkages, and its belated disavowal of it right to strike pre-emptively against targets in the Asia-Pacific, emphasised its determination to be identified as a regional power positioned to secure its political and economic interests in the rapidly growing region. Despite the ANZUS alliance, under Howard, Australia had confirmed that it was a nation capable of expressing and pursuing its particular interests, regionally if not globally. In the changed international climate after September 11, Australia had, it seemed, successfully turned towards the US (and the United Kingdom) without turning its back on Asia (Sheridan 2005a). For reasons that could not have been anticipated when Howard first won office in the mid-1990s, links to the

US and the UK were revitalised in the common cause against 'global terrorism' while economic and political engagement deepened with many states of East and Southeast Asia.

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In the unanticipated geopolitical environment after September 11, 2001, Australia was not obliged to choose between its 'history' and its 'geography' – in large part because the new terrorism cut across old divides, bringing unexpected military cooperation, intelligence sharing, and institution-building between states with shared interests in defeating terrorism both at home and abroad. Australia's reinvigorated relationship with the UK and close cooperation with Indonesia grew largely from broadly shared concerns over terrorism and recognition that successful global counter-terrorism hinged ultimately on US resolve. The assault on the Taliban and al-Qa'ida and war in Afghanistan, although painstakingly inconclusive, fostered concerted international cooperation against an agreed enemy. This collaboration was not generalised to Iraq – an object of American policy but a state not complicit in acts of terrorism abroad. Despite the divisive impact of war in Iraq, throughout 2002-2005 a broad and diverse coalition of states continued to collaborate – covertly and publicly – against a difficult enemy commonly depicted as international terrorism. In the unexpected global climate signalled by the war on terrorism, Australia surprisingly found greater room to manoeuvre, both regionally and internationally while strengthening bilateral ties to the United States. Shared efforts in counter terrorism boosted Australia's capacity to act as a regional interlocutor for the United States, in multilateral dialogue and institution-building as well as with particular ASEAN states, central to the war on terrorism. In this altered international environment, collaborative relationships and political alliances were redrawn in unexpected ways. Australia's bilateral association with Washington became more important to both states. Australia's importance to the US in the Asian region grew appreciably. And the UK joined the two ANZUS allies in a triangular partnership against the new global forms of terrorism that Condoleezza Rice described as 'unexpected challenges' provoked by an 'ideology of hatred in foreign societies' that have not adopted 'liberty' and 'democracy' (United States, Department of State, 2005).

Throughout 2002-2005 Australia was deeply implicated in American policy and actions as it broadened its so-called war on terrorism. As arguably America's most loyal ally, Australia echoed the public rationale for the Bush Doctrine and assumed some responsibility for the character and consequences of United States-led counter-terrorism.[10] In particular, by accepting that the war on terrorism should centre on regime change in Iraq, Australia shared responsibility for the invasion, prolonged occupation and unresolved conflicts in Iraq. Involvement in Iraq fractured allied solidarity evident against the Taliban and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan; compromised wider counter-terrorist initiatives; greatly elevated the risks of 'blowback', including further terrorist attacks against Western interests; weakened the stature of the UN; and compromised the conduct of foreign policy under agreed norms of international law. Additionally, the efforts of the Bush and Howard administrations to justify the Iraq adventure weakened the international integrity of their two governments and damaged the reputation of the very intelligence on which alliance policy was built and justified. Further military actions in the war on terrorism, beyond Afghanistan at least, became more difficult to justify to a sceptical public in both states. By nominating Iraq as central to its war on terrorism, the US and its obedient Australian ally disrupted the broad international consensus that emerged in the aftermath of September 11, and exacerbated the very acts of international violence they ostensibly sought to eradicate.

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[1] From 1986 New Zealand was effectively excluded from the alliance following a dispute over visits by nuclear-armed United States ships to New Zealand waters. The title 'ANZUS' remained, but it now described a bilateral treaty not a tripartite agreement.

[2] Howard stated that Australia could take pre-emptive military action against terrorist cells operating in neighbouring countries: 'It stands to reason that if you believed that somebody was going to launch an attack against your country, either of a conventional kind or of a terrorist kind, and you had a capacity to stop it and there was no alternative other than to use that capacity, then of course you would have to use it.'

[3] In late November 2002, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported on their front pages leaked details of specific invasion plans – plans apparently agreed to by Rumsfeld and Bush.

[4] *Plan of Attack*, Bob Woodward's well-received book on the United States invasion of Iraq, states that Australian forces engaged Iraqi troops eight hours before the ultimatum ended. The Australian advance assault was greatly appreciated by United States Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and General Tommy Franks. Australian Defence Force leaders, along with Howard and Minister for Defence Robert Hall, were also deeply pleased with the effort, and apparently interpreted it as practical evidence of Australia's willing partnership with the United States.

[5] Twelve Major Contributors to Military or Security Personnel in Iraq: United States – 130,000; United Kingdom – 9,000; Italy – 3,000; Poland – 2,460; Ukraine – 1,600; Spain – 1,300; Netherlands – 1,100; Australia – 800; Romania – 700; Bulgaria – 480; Thailand – 440; Denmark – 420.

[6] This claim gained wide currency as the occupation of Iraq continued. In July 2005 the respected International Affairs Institute reported that there is 'no doubt' involvement alongside the United States in Iraq had placed the United Kingdom – Washington's closest ally – at 'particular risk'. The alliance with the United States 'imposed particular difficulties for Britain and the wider coalition against terrorism', boosting the appeal of al-Qa'ida, expanding recruitment, and strengthening its financial base. Additionally, the report argued, the war in Iraq had deflected counter-terrorist resources from use in Afghanistan and unwittingly provided an ideal training ground for al-Qa'ida recruits.

[7] Key elements of the United States Free Trade Agreement as summarised by *The Australian*: estimated to boost Australian economy by $6 billion a year; access for Australian companies to $200 billion a year worth of US government contracts; tariffs on most US goods disappear; no Foreign Investment Review Board investigation into United States takeovers of Australian companies worth $800 million or less; extra review mechanism for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; tariffs on many Australian products disappear, although restrictions remain on sugar, beef and dairy exports to the United States. For informed, critical evaluation of the FTA see Thurbone, Elizabeth and Weiss, Linda, 'The Real Deal: Reading Between the Lines of the Australia-US FTA', 2004 < http://www.australianinterest.com/> 6 September 2005. Also Weiss, Linda, Thurbon, Elizabeth and Mathews, John, *How to Kill A Country: Australia's Devastating Trade Deal with the US*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 2004.

[8] For a balanced Australian evaluation of alliance issues centred on China, see *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Enter the Dragon, Quietly: China's Careful Diplomacy', Editorial, 15 August 2005. For the argument that the rise of China made ANZUS increasingly important see W.T. Tow, 'Stand by Your Mate,' *The Diplomat*, October-November 2004.

[9] On 2 December 2002 Howard declared Australia's right to strike militarily, unilaterally and pre-emptively against terrorist threats based in another country. He did, however, accept that such action would only be taken if local authorities had been unwilling or unable to act

against such threats. Predictably, his assertion was widely interpreted as a regional echo of Bush's pre-emptive strike doctrine – first aired during his Commencement Speech at West Point, 1 June 2002 – an association made possible by the strength of Australia's alliance with the United States in the war on terrorism. Howard's claim that Australia had a right to attack pre-emptively, other countries in its region, disturbed at least some Asian neighbours.

[10] For conflicting assessments of the implications and strategic value of the bilateral alliance see, for example, S. Burchill, 'The Perils of Our US Alliance', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 June 2003; J. George, 'Will the Chickenhawks Come Home to Roost? Iraq, US Preponderance and Its Implications for Australia', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 2, July 2003, pp. 235-242; J. Verrier, 'Australia's Self Image as a Regional and International Security Actor: Some Implications of the Iraq War', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 3, November 2003, especially pp. 465-469. Compare M. Wesley, The Australia US Alliance Under the Microscope, 6 October 2004, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2619> 13 September 2005.