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Differences of Perspective: An analysis of the similarities and differences in Australian and New Zealand attitudes to security

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Abstract

This paper highlights a number of similarities and differences between Australian and New Zealand attitudes to security. Comparing and contrasting cultural, historical, economic and geographic influences, the paper explores the abilities and interests of both countries, and finds that in order to continue to work together in matters of mutual interest, a respectful understanding of each others' perspective is needed.

This paper is 20 pages long.

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There is no strategic partnership in our region closer than that between Australia and New Zealand. Bound together by geography and history, by shared values, beliefs and interests, and by the close relationships between our peoples, we have a tradition of mutual commitment to each other's security. This is the ANZAC spirit.¹

Introduction

The above statement is in essence true, and emphasises the elements that bind Australia and New Zealand together. As the remainder of the same Joint Statement emphasises, this relationship is about two sovereign, independent countries working together across a range of security issues including operations, defence diplomacy, procurement and training to ensure their efforts are coordinated and complementary.² However, the need for such stated coordination indicates that the two countries are not the same and that each has a different perspective. Bryce Harland states: 'Australians and New Zealanders have more in common with each other than they do with the people of any other country, but they are different, in many ways, and the differences are growing.'³

This paper examines the similarities and differences in Australian and New Zealand's attitudes to security, and considers the implications such differences will have in the future. This paper argues that, despite many similarities, our respective geographies, cultures, security histories and resources have always fundamentally shaped different perceptions of the same issues for Australia and New Zealand, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Geography, Culture and Economics

Australia and New Zealand are geographically close, and both countries are caught between their strong European colonial history and their proximity to an increasingly emergent Asian region.⁴ There are, however, some critical differences in geography that affect their respective strategic positions, culture and policies.

¹ Australia—New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations (CDR) issued Wellington 22 August 2008 by the two Defence Ministers at the time: Australian Defence Minister John Faulkner and New Zealand Defence Minister Phil Goff.

² Australia—New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations (CDR).

³ Bryce Harland, *On Our Own: New Zealand in the Emerging Tripolar World*. Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, 1992, p. 57.

⁴ Denis McLean, *The Prickly Pair: Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003, pp. 13–14.

From a New Zealand perspective, its remote location means there is no real evident credible external threat to its territory or immediate interests. Further, Australia acts as something of a geographic shield. A potential adversary would realistically need to deal with Australia (and its US ally) before reaching or threatening New Zealand. By way of illustration of the greater distance and isolation of New Zealand, Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, the closest of the major Asian countries, is 2,723 kilometres from Darwin, but 7,643 kilometres from Auckland. This remoteness contributes to New Zealand's more inward-looking focus, and is one reason it focuses less on territorial defence issues than Australia. Yet, New Zealand's isolation and its commodity-based economy make it critically dependant on international trade. This means it benefits from a stable region and world and recognises that '...distance is not insulation...'.⁵ Australia's closer proximity to Asia contributes to a greater focus on that region compared to New Zealand, which has a stronger Pacific focus.⁶ Also, Australia's greater size and status as a regional middle power, with strong links to the global hegemon that is the United States, encourages its outward focus. In essence, New Zealand gains a sense of security from its geographic position, while Australia perceives a source of threat from its north.

Culturally, both countries have a strong British colonial heritage, which has resulted in many similarities. Both are parliamentary democracies, albeit of slightly different form, employ similar legal systems, and are members of the Commonwealth. Both have European ethnicity and vigorous sporting cultures, with rugby and cricket being particularly strong. However, New Zealand has a more diverse cultural mix than Australia, with a significant and growing Polynesian population and cultural influence. Australia is 92 per cent European, compared to 68 per cent for New Zealand, which has a substantial (21.5 per cent) Māori and Pacific Islander minority.⁷ As a result, New Zealand is much closer to the Pacific Islands culturally, as well as geographically. This assists New Zealand in leveraging cultural 'soft power', particularly when dealing with Pacific Island countries,⁸ which gives New Zealand a competitive advantage over Australia in relations with other countries in the South Pacific.

Historical and cultural similarities drive Australian and New Zealand desires to cooperate on security, but differences in geographic location provide each with a different threat perspective. As New Zealand feels less threat, and has much

⁵ New Zealand Government, *Defence White Paper 2010*, The Beehive Website, 2 November 2010, available at <<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Defence_White_Paper%202010.pdf>>, accessed 2 November 2010, p. 17.

⁶ Bob Catley, *Waltzing with Matilda: Should New Zealand join Australia?* Wellington: Dark Horse Publishing, 2001, p. 54.

⁷ *Military Technology: World Defence Almanac 2009*, pp. 402–407.

⁸ Fuimaono Les McCarthy, 'New Zealand's Pacific Advantage' in *Securing a Peaceful Pacific*, (eds) John Henderson and Greg Watson. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, pp. 43–49.

less by way of either population or economic resources, it devotes less money to security. New Zealand spends only 1.1 per cent of its GDP on defence, while Australia's spends 1.8 per cent.⁹ At times this difference leads to accusations that the smaller partner does not shoulder its share of the regional defence burden.

Even if the threat perceptions and strategic cultures of both countries were the same, New Zealand simply cannot compete with the resources Australia has available to devote to defence. The two economies are strongly linked. Since the implementation of the 1982 Closer Economic Relations agreement, they operate with few restrictions, to the extent that there has even been periodic discussion of potentially combining currencies, economies (and even nations), but the relationship is not that of equals.¹⁰ Australia's population is approximately five times that of New Zealand—21.3 million compared to 4.2 million.¹¹ Australia's GDP is larger both in total and per capita (approximately seven times larger in total)—US\$819 billion compared to US\$116 billion, and 39 per cent greater in per capita terms—US\$38,500 compared to US\$27,700.¹² Australia is New Zealand's largest trading partner, taking 23.3 per cent of New Zealand's merchandise exports and providing 18.2 per cent of its imports. Yet New Zealand is a much less significant trading partner for Australia, taking 4.3 per cent of Australia's exports and providing 3.4 per cent of its imports, illustrating the unequal nature of the relationship.¹³ Contributing factors to the widening gap in wealth between the two countries have included New Zealand's greater distance, its reliance on agriculture and lesser mineral wealth, and its reliance on imported oil and manufactured products.¹⁴

Shared Security History

When the Australasian colonies were established, New Zealand was different from those in Australia. In New Zealand the Imperial regiments that fought the Māori until 1865 were there to deal with hostile indigenous inhabitants, whereas those in the Australian colonies were there to maintain internal order in the convict population. The Māori reaction to colonisation, fighting both for and against the Crown, established their reputation as a respected warrior race,

⁹ *Military Technology: World Defence Almanac 2009*, Mönch Publishing Group, 2009, Bonn, pp. 402–407.

¹⁰ Catley, *Waltzing with Matilda: Should New Zealand join Australia?*, pp. 33–35.

¹¹ CIA Factbook, accessed at <<www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html>> on 14 March 2010.

¹² In 2009 Purchasing Power Parity terms as per the CIA Factbook, accessed at <<www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html>> on 14 March 2010.

¹³ Statistics are 2008 data, from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *The APEC Region Trade and Investment*, October 2009, pp. 121–31.

¹⁴ Catley, *Waltzing with Matilda: Should New Zealand join Australia?*, pp. 102–107.

allowing them to be perceived as 'superior natives',¹⁵ in contrast to the attitude towards the Australian aboriginals. Together, these perceptions of volunteer settlers and a proud indigenous population contributed to New Zealanders developing a sense of a separate destiny from Australia.¹⁶

Despite a common perception of their collective security relationship as part of the British Empire, New Zealand's sense of difference and geographic remoteness from the other Australasian colonies was fundamental. While a major reason for the Federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 was to provide for their own defence,¹⁷ New Zealand opted not to participate beyond initial discussions. Nationalism and economic reasons were significant in this decision,¹⁸ but security considerations were also important. New Zealand felt that in times of crisis its interests would be sacrificed. Because of its geographic remoteness from the Australian mainland, New Zealand would need first to be self sufficient and it would also be better if there were two South Pacific sovereign voices in the Empire.¹⁹ This tension over perceptions of respective sovereign needs and security interests has persisted ever since, as has New Zealand's fear of being dominated by Australia.²⁰

An enduring feature common to both countries' defence policies, resulting from their respective maritime placement, has been the need to retain the support of a major maritime power. Concern about enemy raiders led both countries to fortify larger ports and establish coastal artillery.²¹ A more important development was the 1859 creation of the Australia Station of the Royal Navy at Sydney.²² Federation gave Australia the resources and manpower to start its own navy,²³ while New Zealand's 1909 gift of a battle-cruiser to the Royal Navy simply relieved the British taxpayer of the expense of providing that ship for the Home Fleet. Confirming the prescience of Australia's decision and New Zealand's naïveté, Britain did fail to provide much maritime security in either world war, because it placed a greater priority on its own needs in the

¹⁵ Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein-Smith and Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 197; and Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003, p. 224.

¹⁶ Denoon, Mein-Smith and Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, p. 255.

¹⁷ Denoon, Mein-Smith and Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, p. 195.

¹⁸ King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, p. 236.

¹⁹ Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*. Wellington: Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1991, pp. 125–27.

²⁰ McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, p. 127.

²¹ James Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999, p. 2; and Peter Dennis, Jeffrey Grey, Ewan Morris and Robin Prior (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 541.

²² Dennis, Grey, Morris and Prior (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, pp. 454–55.

²³ McLean, *The Prickly Pair: Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 90–93.

North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. A fear of the rising maritime power of Japan was first balanced by the British-Japanese Naval Treaty of 1902, and then by the US Great White Fleet tour of 1908. This tour saw US vessels steam into many world ports, including Auckland (9 August), Sydney (20 August), Melbourne (29 August), Albany (11 September) and Yokohama (18 October). Australia and New Zealand recognised the emergence of another potential maritime partner in the region.²⁴

Militarily, both Australia and New Zealand followed similar expeditionary strategies under wider British leadership (albeit with two significant exceptions) until 1941. Prior to the First World War both countries had implemented the Kitchener reforms,²⁵ and in line with plans by the Imperial General Staff, they assembled expeditionary forces and also seized regional German territories.²⁶ They landed as an integrated Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) at Gallipoli, establishing that name in their respective national military mythologies. The mounted brigades operated together in Palestine for the rest of the war, while the infantry divisions were separated in France once the Australian Corps was formed. On the outbreak of the Second World War both countries again formed expeditionary forces that fought together in Greece, Crete and North Africa.²⁷

The first thematic difference came in 1916, when New Zealand introduced conscription, as it did again in 1939, to sustain its forces in the field, while Australia did not.²⁸ The failure of several conscription referendums in Australia during the First World War reflected the perception by a sufficiently large number of Australians that this was a European war and that Australia's links to Britain did not axiomatically make it their concern.²⁹ The second thematic difference is that Australia maintained a greater measure of national

²⁴ McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, pp. 165–66.

²⁵ Field Marshal Lord Kitchener visited both countries in 1909–10 and recommended the establishment of staff corps—an organisation of military districts that provided mounted rifle, infantry and artillery organised and equipped on standard, British lines—and the establishment of a military college. Darren Moore, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911–2001*. Canberra: Royal Military College of Australia, 2001, pp. 16–18.

²⁶ Australia took German Papua New Guinea and New Zealand took German Samoa.

²⁷ In Greece the ANZAC Corps was under Australian command (Thomas Blamey as Deputy Commander-in-Chief Middle East) and on Crete all forces were under New Zealand command (Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg). See Denoon, Mein-Smith and Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, pp. 318–19.

²⁸ Ian McGibbon (ed), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 117; and E.M. Andrews, *The ANZAC Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 121–26.

²⁹ Andrews, *The ANZAC Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I*, p. 124.

control over its forces, particularly for discipline,³⁰ while a British officer commanded the 1st New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEAF) throughout the First World War.³¹ In the Second World War New Zealand followed Australia's example and provided the expeditionary force commander with a national charter, allowing him to assert New Zealand's interests in the British chain of command.³²

The Australian and New Zealand reaction to Japan's attack on US forces at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, followed by the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, highlighted differences in defence perceptions. The reaction also showed Britain's shortcomings as a regional maritime security partner. Australia demanded the repatriation of its expeditionary force from the Middle East, a move justified by the Japanese direct attacks in Papua New Guinea and Darwin.³³ New Zealand's remoteness generated a proportionately lower level of concern so that, in return for accepting a gradual build up of US forces in New Zealand, it was convinced by Britain to leave its Division in the Mediterranean.³⁴ This decision highlighted Britain's inability, demonstrated in both world wars, to ensure the maritime security of its major Commonwealth partners in the South Pacific. It also highlighted the immediacy of the Japanese threat to Australia in comparison to New Zealand.

Following the Second World War, the United States became the world's pre-eminent maritime power and was now willing to lead regional security efforts. Therefore, it was reasonable that Australia and New Zealand should look to the United States for their maritime security. Both countries also sought collective security by joining multilateral organisations, and both supported the creation of the United Nations, and raised forces for the 1950–53 Korean War.³⁵ However, faced with a perceived rising international communist threat (while simultaneously seeing Britain's withdrawal from the region), Australia and New Zealand sought to conclude a security arrangement with the United States. In return for accepting the imposition of the US-Japan Security Treaty of 8 September 1951, Australia and New Zealand entered a tripartite security

³⁰ For example, unlike New Zealand, Australia did not grant the British chain of command the right to execute Australian troops. See Andrews, *The ANZAC Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I*, pp. 106–108.

³¹ Colin Richardson, 'General Sir Alexander John Godley, The Last Imperial Commander' in *Born to Lead?*, (eds) Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward. Auckland: Exisle, 2003, pp. 47–51.

³² Matthew Wright, *Freyberg's War*. Auckland: Penguin Books, 2005, p. 34.

³³ Denoon, Mein-Smith and Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, p. 320.

³⁴ McGibbon (ed), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 550. By 1943, when Australia became almost entirely focused on Japan, New Zealand land forces stayed part of the Allies 'Germany first' policy and its small 3rd Division eventually went to the Mediterranean from the Pacific, as reinforcements to the Italian campaign. See Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, p. 12.

³⁵ Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, p. 13.

agreement (the ANZUS Treaty) with the United States on 1 September 1951, which came into force on 29 April 1952.³⁶

The next three decades saw a full transition of regional security leadership from Britain to the United States. Even so, combating communism saw Australia and New Zealand send forces (under British command) to the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation in Borneo. Both countries also sent forces to Vietnam where, under the mantle of ANZUS, they operated together in an integrated Taskforce from 1965, until their withdrawal in 1973.³⁷ The Vietnam War was politically unpopular, with widespread protests in Australia and New Zealand.³⁸

Anti-Nuclear Policy

A major divergence in the defence policies of both countries arose in 1984 when New Zealand entered a national election triggered by the issue of whether nuclear armed or powered vessels should be allowed to visit New Zealand ports. The issue had roots in New Zealand's antagonism to France's nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll (1966–1996), the worldwide fear of a nuclear conflict-induced 'global winter', and an element of anti-American military sentiment left from the Vietnam War.³⁹ The New Zealand Labour Party came to power, and many members in the new Cabinet had been politically active during the Vietnam protests.⁴⁰

New Zealand believed it could implement this anti-nuclear ban yet stay in ANZUS.⁴¹ Compromises were sought, and indeed found. In February 1985 Prime Minister David Lange and the Chief of Defence Staff Air Marshal Ewan Jamieson negotiated a US request that a guided missile-armed destroyer (the USS *Buchanan*), known not to be nuclear powered and most likely not nuclear armed, be allowed to visit New Zealand.⁴² However, Lange was not present when Cabinet considered the request and made acceptance conditional on the US Navy formally confirming the vessel complied with New Zealand's legislative requirements. However, this was contrary to US international policy to 'neither confirm nor deny'.⁴³ The timing was also critical, as the United

³⁶ McGibbon (ed), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 31; and Dennis, Grey, Morris and Prior (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 49.

³⁷ King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, p. 453.

³⁸ McGibbon (ed), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, pp. 565–66.

³⁹ King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, p. 495; and Ewan Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*. Sydney: Brassey's Australia, 1990, pp. 6, 22, and 26.

⁴⁰ Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, p. 6.

⁴¹ Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, p. 21.

⁴² Andrew Mack, *Denuclearisation in Australia and New Zealand: Issues and Prospects*, Working Paper No. 52, Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, September 1988, p. 2.

⁴³ Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, p. 30.

States was actively engaged in convincing many of its allies that they needed to accept the deployment of US cruise or ballistic missiles in their territory.⁴⁴ Consequently, not only did the US officials and the US Navy feel the New Zealand Government had betrayed their agreement, they could not afford such an open rejection of nuclear armament as part of alliance requirements to have no consequences.⁴⁵ New Zealand was suspended from ANZUS, with access to intelligence withdrawn and training with each other's armed forces banned by Presidential Directive.⁴⁶

As it would now be electoral suicide in New Zealand for any party to attempt to repeal the anti-nuclear legislation, a return to ANZUS is unlikely.⁴⁷ However, after 25 years some pragmatism is returning to the New Zealand-US security relationship. It is based on common interests, including operating together in Afghanistan. Direct training and information exchange is taking place and there is more access via third parties.⁴⁸ For New Zealand, not being in ANZUS also has advantages. Being a neutral or non-aligned nation offers New Zealand a range of diplomatic options. Another unexpected positive outcome of being cut off from receiving US-sourced intelligence was that New Zealand had to develop its own systems and sources, targeted to its own needs and interests.

Closer Defence Relations

The ANZUS rift meant that the Australian Government had to deal with its most important and its most traditional security partners on bilateral bases, without the two interacting. Domestically, the Australian Government, like several in Europe, needed New Zealand to be visibly punished for its position, to make sure it would not be subjected to political pressure to follow a similar anti-nuclear course.⁴⁹ Eventually Australia found this situation to have advantages. The now bilateral nature of the ANZUS treaty meant the Australia-US relationship was no longer diluted by the presence and concerns of the smaller New Zealand.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ Mack, *Denuclearisation in Australia and New Zealand: Issues and Prospects*, pp. 3–4.

⁴⁶ Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, p. 74.

⁴⁷ Luke Leighton, 'New Zealand's Defence Posture: a new direction?', *New Zealand International Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3, September/October 2008. p. 25.

⁴⁸ New Zealand Defence Force, *Statement of Intent 2009–2012*. Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2009, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, pp. 111–12.

⁵⁰ Derek J. McDougall, *Australian Foreign Relations: contemporary perspectives*. South Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998, p. 250; and Jameson, *Friend or Ally: New Zealand at Odds with its Past*, pp. 113 and 117.

Without a direct relationship with the United States and outside ANZUS, New Zealand sought to strengthen its formal bilateral security relationship with Australia, building on the Canberra Pact of 1944.⁵¹ Coined in 1991, Closer Defence Relations (CDR) described how the two defence forces were to coordinate in the future.⁵² Originally based on bilateral meetings between the Chiefs of Defence, but now encompassing Ministerial-level annual meetings, CDR included work on joint training, interoperable equipment and shared doctrine, and ensured coordination of both countries operational efforts in the region.⁵³

In this bilateral relationship, Australia is New Zealand's most important security partner, and New Zealand is the junior partner.⁵⁴ New Zealand's commitment to Australia is currently listed as the country's second defence policy priority after defending itself,⁵⁵ and its importance has been detailed in defence policy publications for many years. Conversely, Australia's key ally remains the United States.⁵⁶ Australia's 2009 *Defence White Paper* lists New Zealand among a number of regional states in its immediate neighbourhood whose security is important to Australia's interests.⁵⁷ There is also a minor section on New Zealand that says '...we must plan together on the basis that our combined operations in pursuit of our common security interests, as has occurred over recent years, are the new norm'.⁵⁸ While this section showed that, as far as Australia was concerned, the defence relationship had lessened, it also emphasised that a continued bilateral relationship requires effort. Out of necessity, New Zealand takes on much of this work by keeping as many exchange or other posts in Australia as it can (even if they are not reciprocated) and by having a comprehensive Defence Liaison Staff in Canberra.⁵⁹ However, simply because New Zealand is now more closely tied to Australia than any other country in defence matters, and acknowledges the need for force interoperability, it still does not mean the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) will mimic the Australian Defence Force (ADF), albeit on a smaller scale.

⁵¹ McGibbon (ed), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 45.

⁵² James Rolfe, *Defending New Zealand: A Study of Structures, Processes and Relationships*. Wellington: The Institute of Policy Studies, 1993, p. 11.

⁵³ New Zealand Defence Force, *Annual Report 2009*. Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2009, p. 9.

⁵⁴ New Zealand Defence Force, *Statement of Intent 2009–2012*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ New Zealand Defence Force, *Annual Report 2009*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 93.

⁵⁷ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, p. 42.

⁵⁸ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, p. 96.

⁵⁹ Australian Defence Liaison Staff (ADLS) Wellington has a staff of three; NZDLS Canberra is staffed by personnel of higher rank and has seven members.

Strategic Culture

One reason the two defence forces will not have the same structure is that they have different strategic cultures. Australia has long agonised over the issues of continental defence versus forward defence and the respective emphasis on land, or sea and air forces, along with self reliance.⁶⁰ New Zealand has only ever really had an expeditionary or forward defence mentality, and acknowledges it can only do so in cooperation with partners. Its small population will always make the defence of New Zealand an improbable task for the NZDF on its own, but its geographic position ('a strategic dagger poised at the heart of Antarctica'⁶¹) means a direct attack is unlikely, even during the largest conflicts. As James Rolfe notes: 'Policy-makers have had a consistent understanding that New Zealand's security cannot be determined in and around New Zealand, and security policies have been developed to recognise that perception.'⁶² The NZDF was therefore traditionally structured, with a mix of combat and support capabilities across all three single Services, to provide a balanced range of defence force options that would cooperate with allies.⁶³

Following the ANZUS rift, and as legacy platforms needed replacing, New Zealand had to consider how best to use its limited defence funding to achieve its security objectives. This not only forced a still ongoing re-evaluation of structures; it also identified that significant reinvestment was needed to keep all capabilities at a consistent and responsive level. New Zealand set up an operational Joint Headquarters, and there is ongoing training and work on logistics. However, the major features were the Labour Government's decisions to disband the air combat force, to not buy further ANZAC frigates beyond the two already purchased, and to concentrate on providing a well-equipped land force, supported by an air force and navy.⁶⁴ Debate exists over whether this was a conscious move to a more liberalist defence policy, based on less warfighting capability for the NZDF, or whether budget considerations were the predominant factor.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Michael Evans, 'Overcoming the Creswell-Foster divide in Australian strategy: the challenge for twenty-first century policy-makers', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, June 2007, pp. 193–214.

⁶¹ David Lange quoted in Mack, *Denuclearisation in Australia and New Zealand: Issues and Prospects*, p. 13.

⁶² Rolfe, *Defending New Zealand: A Study of Structures, Processes and Relationships*, p. 3.

⁶³ Rolfe, *Defending New Zealand: A Study of Structures, Processes and Relationships*, pp. 5–8.

⁶⁴ New Zealand Government, *The Government's Defence Policy Framework*, June 2000, p. 7.

⁶⁵ David McGraw. 'The Defence Debate in Australia and New Zealand', *Defence Studies*, Vol 7, No 1, pp. 101–102.

Military Capabilities

In deciding on what military capabilities to maintain, and at what levels, Australia and New Zealand do so from different perspectives of need and resources. Australia is keen to maintain a balanced force that is able to act reasonably independently in securing its territory and interests. This is reflected in its 2009 Defence White Paper, which states: 'Defence self-reliance means that Australia would only expect the United States to come to our aid in circumstances where we were under threat from a major power whose military capabilities were simply beyond our capacity to resist.'⁶⁶

The key defence alliance with the United States provides Australia with defence credibility that it could not achieve by itself, but, arguably, this places pressure on Australia to maintain its defence expenditure and high-end capabilities that are interoperable with the United States.

By comparison, New Zealand has been forced to grapple with affordability and critical mass issues, and in 2000 made a significant policy shift away from a balanced force concept, which was no longer deemed affordable.⁶⁷ New Zealand's approach emphasises depth rather than breadth, with forces designed to offer a credible contribution in niche capabilities to international coalitions. Coupled with a foreign policy that favours a liberal approach to being a good international citizen, New Zealand places greater reliance on international institutions like the United Nations.⁶⁸ However, given its close relationship with Australia, and Australia's strong alliance relationship with the United States, New Zealand does in fact derive some benefits from the Australia/United States alliance.

The difference in resources also drives distinct procurement imperatives, even where the basic capability requirement is similar for both countries. Both nations do not share land borders with other nations and, although historically linked to major defence partners, are often geographically removed from major conflicts. Both defence forces need to operate largely in an expeditionary capacity in a maritime environment, so there are numerous incidences where similar equipment requirements emerge in both countries at the same time. This, together with a desire to maintain a close bilateral relationship, to achieve high levels of interoperability of military forces, and to leverage combined economies of scale, means that there is often a strong incentive to engage in shared procurement, or at least purchase similar equipment. In the past joint

⁶⁶ Australian Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, p. 14.

⁶⁷ Robert Ayson, 'New Zealand Defence and Security Policy, 1990–2005' in *New Zealand in World Affairs IV 1990–2005*, (ed) Roderic Alley, Victoria University Press in association with New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 2007, pp. 137–40.

⁶⁸ Ayson, 'New Zealand Defence and Security Policy, 1990–2005', p. 135.

procurement has been successful, such as the ANZAC frigates, Steyr rifles and Hamel guns. However, due to its smaller scale, New Zealand has a greater tendency to purchase 'off the shelf' mid-range capability. Australia, meanwhile, particularly in recent times, has sought to procure more leading-edge technology, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, *Wedgetail* Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft, and a new expanded and modern submarine fleet.⁶⁹ A recent stark example of different approaches and outcomes in procurement programs between the two countries was the *Seasprite* naval helicopter project. New Zealand opted to purchase its five helicopters largely on an 'off the shelf' basis, and has successfully operated them since 2002. Australia opted to significantly modify the helicopter. Yet, after originally intending to introduce it into service in 2001, Australia finally cancelled the program in 2008.⁷⁰ Although that process had not played out in 2006, its problems were sufficiently well known to be a persuasive reason why New Zealand opted to buy NH 90 helicopters direct from European manufacturers. Another key reason for not contemplating a joint acquisition of the NH 90 was that Australian production and certification would have significantly increased the cost per unit to New Zealand. For the NZDF, value for money is critical, while Australia appears willing to pay the extra needed to get what it desires and to keep a defence industrial capacity.

Conclusion

As transplanted Anglo-Saxon nations, Australia and New Zealand have always had much in common, including in their security interests. However, New Zealand is not simply a smaller satellite or clone of Australia. Their shared histories as British colonies and geographic proximity to each other led to a long history of military cooperation across numerous conflicts, but there are also differences driven by history, culture, economics and geography. Australia is a continent, next to New Zealand and yet also adjacent to Asia, and it has suffered direct attack against its territory. New Zealand is a Pacific Island country, with an identifiable Polynesian element to its culture, is one of the most remote nations in the world, and has always felt it had a destiny separate from Australia. Indeed, despite seeming to be outwardly similar and to initially make similar strategic choices, these factors have helped to shape different security perspectives.

⁶⁹ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, pp. 70, and 80–81.

⁷⁰ 'Billion-dollar Seasprites axed at last', *Australian*, 6 March 2008, available at <<<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/billion-dollar-seasprites-axed-at-last/story-e6frg8yo-111115723016>>>, accessed 21 March 2010.

Both Australia and New Zealand have needed a capable maritime power as a regional security partner. With Britain no longer viewed to be that partner after the Second World War, the United States, through ANZUS, initially stepped in to fill that role. However, when New Zealand made policy choices in the 1980s over nuclear ships and nuclear weapons that the United States could not accept, New Zealand felt that its proximity to Australia meant it could afford to leave ANZUS. Australia is now New Zealand's larger regional maritime partner, building on all those factors of geographic position, culture and shared heritage. New Zealand accepts that it is very much beholden to Australia in this relationship, and knows significant effort is needed on its part to make the relationship work, in a similar way to the effort Australia makes to foster its relationship with the United States.

The bilateral security relationship between Australia and New Zealand is not just a simplistic matter of the small nation taking a free ride. If New Zealand was only to make provision for its own likely security needs, given its geographic position and limited strategic significance, it could arguably do so with little more than a coastguard and gendarmerie. However, New Zealand acknowledges the importance of Australia's security to its own and continues to shape and task its defence forces with contributing to the defence of Australia, recognising that '...it is in our interest to add to Australia's strategic weight'.⁷¹ Australia correctly understands that its defence forces and policies also provide New Zealand with protection, and that its alliance with the United States continues to benefit New Zealand, without this aspect being a stated defence priority. New Zealand's contribution to the defence of Australia also relieves Australia of part of the regional defence burden.

The trend of Australia and New Zealand having divergent views of security and defence will continue. New Zealand has been outside ANZUS for 25 years and is broadly comfortable with the current situation. Years of being denied access to US-sourced intelligence and having to develop alternate sources has contributed to New Zealand having new, more independent regional and global perspectives. The proximity of Australia and New Zealand to Asia and the Pacific respectively and the changing ethnic composition of their populations will continue to shape national priorities and areas of interest. These divergences may increase further over time. Australia's greater economic base means it will be able to pursue a full spectrum of military capabilities, while New Zealand will struggle to keep the lower base it now has and continue to concentrate on niche combat elements. As New Zealand's 2010 *Defence White Paper* states: 'The significant differences between the defence

⁷¹ New Zealand Government, *Defence White Paper 2010*, 2 November 2010, available on the Beehive website at <<[http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Defence White Paper%202010.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Defence%20White%20Paper%202010.pdf)>>, accessed 2 November 2010, p. 18.

forces of Australia and New Zealand are likely to grow over the next 25 years as Australia continues to invest more heavily in high-end military capabilities.⁷² Differences in equipment and levels of capability between the two forces will probably mean less opportunity for future joint procurements.

Australia and New Zealand are mature, sovereign countries. They have interests and security concerns in common and some that are different. However, the close cultural affinities, long history of military cooperation and geographical proximity will not change. This means that Australia and New Zealand need to build on what binds them together and to respect the differences dictated by resources and perspective if they wish to cooperate successfully in the future.

⁷² New Zealand Government, *Defence White Paper 2010*, p. 28.

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