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Introduction

Australia has pursued successive strategies of engagement with Asia under both Australian Labor Party (ALP) and Liberal–National Party (Coalition) governments since the mid-1980s. These have ranged from the Hawke–Keating (1983–96) era policies of 'enmeshment' and 'comprehensive engagement' to the Howard Government's (1996–2007) 'practical regionalism', to Kevin Rudd's 2008 initiative for an Asia-Pacific Community. In October 2012, the Gillard Government's (2010–13) *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* continued to emphasise the pursuit of deeper and broader engagement across the economic, socio-political and security spheres.[1] Coalition Prime Minister Tony Abbott (2013–15) said in 2013 that foreign policy under his government would be '"more Jakarta, less Geneva"'.[2] In 2017, the Turnbull Coalition Government's (2015–18) *Foreign Policy White Paper* embraced the 'Indo-Pacific' strategic concept as defining the scope of Australia's economic and security engagement with Asia.[3]

There is no doubt that these strategies of engagement have resulted in successful economic outcomes. Trade with the Asian region as a percentage of Australia's total trade increased from 38.5 per cent in 1973, after the

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1   Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), 1–3.
2   Quoted in Dennis Shanahan, 'Jakarta Relations Beyond Boats, says Tony Abbott', *The Australian*, 21 September 2013, available at: www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/jakarta-relations-beyond-boats-says-tony-abbott/story-fn59nm2j-1226724097032.
3   Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). The *Foreign Policy White Paper* defines the 'Indo-Pacific' region as 'ranging from the eastern Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean connected by Southeast Asia, including India, North Asia and the United States'. The 'Indo-Pacific' was first mentioned in the 2013 Defence White Paper; see Australian Government, *Defence White Paper 2013* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

opening of relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), to 65.9 per cent in 2018.[4] However, despite this ostensible success, Australian governments, businesses and opinion leaders continue to emphasise the pursuit of 'deeper' engagement with Asia. The catalyst for this book is the observation that the persistent rhetoric of Asian engagement actually indicates Australia's political distancing from the region during the 1970s, rather than its progressively deeper integration.

This book presents an alternative account of Australia's postwar engagement with Asia from 1944 to 1974 based on comprehensive new archival research. The major historical works dealing with this period focus on Australia's relationships with Britain and the United States (US), and their ramifications for Canberra's Cold War policy of 'forward defence', leading to the Vietnam War.[5] In the foreign policy literature, the orthodox narrative of the period praises the wartime Curtin and Chifley ALP governments (1941–49) for pioneering an Australian foreign policy independent of Britain, emphasising Australia's role in the formation of the United Nations (UN) and support for Indonesian independence from Dutch colonial rule. It then typically excoriates the conservative Liberal–Country Party (Coalition) governments from Menzies to McMahon (1949–72) for their obsequiousness to 'great and powerful friends' and uncritical support for US Cold War objectives in Asia. The policies of the Menzies era are seen through the prism of Cold War geopolitics as inexorably resulting in Australia's misguided involvement in the tragedy of Vietnam.[6]

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4   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australia: Pattern of Trade 1975–76* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1977); Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), *Composition of Trade Australia 2017–18* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2019).

5   See, for example, Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1965* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992); Garry Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004); and Peter Edwards, *Australia and the Vietnam War* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing; and Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 2014).

6   See reviews in Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe, with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941–1969* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 1–7, 16; Jeffrey Grey, 'Memory and Public Myth', in *Vietnam: War, Myth and Memory*, ed. Jeffrey Grey and Jeff Doyle (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 139; David McLean, 'Australia in the Cold War: A Historiographical Review', *The International History Review* 23, no. 2 (2001): 300–01; David McLean, 'Too Much Memory: Writing the History of Australian–American Relations during the Howard Years', in *Australia and the World: A Festschrift for Neville Meaney*, ed. Joan Beaumont and Matthew Jordan (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2013), 237–57; and David McLean, 'From British Colony to American Satellite? Australia and the USA during the Cold War', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 52, no. 1 (2006): 64–79.

In this view, it was only with the election of the Whitlam ALP Government in December 1972 that Australia could break free from the Cold War ideological straitjacket to forge a more independent and constructive Australian foreign policy as part of the Asia-Pacific region. The conditions for genuine engagement with Asia were made possible by Whitlam's diplomatic recognition of the PRC in December 1972, and the formal ending of the last vestiges of the White Australia policy and withdrawal of the final Australian military personnel from South Vietnam in 1973. The acceptance in the late 1970s of large numbers of Indochinese refugees by the Fraser Coalition Government (1975–83) is considered another important antecedent for sustained engagement with Asia, which then came to fruition with the Hawke (1983–91) and Keating (1991–96) ALP governments.

This narrative of Australia's engagement with Asia is a myth. It originates in and remains a legacy of the bitter ideological debates over Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.[7] From this orthodox perspective, the end of the Vietnam War and abandonment of Australia's failed Cold War policy of forward defence cleared the way for closer, more independent relationships with regional countries. More than a quarter of a century on from the end of the Cold War, it seems appropriate to examine the period under consideration in this book in a new historiographical light. Much of the research and writing on Australia's engagement with Asia is by scholars who were active supporters of the anti–Vietnam War movement, former diplomats critical of Australia's Vietnam involvement, or strong supporters of the Whitlam Government and its policy agenda in the 1970s. Events and experiences during this era were formative in defining a worldview reflecting the 'radical national' interpretation of Australia's history, which tells a story of the country's struggles to free itself from British colonial domination and then subservience to Washington.[8]

This book starts from a different set of premises. It accepts that during much of this period Australian governments believed that the nation's security was dependent on the guarantees of its 'great and powerful

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7   David Martin Jones and Mike Lawrence Smith, *Reinventing Realism: Australia's Foreign and Defence Policy at the Millennium* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), 8–9; Mark Beeson and Kanishka Jayasuriya, 'The Politics of Asian Engagement: Ideas, Institutions, and Academics', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 55, no. 3 (2009): 365–67.

8   On 'radical national' historiography, see David McLean, 'From British Colony to American Satellite? Australia and the USA during the Cold War', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 52, no. 1 (2006): 64–67.

friends', traditionally Britain and then increasingly the US. It accepts the premise that under Coalition governments from 1950 to the late 1960s, the primary aim of Australia's defence strategy was to maintain a British and US military presence in Southeast Asia. It accepts that Australia's Cold War military posture of forward defence was part of the policy expression of this strategy. By not seeking to problematise these aspects, the book decentres the bilateral dynamics of Australia's relationships with Britain and the US from the core of its analysis. Instead, it considers them the structural conditions for Australia's postwar engagement with Asia, and inextricably linked with decolonisation and the Cold War—the great historical movements of the time.[9] The erosion of these structural conditions in the late 1960s marked a profound turning point in the substance of Australia's involvements in the region. Starting from these premises allows for new patterns to emerge from a fresh reading of the archival sources.

The central argument of the book is that the circumstances of postwar decolonisation intertwined with the Cold War drew Australia deeply into its geographical region of Southeast Asia, despite its historical fears and the barrier of the White Australia policy. Rather than standing in the way of genuine engagement with Asia, the dynamics of decolonisation and the Cold War were its structural conditions. When these eroded from the late 1960s, Australia was progressively distanced from the region in a political sense. The book argues that the 'deepest' points of Australia's political engagement with Asia are to be found in the immediate postwar decades, with the most intense phase being between 1966 and 1968. This integration is evident in that Australia saw itself as being an important part of the Southeast Asian region, and that it was a core member of East Asian security arrangements and regional organisations. The recognition by Asian states and remaining colonial dependencies that Australia was part of the region tended to be ambivalent in the 1940s but became firmer with the onset of the Cold War. From 1949 until the consolidation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (1967) in the early 1970s, Australia was a core member of all 'Asian' regional meetings and groupings.

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9   Edwards, with Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments*, 376–77.

From 1966 into the early 1970s, the conditions for this deep Australian engagement with its region were progressively eroded by a series of compounding, and mainly external, factors. The first of these was the consolidation of the anti-communist Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1966. The new regime in Jakarta quickly put an end to Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* ('Confrontation') (1963–66) of newly formed Malaysia, thus bringing British decolonisation in Southeast Asia to a close. This allowed for Britain's planned withdrawal from east of Suez to be brought forward to 1971, a decision formally announced by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in January 1968. This removed the first foundation of Australia's deep postwar engagement with Asia. A change of outlook from regional responsibilities to the British Commonwealth to a narrower conception of Australia's national interest is particularly evident in the policy discourse of the Gorton Coalition Government (1968–71) in negotiations for the 1971 Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) between Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The other major factors stem from the easing of Cold War pressures in East Asia, thus eroding the other key structural condition for Australia's deep engagement. These were President Johnson's de-escalation of the Vietnam War after the 1968 Tet offensive and subsequent gradual withdrawal of US forces; the 1969 Nixon Doctrine that Washington's Asia-Pacific allies would have to take up more of the burden of providing for their own security; and Washington's rapprochement with communist China in 1972. These profound structural changes mark the start of Australia's political distancing from the region during the 1970s, despite the intentions, efforts and policies of Australian governments from Whitlam onwards to foster deeper engagement.

This argument is supported by the two major themes of the book. The first is that the narrative of Australia's engagement with Asia fails to recognise adequately that the epochal process of decolonisation, both politically and intellectually, is as important as the Cold War, and deserves greater emphasis in understanding Australia's pattern of postwar regional relations. David Reynolds, for example, considers that the 'end of empire has been the most important externality shaping Australian foreign policy since the Second World War', with decolonisation a particularly 'ambiguous' process for Australia 'as both colonised and coloniser'.[10]

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10   David Reynolds, 'Empire, Region, World: The International Context of Australian Foreign Policy since 1939', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51, no. 3 (2005): 349.

Rather than the rigid Cold War boundaries often assumed in the literature on this period, Andrew Phillips draws attention to the 'immense fluidity' of the international system in the 1950s, where 'imperial reinvention, subaltern visions of transnational and pan-national solidarity, and more conventional anti-colonial nationalism jostled for supremacy'.[11] With the benefit of hindsight we may now observe that, while at times very acute, the Cold War dynamics of the period were transient, adding a 'particular strategic insecurity' to the more fundamental historical process of decolonisation.[12]

The documentary record shows that Australia's postwar engagement with Asia, under both ALP and Coalition governments from 1944 until the late 1960s, was based on a sense of responsibility to Britain and its Southeast Asian colonies as they navigated a turbulent independence into the Commonwealth, which retained a high level of significance to Australia's policymakers.[13] Australia's assumption of greater Commonwealth responsibilities in the region, partly because of Britain's postwar resource constraints, led to a deep involvement in Southeast Asian decolonisation. For a country with Australia's history and institutions, it was organic ties with the British Commonwealth that provided the intellectual and practical framework for Australia's attitude towards Asian decolonisation, rather than the more radical, rights-based notions of self-determination represented at the 1955 Bandung Conference. This was the case under both the ALP during the 1940s and the subsequent Menzies Coalition Government during the 1950s and 1960s. Frank Bongiorno makes the point that in 'the 1940s, Evatt was attached to a narrative of empire in which the progress of dependent colonies to self-governing dominions within the British Empire/Commonwealth was the central fact'.[14] The responsibility felt by Australian political elites to assist in the orderly decolonisation of the Straits Settlements, Malayan Peninsula and British Borneo territories—and the Malayan archipelago more broadly—cannot be fully understood within a Cold War ideological framework of anti-communism. However paternalistic the views of policy elites may have been at the time, the evidence suggests that in its approach to Southeast

11   Andrew Phillips, 'Beyond Bandung: The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 70, no. 4 (2016): 332, 334.

12   Reynolds, 'Empire, Region, World', 349.

13   Frank Bongiorno, 'The Price of Nostalgia: Menzies, the "Liberal" Tradition and Australian Foreign Policy.' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51, no. 3 (2005): 414.

14   Frank Bongiorno, '"British to the Bootstraps?" H.V. Evatt, J.B. Chifley and Australian Policy on Indian Membership of the Commonwealth, 1947–49', *Australian Historical Studies* 125 (2005): 21.

Asian decolonisation, Australia was driven as much by normative sentiments of responsibility to the British Commonwealth as it was by calculations of Cold War strategic interest.

The second major theme of the book is to emphasise the agency that non-communist Asian states exercised in their relationships with Australia during the Cold War.[15] In this it marks an important shift in focus from previous work. Academic and journalistic treatments of Australia's historic engagement with Asia concentrate almost entirely on Canberra's initiatives in the region and their perceived successes and failures. Beyond India, Indonesia and Japan, the foreign and defence policies of the non-aligned and non-communist Asian countries barely rate a mention. Rarely is it recognised that the non-communist Asian states also had agency: like Australia, their fortunes were involved in the strategic game of the Cold War. Like Australia, many were aligned with extra-regional great powers. They were not passively used or acted upon by Australia's forward defence strategy, which was well understood in Canberra at the time. It is of course true that Australia's security was sought *from* communist China and North Vietnam, but these countries were not representative of 'Asia'. Indeed, Australia was hardly isolated in this—nearly all the countries of Asia, whether non-aligned or anti-communist, sought security from China at the time. Whatever its merits, forward defence meant that Australia was a core member of Asian political and security arrangements. As the book will show, most of the non-communist states of East Asia, whether allied with Washington or not, welcomed Australia's military deployments as part of the containment of China.[16]

The circumstances of the Cold War provided for a mutual sense of solidarity with the non-communist states of East Asia, with which Australia for the most part enjoyed close relationships. I argue in the book that these relationships transcended the narrow security interest of forward defence, being grounded also in shared non-communist values and identity. These relationships were institutionalised through the South Korean–instigated Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) (1966–75). In the study of Australia's regional relations, ASPAC is either totally omitted or quickly

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15   See also Daniel Wei Boon Chua, *US–Singapore Relations, 1967–1975: Strategic Non-Alignment in the Cold War* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017), 8–9.

16   On this point, see also David Martin Jones and Mike Lawrence Smith, 'Misreading Menzies and Whitlam: Reassessing the Ideological Construction of Australian Foreign Policy', *The Round Table* 89, no. 355 (2000): 395; Andrea Benvenuti and David Martin Jones, 'Myth and Misrepresentation in Australian Foreign Policy: Menzies and Engagement with Asia', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 4 (2011): 68–69.

dismissed as an instrument of Cold War policy. This is inadequate when the documentary record indicates that in the mid-to-late 1960s, it was considered by Australia as the premier vehicle for East Asian regionalism. Noteworthy also is that ASPAC was a fully Asian initiative that did not involve extra-regional great powers and remains the only Asian regional organisation in which Australia and New Zealand have *ever* been included as core members. This alone was considered of great importance by the Australian Government.[17]

The claim in the orthodox narrative of Australia's engagement with Asia that there was no common regional sensibility between Australia and its neighbours during this period is thus highly disputable.[18] There was a close Commonwealth identification with the former British dependencies in Southeast Asia, which Menzies's 'imperial imagination' could readily accommodate.[19] As the book shows, there was also a moral solidarity with the non-communist states of East Asia more broadly, which was expressed by Australia and also by representatives of Asian countries in a language of 'regional consciousness'. This regional consciousness was grounded institutionally in ASPAC, and further with Thailand and the Philippines in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) (1954). The book demonstrates that Australia's engagement with Asia during this period was not based on Cold War strategic interests alone, but also in part on strong normative concerns shared with a range of Asian states.

As David Walker has pointed out, it is important to remember that during the 1950s and 1960s, Australia's strategic and economic weight relative to the developing countries of Asia made it a much more significant player in regional affairs than it is today.[20] Australia's forward

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17   See, for example, 'Asian and Pacific Council—Second Ministerial Meeting: Report by the Minister for External Affairs, The Rt. Hon. Paul Hasluck, M.P.', July 1967, National Archives of Australia (NAA) A1838/541/1/1, Part 2; 'Australia and South-East Asia', Address by the High Commissioner in India, Sir Arthur Tange, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Madras State, 9 October 1967, NAA A1838/3004/11, Part 8; 'Briefing on ASPAC and ASEAN', Prepared by LR McIntyre, Department of External Affairs (DEA), for Lord Casey, Governor-General, 15 November 1968, NAA A1838/3004/13/21, Part 8.
18   For example, Meg Gurry makes the claim that linkages developed in the 1950s and 1960s by Coalition governments 'certainly carried … no sense of *shared membership of a common region*'; see Gurry, 'Identifying Australia's "Region": From Evatt to Evans', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 1 (1995): 22, emphasis in original.
19   Bongiorno, 'The Price of Nostalgia', 414.
20   Cited in Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 'Should ASEAN be Australia's Priority?', *Big Ideas*, broadcast 9 September 2015, available at: www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/should-asean-be-australiae28099s-priority3f/6678584.

defence strategy placed it directly *in* the region. Forward defence meant that Australia's outlook up until the early 1970s was of necessity from a postcolonial Southeast Asian perspective, not from an isolated continental one. The conflicts of the forward defence era—the Malayan Emergency, Indonesian Confrontation and Vietnam War—were not a case of Australia being involved in 'other people's wars'. They were Australia's wars in its own region, in support of regional neighbours who were *also* allied with Western great powers. And while the Republic of Vietnam may have been a US-client state of dubious legitimacy, this did not characterise Australia's relationships elsewhere in East Asia. Australia was not isolated from its region during the Cold War; quite the opposite. Its security was clearly defined at the time as being in, not from, Asia.[21] Forward defence required that Canberra view the world from a Southeast Asian standpoint, rather than the South Pacific perspective it has been forced to adopt from the 1970s to the present.

In contrast to the 1950s and 1960s, Australia's current mode of engagement has been described as transactional.[22] It is broad but shallow, involves a range of societal actors, and is centred on the functional issues of economics and business, education, sport and tourism, and transnational security. The book concludes that Australia's engagement with Asia in the postwar period up until the late 1960s was narrow and elite-driven, but it was deeper than it has ever been since. Engagement during this earlier historical period was 'deeper' because it impinged on fundamental issues of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, whereas transactional engagement does not. The historical trajectory uncovered in the book accounts for the increase in recent decades of Australia's bilateral economic relationships, and people-to-people contacts in Asia, at the same time that Canberra has been distanced in political terms.

The period of the Hawke and Keating ALP governments is generally considered the time when Australia's engagement with Asia came of age. Emblematic of this new era in Australian foreign policy was Canberra's role in creating the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in partnership with Japan, and the establishment in 1993 by the Keating Government of annual leaders' meetings. A number of accounts identify

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21   See 'Extract from Statement by Mr. Paul Hasluck, Minister for External Affairs in Parliament', 17 August 1967, NAA A4359/221/4/31, Part 1.

22   For example, Michael Wesley, 'Howard's Way: Northerly Neighbours and Western Friends', *Griffith Review* 9 (2005): 39–50; Ramesh Thakur, 'Australia's Engagement with Asia: Strategic or Transactional?' *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 69 (2013): 335–50.

the Howard Government's 'practical regionalism' as the decisive shift to a more transactional form of engagement,[23] which the Rudd and Gillard (2007–13) ALP governments again sought to deepen. This book very clearly demonstrates, however, that this broader but shallower transactional form of engagement evolved much earlier, during the critical 1968 to 1972 period of profound changes to Australia's regional environment. It is fully evident by 1974 during the tenure of the Whitlam Government.

The book begins by exploring Australia's place in the shifting regional definitions of Southeast Asia from 1944 in the unsettled period after the tide had turned against Japan in the Pacific War. Chapter 2 shows that, compared with the Menzies Government that followed, in the 1940s the wartime ALP governments were ambivalent about whether Australia was, or should be, a part of Asia. Newly independent India, for example, was quite accommodating toward Australia in the late 1940s, but the Chifley Government resisted Nehru's proposals for regional organisation. In the immediate postwar period, the ALP Government privileged the role of the new UN organisation and was wary of regional bodies detracting from its work or duplicating its functions. In the war's unsettled aftermath, the ALP also tended to see insular Southeast Asia as part of Australia's region for security purposes, rather than Australia being a part of 'Asia'.

Based on this strategic outlook, Chapter 3 demonstrates that it was the Chifley ALP Government, typically labelled as 'internationalist', that established the policy theme of Australia carrying a special responsibility for insular Southeast Asia on behalf of the British Empire and Commonwealth. This responsibility was given policy expression primarily under the umbrella of the Australia–New Zealand–Malaya (ANZAM) Agreement, the origins of which can be traced to 1946. ANZAM denotes the postwar Commonwealth zone of defence in Asia, in which Australia carried planning responsibility from 1950. Chapter 3 then examines the period from the change of government in 1949 until the end of Indonesia's Confrontation of Malaysia in 1966. It shows that under the Menzies Government, Australia was intimately involved in Southeast Asian decolonisation and nation-building processes

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23   Anthony Milner, 'The Rhetoric of Asia', in *Seeking Asian Engagement: Australia in World Affairs 1991–1995*, ed. James Cotton and John Ravenhill (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44; Michael Wesley, *The Howard Paradox: Australian Diplomacy in Asia 1996–2006* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2007); James Cotton, 'Asian Regionalism and the Australian Policy Response in the Howard Era', *Journal of Australian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2008): 115–34; Martin Griffiths and Michael Wesley, 'Taking Asia Seriously', *Australian Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (2010): 25.

in the Malayan peninsula and archipelago. It demonstrates through the examples of the Colombo Plan, ANZAM initiatives and Australia's military commitments to Malaya (1955) and Malaysian Borneo (1965) as a part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve (CSR) that during this period of the Cold War, responsibility to the British Commonwealth remained an important driver of Australian policy in Asia.

Chapter 4 turns directly to the Cold War dynamics of the period and analyses Australia's relationships of solidarity with the non-communist states of East Asia and Canberra's central place in regional organisations of the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter shows that rather than distancing Australia from Asia, the Cold War drew Australia deeply into the region. The circumstances of the Cold War provided for a mutual sense of solidarity with the non-communist states of East Asia, with which Australia enjoyed close relationships. Chapter 4 demonstrates that these relationships transcended the narrow security interest of forward defence, being grounded also in shared values and non-communist identity.

Chapter 5 then traces how the changing structural conditions from 1966 into the early 1970s—the end of British decolonisation in Southeast Asia and the easing of Cold War pressures—began to erode Australia's formerly deep engagement, thus serving to politically distance Canberra from Asia. The results of these changes were profound. By 1974, Australia's political position was transformed from being an integral part of Southeast Asia's decolonisation process, and a core non-communist Asian state, into one of the South Pacific periphery.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that despite the intentions and efforts of the Whitlam Government, by 1974 Australia was outside the political margins of Asia, with its engagement premised on a broadening but shallower transactional basis, rather than the deeper normative ties of responsibility and solidarity evident from 1944 through to the late 1960s. This chapter also shows that Whitlam's much-lauded diplomatic recognition of the PRC on taking office in December 1972 may have been consistent with global trends, but it alienated Australia's Southeast Asian neighbours, particularly Indonesia. This was a major factor in Australia's political exclusion from the region in the early 1970s, along with Whitlam's insensitive and unwanted advocacy for a new 'Asia Pacific Forum' that was to include the PRC and North Vietnam.

Chapter 7 assesses the implications of the historical trajectory advanced in the book for Australia's foreign policy 'traditions' and makes some concluding analysis and observations about the prospects for deeper Australian engagement with Asia in the 21st century. It suggests that recent trends, including a more assertive and nationalistic China, India's emergence as a great power, overt Sino-Japanese strategic rivalry and competing maritime claims among a number of states in the East and South China Seas, indicate that conditions may again be developing to support deeper Australian political and security engagement in Asia.