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**Australia and the United States: The Role of Secondary Allies in Burden Sharing**

Rachel McVicker

Modern conflict is rarely fought bilaterally, instead many states share the burden of war. Multilateralism adds legitimacy to, and potentially reduces the cost of, the mission and so the major powers recruit its allies to fight wars with them. Conflict is costly for all states involved. As a result, the decision to join the effort is not simple. The smaller allies that major powers ask to join in must justify the cost of that conflict. Some states always fight alongside its major allies, others have more variability in its commitments. This paper aims to identify the reasons why states, specifically secondary allies, choose to burden share in these multilateral conflicts. Secondary allies are the middle power states who believe they are not at the top of the major power's list of priorities and have less influence in the international system. These states are “burden-sharing” when they take on the task of paying part of the cost of conflict whether that be in men, money, or resources. Regardless, they still commit themselves to major power alliances in hopes that it will benefit them either economically or militarily. Ultimately, this analysis shows that when a secondary power’s government highly values the alliance with the major power, they will burden-share with that power unless public opinion is preventative.

One super power Australia routinely burden-shares with the United States, but why? Why would Australia risk men and money on United States missions, some of which are unpopular but all of which are costly? Is it simply the importance of the United States alliance to the Australians? Are the Australian people pushing its government to get involved? Or maybe, each of these cases also happened to threaten Australian security. The common thread linking each decision to intervene will help identify the pattern as to why secondary powers, in general, burden share,

In 1962, Lyndon Johnson asked Australia to assist the unpopular United States efforts in Vietnam and Australia aided the mission. In 2003, Australia deployed troops to Iraq to assist the

United States in taking down Saddam Hussein after Western powers accused him of having weapons of mass destruction. And now, Australia and Japan have come together to assist the US mission of containing Chinese military power in the Pacific: A move that could hurt Australia's future economic relationship with China. Australia shared a burden with the United States in each of these conflicts when other close allies of Washington refused.

The Australian–American relationship faced the test of time as the two have fought together in every conflict since World War I and they have remained close in peacetime. They are linked through economic treaties, defense agreements, and have worked together in times of humanitarian crisis as well. The United States has similarly close relations with Britain and France, but they do not always choose to contribute like Australia does.

International Relations theorists have long studied the reasons that countries burden share and so there is a substantial base of information on the topic. With that said, the Australian commitment to US missions is different and a test of the existing theories only partially answers the question of why Australia burden shares. Australia is a paranoid, secondary allies meaning that it has different motivations behind burden-sharing than major powers. The paranoia of abandonment also separates out Australia from other secondary allies who may have a greater ability to ignore American calls to action.

To understand Australian rationale for burden-sharing I will study the cases of Australia's participation in Vietnam, Iraq, as well as current relations with China to assess burden-sharing in a variety of situations. The Vietnam War will shed light on the early decades of the American-Australian relationship before there was a long history of cooperation, and when Australia still had other large power allies. Vietnam was an unpopular war when the United States asked Australia to join the United States with boots on the ground. Regardless Australia answered the

call to arms. In Iraq, the decision was more widely debated internationally but against Australia came to US aid. Australia pulled out of Iraq before the end of the war and studying what caused the removal of troops will shed light on the necessary conditions for burden-sharing. Lastly, the case on modern relations in the Pacific with Australia, Japan, and China will display the use of soft power burden-sharing outside of conflict. The decisions that the Australian government made to oppose Chinese military power had its costs but is it truly risking its economic relationship with China? The China case to shows the rationale for burden-sharing when there is no kinetic conflict to get involved in and powers must act through balancing. The Australian-American relationship is well defined by the time the issue of China emerges, so in contrast to the Vietnam case, it should pinpoint the impact of established relations on burden-sharing. Understanding the extent of the burden shared in each of these cases and the reasoning behind the contribution will create a holistic understanding of Australia's likeliness to contribute to an American cause. Therefore, it will clarify the conditions required for secondary allies to contribute to the major power's efforts.

In each of these cases, Australia's assistance allowed the United States to fight for the international order and not just their power. The Washington cannot always depend on other major power allies, like France and Britain, to come to its aid as those powers make its decision based on different criteria. Secondary allies are necessary for the United States to maintain its legitimacy when it chooses to go above international organizations or fights controversial wars. Therefore, understanding what motivates states to burden share will keep secondary allies on the side of the United States.

The analysis of the three cases strongly suggests that if the secondary ally's government highly values the alliance with the major power, then it will burden share if public opinion is not

preventative. Public opinion will not be preventative if the public either recognizes the importance of the alliance or perceives a threat from the adversary that it will fight. Threat can also influence a state to act but in the end, the alliance valuation is what defines whether burden-sharing will take place. If the secondary ally believes it can maintain security even if the dominant power pulls back security commitments and cooperation with the state it will be less likely to burden share, because the value of that alliance has diminished. This is seen in Vietnam when Australia believed the United States was the major power under which to burden share and so it chose the more costly intervention to show commitment to the US. Increased support for the United States throughout the country influenced the decision to join the coalition and when the pro-American sentiment faded, Australia pulled itself back from the conflict pinpointing alliance valuation as a major contributor to its intervention. Lastly, in the case of China, the importance of American security proved more influential than the economic ties of China as Australia faced strong economic sanctions for the sake of maintaining strong ties with the United States.

### **Literature Review**

The studies of burden-sharing are numerous yet there is no agreement on one decisive factor that determines if a country will burden share. Most theorists conclude that the best assessments of burden-sharing are those that account for both the factors from the international system as well as the domestic political situation. The role of the domestic and external factors varies from theorist to theorist.

Andrew Bennett, Joseph Leopold, and Danny Unger were some of the first individuals to address the question of why states contribute to alliances. Bennett, et al. propose five potential hypotheses that could determine a state's contribution. Those are: for the sake of collective action, to balance a threat, alliance dependence, to protect state autonomy, and because that is

what their constituents want.<sup>1</sup> Through five case studies of various countries' decisions to enter the Persian Gulf War, one for each hypothesis, they concluded that a country's likelihood to participate was determined by the external factors from the international system such as collective action, balancing threat, or alliance dependence. But the way a country contributed was based on the domestic political situation and explained by the assessments of state autonomy and domestic politics.<sup>2</sup> This case is useful to understand the possible factors of burden-sharing but the isolation of external from internal factors oversimplifies political structures. There is an intricate interconnection between the two that needs to be assessed.

Daniel Baltrusaitis further defines the causes of different domestic factors for burden-sharing. He writes in *Friends Indeed? Coalition Burden Sharing in the War in Iraq* in 2008 when the war is ongoing. This assessment argues that a state's domestic political structure finds the contributions of states instead of the political climate. States with strong executive branches were likely to commit to burden-sharing and supply forces. Alternatively, states with more “parliamentary freedom,” or legislative power, were less likely to get involved with forces on the ground but may still help in some way.<sup>3</sup> The importance of domestic politics in state's decisions to burden share is important but Baltrusaitis recognize the limitations of his theory as a result of national elections. He posits that the executive is more likely to use force; but, in democratic nations, the public still holds power over the executive pushing its hand in times of election.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, regardless of the structure, public opinion influences how the government uses force overall.

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<sup>1</sup> Bennett, Andrew, Lepgold, Joseph, and Unger, Danny. "Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War." *International Organization* 48, no. 1 (1994): 40 -42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>3</sup> Baltrusaitis, Daniel. “Friends Indeed? Coalition Burden Sharing and the War in Iraq.” PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2008. 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

In her 2013 work, *American Allies in Times of War* Stefanie Von Hlatky comes to a similar conclusion to Bennett et al. as she tries to understand why US allies are so unreliable in their burden-sharing. Her goal was to understand why some states go all out and others do not join US military efforts at all. For example, the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom was useless when recruiting help for the Vietnam war effort; however, Australia quickly came to US aid.<sup>5</sup> She reasons that the secondary allies still are swayed by the fear that not contributing to a war effort will cause them to be marginalized by the unipole (which was America at the time of her assessment). However, the domestic impact of burden-sharing is something those states also have to consider as the leaders are concerned with their political survival.<sup>6</sup> This theory is closest to the explanation that I pose here. However, Von Hlatky wrote her assessment for a unipolar world and that is not the status quo, and so we must study how these tenets hold up in a bipolar structure.

Jason Davidson's work on burden-sharing, *American Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq*, emphasizes the interconnected nature of those domestic and international influences and works to understand how they interact. His case studies on allied contributions to Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq support the conclusion that if a state values its alliance with the US, perceives the target as a threat, and public and opposition opinion are both in favor of intervention, then the US ally will assist the US.<sup>7</sup> If any of these three conditions are not met, then contributions are not guaranteed; instead, the balance of these three conditions must be tested. The most important take away from this theory is that domestic opposition is extremely hard to overcome. Strong domestic opposition does not mean an ally will make a small

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<sup>5</sup> Von Hlatky, Stefanie. "American Allies in Times of War." United Kingdom. Oxford University Press (2013): 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>7</sup> Davidson, J. *America's Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq*. New York. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.



contribution; it usually means the ally will not contribute. Davidson's cases looked closely at Britain, Italy, and France. Two of these three are larger power contributors, as a result, he over-emphasizes the necessity for the ally to recognize a threat. Large powers are not dependent on the United States in the same way as secondary allies. The Britain and Frances of the international system benefit from its alliances with the United States however, these powers have enough influence, economic and political, on its own to overcome abandonment from the United States. On the other hand, smaller powers like Australia, Poland, Japan, and South Korea lack such influence. This is just one of many differences that separates large powers from smaller powers in its rationale to burden-share.

Furthermore, in 2016, Charles Miller at the Australian National University wrote another piece on burden sharing, this time specifically from the perspective of the Australian public. The analysis and study on public opinion in Australia concluded that neither the voters nor the candidates express support for a free-riding position, where they reap the benefits of agreements without paying their share of the cost.<sup>8</sup> The data from this study shows that Australian trust in the United States makes the Australian people more willing to aid US missions. Furthermore, if it feels like the United States will defend them, it will be more likely to contribute.<sup>9</sup> The public trust of the United States in Australia is powerful and helped Australia to take part in numerous US conflicts since WWI. This last study found a potentially important trait of secondary allies, they highly value the United States. Miller recognizes the faults of this study when he notes foreign policy is not always a salient issue with the public, and therefore policy makers can overlook public opinion. Moreover, the way politician frame foreign policy issues also have a

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<sup>13</sup> Miller, Charles. "Free Riders in Spite of Themselves? Public Opinion, Elite Behavior, and Alliance Burden Sharing in Australia." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 28, no. 2 (2016). 209.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 213.

massive influence on public opinion as we will be in the Vietnam case. Miller introduces the importance of alliance valuation by the public into the discussion on burden-sharing and I agree that it has an important role to play.

Charles Miller and Patrick Mello both assessed the rationale for ending burden-sharing agreements and both conclude that domestic and international influences aided the decision, just as they play a role in the decision to burden-share. In 2010, Miller looked into why international support for the United States' efforts in Afghanistan was declining and determined the loss of domestic faith in the coalition's ability to succeed was the primary reason for withdrawal.<sup>10</sup> Changing beliefs of political leadership and the breakdown of the consensus that this was necessary also played a crucial role.<sup>11</sup> Mello's research was completed on the withdrawal of allies from Iraq, which is something that I will directly be assessing also later in this paper. He concludes that leftist partisanship, and a lack of upcoming election is what led Australia, along with others, to withdraw before the end of the conflict.<sup>12</sup> This rationale did not extend to every country Mello researched. A second group that did not leave because of political shifts, was swayed to leave Iraq as a consequence of large casualties and direct attacks against its soldiers, such as the cases of The Philippines and Bulgaria.<sup>13</sup>

Both of these studies use Australia as an example of political power changes causing withdrawal. The lack of upcoming elections that pushed countries out of Iraq, according to Mello, was also the result of elections having just occurred in many instances. There was a transfer of power in Australia to a government that was much less pro-American which caused

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<sup>10</sup> Miller, Charles A. "Endgame for the West in Afghanistan? Explaining the Decline in Support for the War in Afghanistan in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Germany." *Letort Papers* ; No. 38. Carlisle, *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, 2010. 7

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 126 – 129.

<sup>12</sup> Mello, Patrick A. "Paths towards Coalition Defection: Democracies and Withdrawal from the Iraq War." *European Journal of International Security* 5, no. 1 (2020)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

them to end its participation in the war effort. Besides, the increased political competition that Miller saw in Australia was the result of an election cycle giving the opposition a larger stage and reason to strongly oppose the current policy. The political changes within Australia show a bigger pattern as to why troops were brought home, the country's priorities toward America changed.

Each study mentioned addresses the rationale behind burden-sharing in some way, but all focus on groups of states and patterns within those groups. The differences between alliances are clearly shown between Hirofumi Shimizu and Todd Sandler's account of North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Eiko Thielemann's of the European Union. Shimizu et al. studies NATO relations from 2001 to 2006 and concludes that states were more likely to contribute when the contribution was self-preserving or beneficial to the state and in any other case could be considered a free rider.<sup>14</sup> This experience may be a result of the nature of NATO. The institution was developed to counteract the Soviet Union. Since the fall of the USSR and the evolution of the Russian threat, the use of NATO as a burden-sharing mechanism became limited, therefore limiting the generalizability of this theory.

Alternatively, Thielemann's similar assessment of the European Union and member state reacts to migration security issues. He came to a vastly different conclusion. The member states of the EU acted in solidarity as a means to protect the whole of the European Union.<sup>15</sup> It is important to recognize that this burden-sharing relationship is special because all involved parties share borders. Therefore, when one is threatened, that threat is close to home for the rest of the powers too. These two opposing conclusions illustrate that different alliances have

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<sup>14</sup> Shimizu, Hirofumi, and Sandler, Todd. "Recent Peacekeeping Burden Sharing." *Applied Economics Letters* 17, no. 15 (2010): 1483.

<sup>15</sup> Thielemann, Eiko. "Between Interests and Norms: Explaining Burden-Sharing in the European Union." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 6, no.3 (2003): 268

different dynamics influencing the likelihood of burden-sharing. The distinctions between these groups emphasize the need to assess burden-sharing rationales in groups with specific attributes; like this study looks specifically at middle powers that are secondary allies of the United States. This group gives the United States a large web of influence around the world and the patterns recognized among them will help the United States to remain powerful.

Through my case studies, I will be able to contribute a specified analysis of which theory of burden-sharing fits the specific rationale of secondary allies.

### **Theoretical Explanation**

The major takeaways from each work found in the literature review are important to recognize and maintain in my explanation. Davidson, Baltrusaitis, and Von Hlatky all acknowledged the influence of alliance valuation to some degree. I take this one step further when assessing only secondary allies and argue that a high alliance valuation causes states to burden share. Secondly, due to the increasingly democratic nature of the world, public opinion must not be preventative to intervention. Politicians must please their constituencies to stay in their positions of power. Therefore, they cannot make decisions that the public strongly disagrees with. To this, I simply claim that a secondary ally's government's valuation of the alliance makes the ultimate decision of whether they will burden share with the major ally.

Secondary allies are middle power countries that choose the United States as its great power ally. Whether it be a result of geographic distance, history, or cultural differences, these states still aim to prove themselves loyal to the American alliance in hopes it will pay off in its time of need. In the China case, the threat that Australia would need protecting from is present but overall, pleasing the major power ally is an insurance policy that the middle power will not be left alone if attacked in the future. The states that the United States has stable and long-term

relationships with, such as the United Kingdom and France, will make decisions on burden-sharing with a different set of criteria. They maintain a good relationship with the United States but do not need feel as strong a need to please the United States. This distinction allows for a more exact assessment of what makes secondary allies burden-share with the United States.

Alliance valuation is the assessment of the benefit gained or lost by keeping a relationship with another power. Alliance valuation is high for an ally that is reliable, shows the ability to protect the smaller power militarily, and has the potential to help the secondary ally prosper in the long-term. Glenn Snyder, in his study of alliance relations, finds that states with similar ideological, ethnic, economic, or prestige values will naturally have a greater alliance valuation.<sup>16</sup> The United States and Australia's alliance has a strong foundation of similar values and therefore if Canberra is convinced Washington will come to its aid, the value of the United States alliance should remain high.

Australia's geographic distance from the United States increases its fear of abandonment by the United States.<sup>17</sup> The United States can ignore an attack on Australia as it is not on the US's border. As a result, Australia feels the need to prove that it will come to America's aid to ensure the United States will come to its.<sup>18</sup> Understanding the role of abandonment for the secondary ally's is imperative to the implementation of this theory. The fear of abandonment is only a condition of compliance if the alliance is highly valued by the secondary ally. High valuation comes from the belief that the relationship with the major power will benefit from the smaller state complying and the faith that the major power can protect the secondary ally.

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<sup>16</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 464.

<sup>17</sup> O'Connor, Brendon, and Vucetic, Srdjan. "Another Mars-Venus Divide? Why Australia Said 'yes' and Canada Said 'non' to Involvement in the 2003 Iraq War." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 5 (2010): 528.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Regardless of whether the dominant power protected them in the past, if the subordinate does not believe that the dominant power upheld its influence, or has already abandoned the smaller power, it will not fear the repercussions of not siding with them.

Snyder's theory of alliances states that alliances are created by states to ensure it is on the more powerful side in conflict and to avoid isolation if other states ally with one another.<sup>19</sup> The side one chooses to align with is a result of similar general interests, such as defending or fighting for a common cause, and similar particular interests, such as identity, economics, or ethnicity.<sup>20</sup> These principles explain why the Australian-American relationship took root. Further, once an alliance exists the members repeatedly chose to comply or defect in Snyder's theory.<sup>21</sup> Snyder then builds off this by arguing that the higher the alliance valuation and the more dependent a state is on its ally the more willing it will be to entrap themselves in the missions of allies to prevent abandonment.<sup>22</sup> This is exactly what we see in Australia throughout each case study, the fear of abandonment intensifies the role of alliance valuation for secondary allies.

The responsibility to intervene is that of the subordinate, or secondary ally. Bjorn Jerdén deciphers the role of choice and finds that the secondary allies of major powers recognize its great power as the "best choice for maintaining regional stability."<sup>23</sup> Jerdén ultimately resolves that secondary allies fight in conflict with the United States, or other major power, because that ally is highly valuable to its security. Secondary allies will burden share under the superior

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<sup>19</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 462.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 464.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 466.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 471.

<sup>23</sup> Jerdén, Björn. "Security Expertise and International Hierarchy: The Case of 'The Asia-Pacific Epistemic Community'." *Review of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2017): 495.

power that is of highest value to them, for whatever reason that may be, economically or militarily.

Secondly, the role of threat is periphery in the cases that I will evaluate. Almost all theory recognizes a state's primary goal is to survive. The existence of threat put that survival into question. Therefore, when a state perceives a threat, it is likely to react. I argue that alliance valuation decides how allies will react to threat. Alliance valuation is the determining factor is whether burden sharing will occur. Burden-sharing and threat often overlap, as allies typically have common enemies; in some cases, burden-sharing can exist without threat, as we will see in the case of Iraq. When threat is present, alliance valuation is more important of a determinate when despite being the more costly choice the secondary allies still sides with its major power instead of an alternative.

In term of public opinion, according to Andrew Moravcsik, within liberal society the domestic actors that decide the actions of the state promote its interests.<sup>24</sup> On the elite levels, this means that a dictator, or president, will make foreign policy decisions to help himself. In democratic societies, constituents hold these leaders accountable and therefore they must pay attention to the wishes of their constituents or those constituents will be vote them out of office. This is the structure that exists in all democracy and so regardless of whether burden-sharing is the best choice or not, a political leader's constituents must believe it is the best choice.

A government that highly values its United States alliance will decide to burden share with the United States. However, a public that does not agree with the decision of said government can remove that government from power. Moravcsik makes a note in his recount of liberalism he emphasizes political competition within states ensures that powers listen to the sect

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<sup>24</sup> Moravcsik, Andrew. "Liberalism and International Relations Theory." Center for European Studies, Harvard University. No. 92-6. 1992. 6.

of individuals it represents to some degree.<sup>25</sup> The public must recognize a reason to burden-share with the United States, either because it recognizes a threat to its country or because it understands the importance of pleasing its American ally. As the cases will demonstrate, the result of the loss of public support changes the ability for the government to burden-share with the United States .

In summary, when a state's government highly values its alliance with a major power that state will burden share with the United States if public opinion is not preventative. Public opinion will only be preventative if the public does not recognize the importance of supporting good relations with the United States and they do not perceive a threat from the power it would be facing. If the public senses either condition, the country will fight alongside the United States.

### **The Alternative Theoretical Explanation**

If this theory falls short of describing the patterns of secondary allies there are other possible rationales including one where the secondary ally may not be fighting to maintain its security protections from the US; but its protections from the world order that it identify with, and from which they benefit. Wars over ideology are common. A simplified view of the Cold War and the war on terrorism emphasize this. When capitalism was threatened, capitalist nations sided against the communists to fight for the liberal world order from which they benefitted. Then again, when terrorist groups attacked the twin towers, the liberal lifestyle was threatened, and countries came together to fight.

When these conflicts are assessed in terms of the motives for each conflict it is rational to conclude that the allies that fought alongside Washington were fighting for its right to maintain

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 9-10.



its identity. The constructivist theory emphasizes the role that identity plays in a state's international affairs, defense of that identity can drive a state to war. This perspective reframes the influence of the alliance on the choice to intervene and argues that Australia, or any other secondary ally, aids the United States by the coincidence of protecting the same cultural, political, and economic values. In Matt McDonald's breakdown of constructivist theory, he defines security as a social construction. States create the structures that decide which group needs to be protected and how one should protect it.<sup>26</sup> Then the role of a state's identity can be a powerful force in deciding whether or not a state should go to war. Arnold Wolfers simplifies this definition of security noting that it is the protection of a state's core values.<sup>27</sup> If a secondary state recognizes the international system that it identifies with is under attack, then it is likely to fight to protect it. It will defend its core values.

For Australia, those values often align with the United States, and therefore it burdens shares with them for mutual benefit. The United States created its identity as a protective world power, and it helped to build institutions to enforce a liberal international order. As defined by Ikenberry, the liberal international order is, "co-binding security institutions, penetrated American hegemony, semi-sovereign great powers, economic openness, and civic identity."<sup>28</sup> The interaction of these elements creates the primarily democratic liberal international order that Washington protects and developed the 'free world' identity that people often equated to it.<sup>29</sup> For the sake of this paper the free world identity, civic identity, and cooperation's with institutions are of primary importance.

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<sup>26</sup> McDonald, Matthew. "Constructivisms" in *Security Studies : An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Edited by Paul D Williams and Matthew McDonald, 48-58. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2018. 49.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>28</sup> Deudney, Daniel, and G. John Ikenberry. "The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order." *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 195.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall note that these institutions the United States created allow for global governance to be the overarching power, even if set up by a major power.<sup>30</sup> In more concrete terms, even though the United States helped to build the United Nations, the norms that the UN helps to uphold should withstand the United States testing them. Institutions should be looked at as insurance policies for the norms that fuel the international system according to constructivism.<sup>31</sup>

So, if this alternative is the reality of the situation, then Australian actions leading up to conflict will side with the United States when both countries choose to fight for the international systems and norms from which they benefit. Also, Australia would be more hesitant without the approval of international institutions, such as the UN, if at all willing to fight, without its approval. Instead, if they chose to ignore the reactions of the institutions, then the state's intentions are not purely to protect the world order that. In general, the official statements on each conflict will shed light on whether the Australian identity is the reason they are fighting.

Through the analysis of Australian involvement in Vietnam, Iraq, and China we can see Australia is investing in protecting something associated with the United States whether that be the strength of the US's alliance or their shared ideals and international norms. An assessment of government speeches and actions, and public opinion will illustrate whether that is the characteristics of their common identities or their security relationship with the United States. If the government repeatedly discusses the role that America plays in conflict and the aid that the United States can give Australia, it will be clear that it is their relationship that pulls Australia to

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<sup>30</sup> Barnett, Michael, and Raymond Duvall. "Power in International Politics." *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005): 58.

<sup>31</sup> Navari, Cornelia. "Liberalisms." in *Security Studies : An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Edited by Paul d Williams and Matthew McDonald, 34-47. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2018. 36.

burden share. On the other hand, if the conversation focuses on the international system, and protecting the normative status quo my theory will be disproven.

### **Case 1: Australia in Vietnam**

World War Two ended in the Pacific in 1945, but the spread of communism toward Australia in the Pacific followed it. The British and Americans involved themselves in the region in efforts to contain communism in Malay, Borneo, and Korea. Soon the conversation would turn to the situation in Vietnam as the French refused to pull out troops in fear that the country could succumb to communist rule.<sup>32</sup> The British were tied up in Malay when the conflict began, and although US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, was in favor of boot on the ground assistance for the French but was warned that the United States could not go it alone.

American policymakers quickly scrambled to find allies that would fight alongside the United States in Vietnam and to make it a multilateral effort. The Australian government, who was trying to improve its relationship with the United States, were quick to please. When asked in 1962, the Australians deployed 30 advisors to the American efforts, and then this group grew when called on again in 1963.<sup>33</sup> It was not until 1964 when the Americans would push for Australian to deploy infantry battalions and Australia would be deployed in June of 1965. From 1962 until the final removal of troops 60,000 Australian troops would take part in the war effort and Canberra would spend \$218 million.<sup>34</sup> The decision to join the United States in Vietnam marked Canberra's turn away from Britain as Australia's number one ally.

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<sup>32</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51, no. 3 (2005): 430 .

<sup>33</sup> Bloomfield, Alan, and Nossal, Kim Richard. "End of an Era? Anti-Americanism in the Australian Labor Party." *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 56, no.4 (2010):597.

<sup>34</sup> Ekins, Ashley. "Impressions: Australians in Vietnam. Overview of Australian military involvement in the Vietnam War, 1962–1975". *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 29 April 2021.  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/impressions/impressions>

The United States and Britain aimed to intervene in Vietnam, and both were Australian allies giving the Australians a choice of who to side with. The British addressed the issue of Vietnam via diplomatic means because it did not have the resources to go to war in another country. If Australia teamed up with the British instead, the cost of the endeavor, in terms of both men and money, would have been much lower. This is the course of action that the Australian public was hoping for.<sup>35</sup> The decision to fight alongside the Washington came from Robert Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, and the Australian Labor Party coalition. Why did the Australian government ultimately choose the costlier option? Because the Americans also chose the more costly option and asked for its help at a time when Australia was trying to prove its commitment to the United States.

*Theoretical Explanation:*

The Australian military fought in the Vietnam war because its government and Australian people highly valued its burgeoning alliance with the United States and because the Australian people were convinced communism was a threat to its national security. Firstly, the Australians explicitly identified US alliance as a reason for going to war in Vietnam, as its relationship was becoming a pillar of Australian foreign policy. According to Gordon Greenwood, Australia developed behind a wall of British protection in the Pacific and initially thought that Australia would be safe if the British remained a strong naval power Australia would be safe.<sup>36</sup> However, in 1941 the Australians' biggest fear became a reality. As it faced a serious threat of invasion from the Japanese the British turned its attention to Nazi Germany, a threat that was much closer

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<sup>35</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." 432, 439.

<sup>36</sup> Greenwood, Gordon. "Australia's Triangular Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* (New York, N.Y.) 35, no. 4 (1957). 690., Greenwood, Gordon. "Australian Attitudes Towards Pacific Problems." *Pacific Affairs* 23, no. 2 (1950). 165.

to home. The Australians were alone.<sup>37</sup> In the face of perceived abandonment, it the needed a new major power ally to bolster Australia's defenses.

In Australia Britain had created a Western country in the Pacific, so when Australia needed new allies ,it understood its Asian neighbors were not the best options. Then in 1949 Robert Menzies was elected Prime Minister, after he ran on a platform that argued its main goals should be to grow independent of the UN and more supportive of its British and American alliances.<sup>38</sup> The resulting foreign policy was dubbed the Triangular Policy.<sup>39</sup> This policy determined that Australian security could only be achieved by maintaining strong relationships with Britain, the United States, and non-communist Asian nations. The linkages with the British and non-communist nations were already strong and so most available resources would be allocated to the development of a relationship with the United States. In 1951, Australia formalized its relationship with the United States for the first time through the signing of the ANZUS Treaty alongside New Zealand. As the threat of communism came closer to home, Menzies' administration also developed the "forward defense" method which justified them fighting with the British in Borneo and Malay.<sup>40</sup> More specifically this policy pushed Australia to fight beside the allies it wanted to preserve against communism to keep the threat far from the Australian border. This meant fighting alongside the United States.<sup>41</sup>

The Triangular Policy and forward defense continued to take form in Australian foreign policy in the 1950s as Greenwood recounts, "every major postwar statement in Australia has stressed the importance of friendship with the United States."<sup>42</sup> The process of becoming a US

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<sup>37</sup> Greenwood, Gordon. "Australia's Triangular Foreign Policy." 690.

<sup>38</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." 429.

<sup>39</sup> Greenwood, Gordon. "Australia's Triangular Foreign Policy." 691.

<sup>40</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." 430.

<sup>41</sup> Benvenuti, Andrea. "Difficult Partners: Indo-Australian Relations at the Heights of the Cold War, 1949 – 1964." *The Australian Journal of politics and History* 57, no.1.(2011).65

<sup>42</sup> Greenwood, Gordon. "Australian Attitudes Towards Pacific Problems." *Pacific Affairs* 23, no. 2 (1950): 165.

ally that received the security benefits of America would not be easy. The situation in Vietnam tested Canberra's new alliance with Washington, and to prevent abandonment the Australians needed to prove its loyalty to the United States. In a statement from the Australian Ambassador to Washington, they advised, "The problem of Vietnam is one, it seems, where we could ... pick up a lot of credit with the United States..."<sup>43</sup> And the Menzies government wanted to jump at this opportunity to win the favor of the United States.

Also, in 1954, just after France's defeat in Vietnam by signing the Geneva Conventions, there were warnings the United States would reducing its presence in the region if allies were not going to come to its aid.<sup>44</sup> As a result, Australia enthusiastically increased its commitments to the United States in helping to form the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty (SEATO).<sup>45</sup> Following this pattern, when the US government warned that intervention in Vietnam would be impossible without allies through its More Flags campaign, Australia quickly committed what it could to the effort.<sup>46</sup> This was initially just advisors and non-combatants, but in 1962 the United States would request Australian troops on the ground. Garry Woodard wrote extensively on the topic of Australia in the Vietnam war. He accredits this Australia's excitable commitment to Vietnam as a representation of its understanding of an "insurance premium."<sup>47</sup> Menzies knew Australia could not expect America to continue to work with Australia if it did not do the same in American times of need and was ready to pay for its partnership. This is Australia's fear of abandonment dictating what costs the Australians were willing to pay.

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<sup>43</sup> Australia's Military Commitment to Vietnam. (1975, May 13). Retrieved, from <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-3737>

<sup>44</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." (2005). 433.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Davidson, J. "America's Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq." 31.

<sup>47</sup> Woodard, Garry. "Australia's War in Vietnam: Debate without End." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 2 (2017): 218.

This defensive policy was necessary being the spread of communism threatened the Australian way of life and put the stability of the region into question. The presence of threat pushes Australia into action, the value of the alliance would decide how it would address the threat. Leading up to the deployment of troops on the ground, Canberra was aiming to maintain its relationship with both London and build one with the Washington, but the powers chose different approaches to the issue. Britain made a stronger diplomatic effort to create peace as it could not afford to send more troops, while the United States wanted boots on the ground to influence the situation.<sup>48</sup> Australia's goal to improve the American alliance pushed them toward the US method of involvement; but Britain also made itself a less appealing ally to Australia. The Australian government recognized the threat of communism. That is why the triangular policy that was developed, and Menzies' "forward defense" were so widely accepted. However, Britain was making moves toward granting Singapore its independence. This threatened Australia as it presumed the predominantly Chinese population would convert Singapore to a communist nation and create another adversary of Australia in the region.<sup>49</sup> Menzies' concern with this decision pushed him and his administration to increase the relative importance to the American alliance<sup>50</sup> as the British did not appreciate the gratitude of the situation like America and Australia. The Australian government decided to fight in Vietnam to improve its relationship with the United States. This pushed Australia to choose the United States as its major power to burden share with.

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<sup>48</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." 432.

<sup>49</sup> Benvenuti, Andrea. "Difficult Partners: Indo-Australian Relations at the Heights of the Cold War, 1949 – 1964." 62.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Australia's decided to side with the United States instead of the British by May 1962, when Australia committed to advisors to South Vietnam at America's request.<sup>51</sup> The Australian cabinet made this decision based on hypothetical situations where Washington may ask for assistance in meetings between 1959 and 1961. On three separate occasions, the executive determined that while they preferred to work with all its SEATO allies, the situation in Vietnam was important enough to address with just the United States.<sup>52</sup> On this topic, Menzies told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that Australia's decision was not the one the people wanted but they had to accept the decisions shaped by its "great and powerful friends."<sup>53</sup> The friend was the United States and it was asking for support in its endeavors in Vietnam. As a result, Australia fulfilled its request and sent troops to Vietnam.

It is not enough for the government to value the US alliance and therefore go to war. Public opinion must also either recognize the importance of a strong relationship with the United States too or see the conflict as an issue of national security. In this case, the public understood the gratitude of the threat of the expansion of communism and feared the realization of the domino theory. This was ensured by Minister of External Affairs Percy Spender in the early 1950s and he repeatedly warned the public of the encroaching threat of Communism on Australia. He warned, "Should the forces of Communism prevail, and Vietnam come under the heel of Communist China, Malaya is in danger of being outflanked and it, together with Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia, will become the next direct object of further Communist activities."<sup>54</sup> At first, legislatures and the people did not support this opinion but it steadily

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<sup>51</sup> Edwards, Peter. *Australia and the Vietnam War*, University of New South Wales Press, 2014. 75.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 70.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 72

<sup>54</sup> Lee, David. "The Liberals and Vietnam." 430.



gained support throughout Menzies' cabinet and gained popularity.<sup>55</sup> With a constituency that understood the threat of communism, Menzies' work to sway the people in favor of war would be easier.

The condition that the public highly valued the American alliance when burden-sharing began may also be satisfied but it is almost impossible to prove because of the lack of available data from before the war. Regardless, Australian support for the war did not plummet when anti-American sentiment began to spread. Public support for Vietnam was high at the beginning of the conflict with 61% of the public approving of the initial deployment of advisors to Vietnam and Thailand.<sup>56</sup> Public support for the war remained about 50% until April of 1969; however, by April of 1970 only 10% of the public wanted the Australian troops to stay in Vietnam until the end.<sup>57</sup> This dramatic drop mimics the rise in anti-American sentiment through the Australian Labor Party and the country that would be accelerated by the Tet Offensive in 1968, and later by the publication of the details of the My Lai Massacre over the year.<sup>58</sup> These atrocities, combined with the set-in of war fatigue, caused the people to view the Vietnam War as an American war that they did not need to fight which effectively eliminated public support for the war.<sup>59</sup> Although impression spread rapidly through public discourse, the Australia people still supported the war until the government removed troops in 1973.

The removal of troops before the drop in public support exemplifies the importance of the precondition of the government valuing America because in 1969 when public opinion was still high (50%) the government decided to recall troops from Vietnam. The Australian government

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 430.

<sup>56</sup> Hall, Robert. "Gallup polls #2 – Australian support for Vietnam deployment." University of New South Wales – Sydney. (March, 2020).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Bloomfield, Alan, and Nossal, Kim Richard. "End of an Era? Anti-Americanism in the Australian Labor Party." 598.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 598, 608.

no longer saw this commitment to the US effort as vital to sustaining a beneficial US relationship and the ALP moved away from its pro-America stance. In conclusion, the decision that Australia made to support the US efforts in Vietnam was based on the importance of the support to the Americans and the opportunity to strengthen its American alliance. This was only made possible by the Australian people recognizing the threat of the spread of communism from the north.

*Alternative Explanation:*

It could be argued that Australia was not advising and fighting in Vietnam for the sake of strengthening its US alliance but instead because it was a beneficiary of the liberal system that the United States was trying to protect in Vietnam. As previously established the identities of the Australian people are closely tied to those of the British people and the western world. Therefore, when the liberal political system they identified with was under attack, it fought to protect it.

Statements by Menzies pushed the idea that fighting against communism was fighting for the Australian freedoms that the people took for granted. In his address at the Australian – American Association’s 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary dinner in October 1965, Menzies applauded US acceptance of its great power role in the Post WWII world and went on to say, "the defense of freedom which, in the long run, make no mistake, is our own defense." This speech recognizes that Australia’s efforts to fight with the United States were efforts to protect the freedom of the people of the world, as that was the best way to protect its “freedom”, or liberal political system.<sup>60</sup> In that same speech, he would further emphasize this point by stating, "... the freedom

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<sup>60</sup> Menzies, Robert, “Speech at The Australian-American Association 25th Anniversary Dinner Held at Melbourne.” Speech. Melbourne, Australia. 29 October 1965.

of man is not a local prerequisite, and it can't be defended in isolation."<sup>61</sup> His conviction furthers the conclusion that Canberra could have been fighting for the continuation of the liberal world order.

Additionally, Australia was not only fighting communism alongside the United States. They fought with the United Kingdom against the expansion of communism in Borneo and Malay too.<sup>62</sup> This is evidence that Australia was fighting to protect the world from communism. Communism was as a big threat to Australia. The fight in Vietnam against communism was dual purposed. It was for Australia's security and to maintain alliances that were helping to protect them from that threat. Australia's handling of the threat of communism on two different fronts shows where its priorities lie. Australia had been a long-term ally of the British and was loyal to its commitments thereby supporting the efforts in Borneo and Malaya. However, in December 1963, the British requested Australian troops for the first time and Australia denied its request.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, within a year Australia agreed to send troops to Vietnam to support the United States in a conflict that was much newer. Australia eventually got involved on both fronts but its demonstration that the American effort was more important indicated that communism was not the only reason they were going to war.

In conclusion, there is evidence to support this alternative where Australia took on its share of the burden simply to ensure that it would be able to continue to benefit from the liberal system. However, there are large holes in this argument, Australia was not involved diplomatically or militarily in every conflict against communism just those where its allies were. Also, there is no justification in this explanation for why Australia chose to fight alongside the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Blaxland, John. *The Australian Army from Whitlam to Howard*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Edwards. "Australia and the Vietnam War." 89.

United States in Vietnam instead of remaining a dutiful follower of Britain's lead. Both were fighting for that liberal identity; however, Australia saw the United States as the ally to which it most needed to show support. In conclusion, Australia went to war in Vietnam because of how important the United States was to it; not because of how important the liberal world was.

### **Case 2: Australia in Iraq**

After Vietnam, Australia and the United States maintained its new relationship, even as pro-American sentiment ebbed and flowed. In 2002, the conversation about a potential war in Iraq began to gain momentum. Intelligence suggested that the Iraqi government was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. The intelligence on the matter was inconclusive and each country had a different opinion on the reality of the situation in Iraq. As a result, international powers debated whether it should come to the US's aid. Long-term allies such as France decided against assistance, where Britain and smaller powers such as Poland and Australia chose to help out. This was a much more controversial decision and the international implications for joining the fight were greater than those for staying home as both the UN and NATO opposed the mission. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the US, assisted by the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland, invaded Iraq. At the peak of conflict Australia contributed 900 troops, and over the course of the war they would spend \$1.7 billion on the war effort.<sup>64</sup> Why did Australia, a geographically removed, smaller power answer America's call to action when so many others ignored it? The unpredictability of the decision makes this case especially telling of how important the US alliance is to Australia.

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<sup>64</sup> Davidson, Jason. "The Costs of War to United States Allies Since 9/11." *Cost of War Project*. Forthcoming 2021. 7-8.

*Theoretical Explanation:*

Many theorists studied the rationale behind Australia's decision to join in the Iraq war since the decision was made partly because other US allies comparable to Australia in many ways almost all choose the alternative. For example, Canada and Australia are incredibly similar in terms of size, history, culture, economy, and quality of life and Canada chose to stay home.<sup>65</sup> In the end, the increased value that the American alliance, and its fear of being abandoned, pushed Australia into the war. Strengthening the alliance with Washington was a primary goal of Prime Minister John Howard's administration when they made the decision to join the US-led coalition.<sup>66</sup> There was an increased American appreciation for Australia after Australia provided aid to the US-led operations in Vietnam<sup>67</sup> in the 1960s; and the government knew coming to the aid of the United States could help the alliance again. When Australia joined the coalition, theoretically, they decreased the chances of US abandonment. Consequently, Howard understood the importance and standing beside the United States in Iraq.

The influence of the alliance is clear in PM Howard's addresses to the nation where he repeatedly emphasized the importance of assisting the United States as well. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003, he reminded the Australian people, "...that no nation is more important to our long-term security than that of the United States."<sup>68</sup> Later that week, after the invasion began, he furthered that justified the decision by arguing the US alliance would only grow more important.<sup>69</sup> In both

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<sup>65</sup> O'Connor, Brendon, and Vucetic, Srdjan. "Another Mars-Venus Divide? Why Australia Said 'yes' and Canada Said 'non' to Involvement in the 2003 Iraq War." 539.

<sup>66</sup> John Howard, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister The Hon John Howard MP, Address to the National Press Club, The Great Hall, Parliament House,' 13 March 2003

<sup>67</sup> Cox, Lloyd, and O'Connor, Brendon. "Australia, the US, and the Vietnam and Iraq Wars: 'Hound Dog, Not Lapdog'." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (2012): 182.

<sup>68</sup> John Howard, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister The Hon John Howard MP, Address to the National Press Club, The Great Hall, Parliament House,' 13 March 2003

<sup>69</sup> John Howard, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister The Hon John Howard MP: Address to the Nation,' 20 March 2003.

instances, Howard justifies the decision to join the efforts in Iraq as a fight against more than terrorism. The importance of remaining in the good graces of the Americas was a major factor that led Australia into the conflict.

Moreover, there was concern that the United States would not emerge from Iraq with success and the international system would question the benefits of US power and therefore the status of its alliance would be affected.<sup>70</sup> The concerns about the impact of this conflict on US power, translate into concerns of abandonment. If failed involvement tarnished the US', then the security guarantees that Australia benefits from in the alliance would also diminish. The severe devaluation of US security guarantees leaves Australia defenseless against future threats.

Australian decision-makers understood the important role of American power in the protection of Australia and the increased risks if the United States was seen as vulnerable. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute agreed with this sentiment as they wrote the reason success was important to Australia included the future "confidence of our major ally."<sup>71</sup> Its cooperation increased the legitimacy of the coalition entering Iraq, increasing the likelihood that the United States would walk away still powerful even if they lost as typically multilateral action is more supported. Australian strategists highly valued the US alliance under its current conditions, with the United States as a hegemon. So, its cooperation in Iraq was also a fight to maintain that highly valuable alliance.

The nature of Australian involvement demonstrates that Australia was in Iraq to support the United States. First, in a report composed by the directorate of Army Research and Analysis in Australia, there is an outline of the five strategic objectives for Australian defense forces

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<sup>70</sup> Lyon, Rod. "Iraq, Bush and Australia." *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*. 2007. 1

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

which include, “demonstrate support for Australia’s alliance with the United States.”<sup>72</sup> The United States and Australia’s operations were deeply intertwined to the point that ballistic and electronic protection kits were removed from American aircraft and offered to ADF.<sup>73</sup> The close relationship between the United States and Australian military displays Australia’s dependence on US military support and why this alliance is important to maintain.

The push to emphasize the potential security threat attempted to create enough public support for the conflict that Howard would not lose his legitimacy. PM Howard said himself, “if terrorists ever get their hands on weapons of mass destruction that will, in [his] very passionate belief and argument, constitute a direct, undeniable, and lethal threat to Australia and its people.”<sup>74</sup> This rhetoric of a major WMD threat mimicked the United States and British stance. However, various intelligence organizations around the world perceived the threat differently. France had concluded there was no real threat because while Iraq may have WMDs, there was insufficient evidence to suggest they would be used or passed off the terrorist organizations.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand the UK and the United States spoke as if they had irrefutable evidence that there was no bigger threat to the world. Furthermore, two of the Five Eyes, Canada and New Zealand chose not to join the war effort in Iraq despite having access to the same intelligence. Australia chose to fully support the US’s interpretation and response to the intelligence when there were other options that were less costly.<sup>76</sup> The difference between Australia and New Zealand or

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<sup>72</sup> Palazzo, Albert. “The Australian Army and the War in Iraq: 2002-2010” Directorate of Army Research and Analysis, March 2011. 38.

<sup>73</sup> Palazzo, Albert. “The Australian Army and the War in Iraq: 2002-2010.” 266.

<sup>74</sup> Howard, John ‘Transcript of the Prime Minister The Hon John Howard MP, Address to the National Press Club, The Great Hall, Parliament House,’ 13 March 2003

<sup>75</sup> Cogan, Charles. “The Iraq Crisis and France: Heaven-Sent Opportunity or Problem from Hell?” French Politics, Culture & Society 22, no. 3 (2004): 130

<sup>76</sup> Doig, Alan, Pfiffner, James P, Phythian, Mark, and Tiffen, Rodney. “Marching in Time: Alliance Politics, Synchrony and the Case for War in Iraq, 2002-2003.” Australian Journal of International Affairs 61, no. 1 (2007). 32.

Canada that made them side with the United States and UK, is that Australia has a greater fear of abandonment than Canada and a great military dependence on the United States than New Zealand both of which increase the alliance valuation for Australia. Therefore, the Australians had more to lose by ignoring the American interpretation of the intelligence. Australia's relationship with the United States pushed them into war.

It is important to note that the threat to Australian national security may have influenced the decision to enter the conflict. The concern that terrorist organizations may gain access to these dangerous weapons was concerning. However, it was a threat to the entire Western world, many of whom only supported the conflict with monetary aid. Even more so, the existence of a threat calls a state to action, but the high alliance valuation of the United States for Australia influenced how they reacted to the threat. In this case it pushed them to address the threat alongside the United States to strengthen the alliance.

In a poll conducted in January 2003, 61% of the Australian public opposed US-Australian military action in Iraq.<sup>77</sup> However, as the conversation continued over the next months, and Howard repeatedly spoke on the topic, about the importance of the US, and the existence of a threat public opinion slightly shifted. In early March, 42-48.5% disapproved of Australian involvement in Iraq a 20-point drop in disapproval in less than three months.<sup>78</sup> The Australian public also valued its American counterpart and rallied behind them. After the conflict began, still in March, only 38% of the Australian population opposed the war in Iraq.<sup>79</sup> Howard understood the importance of going to war alongside the American military and so when the people initially disapproved of the conflict, he fully committed resources to change their minds.

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<sup>77</sup> O'Connor, Brendon, and Vucetic, Srdjan. "Another Mars-Venus Divide? Why Australia Said 'yes' and Canada Said 'non' to Involvement in the 2003 Iraq War." 535.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.



*An explanation for withdrawal:*

Australian military involvement in Iraq ended before the war ended. They were not alone, other countries also pulled out as it became clear that the weapons that caused the invasion did not exist. In June of 2008, Australia was pulling troops out of Iraq because of a change in valuation of the US alliance by the public. They were not ending involvement in the region because support for the American alliance was still present, but it was not as strong. As the theory argues, the higher the alliance valuation the more willing a state is to be entrapped. The people vocalizing their opinions on ending the war in Iraq, but they still valued their alliance with the United States, a Lowy Institute Poll shows that while support for the US alliance dramatically dropped in 2007 and 2008 the Australians that valued the US alliance were still in the majority.<sup>80</sup>

The election of a new leader also without the dedication to the American alliance also signaled a change in positioning in Iraq.<sup>81</sup> Security wise, the Australians still wanted peace and stability in Iraq and the Middle East<sup>82</sup>; however, the people began to support the Australian Labor Party's belief that such a change would come from within Iraq and not from Australian soldiers.<sup>83</sup> Canberra also wanted to ensure the alliance with the United States was maintained but was not as dedicated to increasing the alliance as the previous administration. This is seen through its concern with the appearance of ending involvement.<sup>84</sup> Its concern with the American perception of its removal is especially evident.

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<sup>80</sup> "Importance of the US alliance." Lowy Institute Poll 2020. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/importance-of-the-us-alliance/>

<sup>81</sup> Davidson, Jason. "Heading for the Exits: Democratic Allies and Withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan", *Democracy and Security* 10, no. 3 (2014): 259.

<sup>82</sup> Lyon, Rod. "Iraq, Bush and Australia." 1

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

The Australian Labor Party won the election after the new Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, ran on the promise of bringing Australia home. And he followed through on that promise.<sup>85</sup> Coming through on that promise took almost a year under Rudd's leadership. More so, the day that Australia began withdrawing troops, PM Rudd promised that Australia was not abandoning the US-led effort and would return in the form of reconstruction forces, which they did.<sup>86</sup> In the US, troop reduction efforts were in full effect and George Bush's replacement in 2008 would be more focused on ending the conflict in Iraq. This gave Rudd the leeway to reshape the Australian commitment into an uninvolved force without losing the goodwill of its American ally.<sup>87</sup> So while Australia did pull out before the United States, the move still followed the lead of the US. This is important because Australia was not no longer willing to burden share, instead they wanted a lesser commitment.

While Rudd never makes a statement to this effect, if the Iraq coalition was no longer of concern to the Australian people, then the country would remove itself from Iraq immediately as any involvement was against the wishes of NATO or the UN. It is also important to note that Australia sustained a contingency in Afghanistan after pulling out, continuing to support the US's efforts in the Middle East.

The Australian government highly valued their alliance with the United States, and the public understood both the threat to national security as well as the desire to help the US. So, Australia assisted its American ally's mission in Iraq. When the decision to join the war had to be made, PM Howard desired to continue the tradition of strong Australian-American relations

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<sup>85</sup> "Australian PM Rebuffs Arguments for Iraq War." *France 24*. June 2, 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Kerin, John. "Has Rudd Backed the Wrong War?" *Australian Financial Review*. AFR, June 7, 2008; "Australian PM Rebuffs Arguments for Iraq War." *France 24*, June 2, 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Holland, Jack. "Selling the War on Terror Foreign Policy Discourses after 9/11." *Critical Terrorism Studies*. New York: Routledge (2012): 172.

despite the cost to the Australian people. Once Australia decided this, the Australian people continued to support Howard, as they too had elected him under the guise that he would revitalize the US alliance which could only be done through intervention.<sup>88</sup> Then, as the war continues, the public maintained its desire to assist the United States even though it did not support the conflict. They voted out the Howard government and replaced him with Rudd who ran on the platform of ending violence in Iraq. It took Rudd one year to begin withdrawing troops in 2008. Within that year it became evident that the US administration was changing its tactics in Iraq, as a result of the upcoming change in administration, and so could Australia. Throughout the conflict, Australia continued to support its American allies. Even though the public no longer recognized a national security threat from Iraq, they supported its connection to the US. The war changed because of the lack of threat but because the second condition was still satisfied Australia did not have to completely pull out. Australia supported a presence in the region and returned to Iraq to help with reconstruction, an effort that still helped the United States achieve its strategic goals.

*Alternative Explanation:*

Australia's intervention may have been an effort to protect the liberal world order that they benefit from, and an attempt for them to protect its core values and identity. The situation in Iraq risked increased instability in the world, which is concerning. Also, when coupled with the potential to sell weapons to terrorists, it exposed a concern that terrorist potential to attack western ideologies would only grow. When pitching the war to the Australian people, Howard assured the people, "[Australian] troops are going to defend what this society believes to be

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 66.

right.”<sup>89</sup> Howard strategically pushed the Australian people to support intervention through appealing to the Australian identity of wanting to be a benevolent power and calling on the emotions of his people and justifying conflict through the protection of freedoms.

The Australian conversation on the intervention in Iraq undeniably included a conversation about its allies. Howard used the similar histories of the United States and Britain to foster us – versus – them mentality amongst the Australia people.<sup>90</sup> He wanted their common values to bring them together against Iraq and other non-Western countries.<sup>91</sup> Its alliance with the United States was important, but it was important because of its shared values and not the security guarantees that the United States granted Australia according to this representation of the relationship.

Additionally, there was the rationalization that this war was to protect the reputation of the United Nations, regardless of whether the UN approved. First Bush and then Howard, pointed out that Iraq had ignored the requests by the UN for inspection and disarmament and this was a "challenge to the efficacy of the UN."<sup>92</sup> Their efforts were an effort to prevent the UN from being seen in the same light as its predecessor, the League of Nations. However, the invasion of Iraq was also a challenge to the efficacy of the UN as it took place without UN Security Council authorization breaking international law. Therefore, it appears this rhetoric was simply another way for Howard to gain the support of the Australian people.

The role that identity had to play in the decision that Australia made to join the US coalition does appear to be limited. While Howard made obvious efforts to appeal to identity

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<sup>89</sup> Holland, Jack. "Selling the War on Terror Foreign Policy Discourses after 9/11." 67.

<sup>90</sup> McDonald, Matt, and Merefield, Matt. "How Was Howard's War Possible? Winning the War of Position over Iraq." 188.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 196

<sup>92</sup> Holland, Jack. *Selling the War on Terror Foreign Policy Discourses after 9/11*. Critical Terrorism Studies. New York: Routledge, 2012. 139.

politics, his conservative party won elections because they were, “over all that identity stuff.”<sup>93</sup> So, either the party’s portrayal of identity was performative, or Howard’s appeal to identity was. The Labor government in power before Howard often pointed to the importance of Australia’s role as a “good international citizen.”<sup>94</sup> Matthew McDonald and Matthew Merefield’s 2010 assessment of his rhetoric proposes that it was a display to gain public support for a war effort so that it would be possible.<sup>95</sup> Howard said what he needed to so public opinion would not be preventative. Retrospective analysis of the Australian decision demonstrates the impact of the US alliance on the decision to intervene.

### **Case 3: Australian Balancing Against China**

As the previous cases established, Australian security is deeply intertwined with its American ally. However, in recent years Australian economic stability grew increasingly dependent on the export of energy to Chinese. In 2007, Chinese had already invested over \$100 billion in uranium and natural gas contracts making them a critical part of the Australian energy sector and its influence has only grown.<sup>96</sup> Despite the increase of Chinese economic influence in Australia, Australia does not consider China an ally by any means. Australia participated in balancing efforts against the growing power of China throughout for more than 15 years. This includes the establishment of US military bases in Australia’s northern territory to face the threat.

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<sup>93</sup> McDonald, Matt, and Merefield, Matt. "How Was Howard's War Possible? Winning the War of Position over Iraq." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 2 (2010): 195.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 191.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 201

<sup>96</sup> Cobb, Adam. "Balancing Act: Australia's Strategic Relations with China and the United States." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2007): 71.

In reaction to the expansion of Chinese power, Australia remains faithful to the United States, however, the degree to which an administration has sided with the United States has varied. Initially, in 2003, that Australian strategy in US-Chinese affairs was to treat the two as equally as possible.<sup>97</sup> This went as far as Australia remaining neutral on issues such as Taiwan.<sup>98</sup> The policy shifted in 2009 when then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd began emphasizing the threat of Chinese expansion and its potential detriment to Australia.<sup>99</sup> Then in 2013, the next Prime Minister Julia Gillard walked back Rudd's warning and repositioned Australia as relatively unaligned on the issue.<sup>100</sup> And in 2018, another Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull spoke at the University of New South Wales noting that "the security and peace of the region has been underpinned by the United States" but goes on to remark, "Just as it is a mistake to assume that China will assume, vis a vis the United States, the role of the Soviet Union in the Cold War or for that matter, that the United States and its allies would or should seek to contain China."<sup>101</sup> This statement positioned Australia comfortably between the two powers. It recognized the importance of the United States for regional stability while attempting to calm Chinese paranoia that America's presence will be inherently threatening.

Australia was in the middle of a battle for power with its position between the United States and China. It was not always clear that the Australian efforts would help the United States maintain balance instead of aiding the Chinese effort to throw off the balance. Jaebeom Kwon notes that politicians and academics discussed whether siding with the Americans was the right

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<sup>97</sup> Terada, Takashi. "Australia and China's Rise: Ambivalent and Inevitable Balancing." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 134.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Walters, Patrick. "The Making of the 2009 Defence White Paper." *Security Challenges* 5, no. 2 (2009). 4.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Turnbull, Malcolm. Speech at the University of New South Wales. UNSW. July 2018.

choice.<sup>102</sup> They warned Australia against increasing its dependence on the United States because of the increasing unreliability of American guarantees under the Trump presidency.<sup>103</sup>

In the last two years, the country aggressively moved to balance with the United States and other concerned allies in the region, despite potentially hurting its relationship with China. The establishment of the Darwin base in Northern Australia is one example of Australia's military burden-sharing.<sup>104</sup> When the Minister of Defence Maurice Payne defended this project in 2016 she argued it was need because it is, “consistent with Australia’s longstanding strategic interests in supporting US engagement in our region in a manner that promotes regional security and stability.”<sup>105</sup> Note that the primary rationale for the base is to support the American alliance. The role the base can play in regional security is presented as a secondary benefit of the base.

Following this pattern, US military presence is steadily increasing. As of 2019, American stationed 2500 American men and women in 2019 in Australia, and the plan is for the US station to grow as agreed upon in 2012.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Australia continues to buy US planes and technology increasing its dependence on the US military.<sup>107</sup> They are conducting an increasing number of military exercises with Australia. In 2005, they began Exercise Talisman Saber which has grown since 2010 becoming the largest multilateral drill for Australia to date in 2015.<sup>108</sup> Australia also joined the American military in exercise with the Philippines in 2014 and

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<sup>102</sup> Kwon, Jaebeom. "When the Kangaroo Encounters the Flying Dragon: The Growth of Balancing Elements in Australia's China Policy." *Pacific Focus* 35, no. 3 (2020): 512.

<sup>103</sup> Chan, Lai-Ha. “Hedging or Balancing? Australia and New Zealand’s Differing China Strategies.” *The Diplomat*. July 14, 2020

<sup>104</sup> Terada, Takashi. "Australia and China's Rise: Ambivalent and Inevitable Balancing." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 143.

<sup>105</sup> “US agrees to share cost of American military presence in Australia's Northern Territory” *The Guardian*. 6 October 2016. Accessed April 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/oct/07/us-agrees-to-share-cost-of-american-military-presence-in-australias-northern-territory>

<sup>106</sup> Kwon, Jaebeom. "When the Kangaroo Encounters the Flying Dragon: The Growth of Balancing Elements in Australia's China Policy." 510.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 511.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

with France and the United Kingdom in 2018.<sup>109</sup> This build-up sends a message to the United States that Australia is committed to fighting with them when the time comes. If the American alliance loses its value, Australia will look elsewhere for military assistance as it is currently dependent on the United States or limit its military demonstration in the north of the continent to minimize Chinese reactions to it.

Regardless of the extent, the Australian government is under the impression that its American alliance is key to its security as a nation. So, irrespective of the potential economic consequences, Australia will continue to balance against China in the region to show good faith toward the United States if the public recognizes the threat posed by China or the value of the US alliance.

*Theoretical Explanation:*

I recognize that this case involves the most substantial threat to Australian security, and some will see it as less burden-sharing with the United States effort and more of an issue of a genuine threat to Australian national security. Chinese expansion is a threat to Australia as it grows more aggressive in its government interference and threaten regional stability.<sup>110</sup> The fact that China is a threat motivates Australia to protect itself; however, the high value of the American alliance motivates Australia to protect itself through burden-sharing. In this instance, Australia is sharing the burden of balancing China with the United States, Japan, and others. This balancing is imperative to its long-term survival in the region. The burden-sharing specifically with the United States is happening because of the government's understanding that its American

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Carr, Bob. "The Shrinking 'Quad': How the alliance is going nowhere as Japan and India Court China" *South China Morning Post*. 17 May 2018.



alliance will keep them afloat in the face of this threat and future ones. Arguably, if Australia chose to distance itself from the United States the reactions from the Chinese could be lesser as the United States is also China's number one opponent on the world stage.

Australia had options in how it would react to the threat and the fact that it chose a costly option in siding with the United States speaks to the role of alliance valuation. New Zealand, a comparable country to Australia with fewer military linkages to Washington, remained neutral on the issue to stay in the good graces of the Chinese and the Americans.<sup>111</sup> This was a practical path for the Australians as well. In 2018, both Australia and New Zealand decided to ban Huawei, a Chinese telecom company, from installing 5G networks in their countries.<sup>112</sup> Each country's framing of the issue called for different reactions from the Chinese. New Zealand dubbed the decision "country-agnostic" and as a result, China had no noticeable reaction. However, Australia justified its decision based on national security concerns, and in reaction, China banned the import of Australian coal.<sup>113</sup> The Australian intelligence network that led the public charge against Huawei hurt its economic relationship with China. The potential reactions of the Chinese to the balancing steps that Australia is making could cripple the Australian economy. China cannot afford to stop buying Australian iron ore, but it can sanction other Australian goods which would quickly become costly for the Australians.<sup>114</sup> Despite this Australia continues to speak out against China on issues like its poor treatment of citizens of Hong Kong, increased tensions with Taiwan and any other issue that the United States also felt

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<sup>111</sup> Chan, Lai-Ha. "Hedging or Balancing? Australia and New Zealand's Differing China Strategies." *The Diplomat*. July 14, 2020

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Bryan-Low, Cassell, Colin Packham, David Lague, Steve Stecklow, Jack Stubbs. "The China Challenge: The 5G Fight" *Reuters. Canberra*. May 21, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> Needham, Kirsty. "Australia Faces Down China in High-Stakes Strategy." *Reuters. Canberra*. September 4, 2020.

strongly about.<sup>115</sup> Each of which ricks increased backlash from China. Had the Australians prioritized its economic balance and short-term security it may be more cautious in its balancing efforts, like New Zealand. However, its decision to assertively act against China pushed them closer to the United States creating yet another opportunity to improve the alliance. Each time China reacts to Australian moves, Canberra gets slightly more dependent on Washington. We know this is the rationale from assessing the priorities of the government at the time.

In the 2020 strategic update to the Australian 2016 White Paper, Australia repeatedly commits to the United States both in general terms and in reaction to the China situation. The paper states, “Defense will continue to strengthen its engagement with Australia’s international partners in support of shared regional security interests and will continue to deepen Australia’s alliance with the United States.”<sup>116</sup> This demonstrates that one of the country's main objectives to increase and maintain its American alliance. In the following pages, the government continues to credit the United States with the stability of the region and asserts Australia's support for American involvement.<sup>117</sup> Reiterating that its decision to address the issue in conjunction with the United States instead of parallel to it because of how important the United States is to the country.

Australia’s commitment to the revitalization of the Quadrilateral Alliance, or the Quad, is also evidence that the alliance with the United States motivates its decision-making process. The Quad is an alliance between Australia, America, India, and Japan in their efforts to balance China. The powers created it in reaction to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami as a relief effort and

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> “2020 Defense Update.” Commonwealth of Australia. 2020. Accessed April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
<https://www1.defence.gov.au/strategy-policy/strategic-update-2020>

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 22.

molded into an informal alliance by 2007.<sup>118</sup> In the years since creation the informal alliance faded and in 2017 Japan and the United States began their attempts at revitalizing the alliance to balance China and remove them as the primary threat to regional stability. During this time there were major concerns that the United States was an unreliable ally from India and Japan.<sup>119</sup> It was concerned that being part of an alliance that is a blatant balancing coalition that would threaten China. Despite this concern, Australia has focused on the benefits is increasing the links that Washington has to the Indo-Pacific region, which was especially important as the major ally was extremely unpredictable at that time when Japan and India were not always so hopeful.<sup>120</sup> Australia did not leave the United States behind when it was unpredictable because as the value of the American alliance was still high even if it need to be reassured through another commitment like the Quad.

Australia's high level of commitment to the United States also comes with concern that the United States will abandon them in its time of need.<sup>121</sup> As Snyder points out, higher dependence means a higher willingness to be entrapped.<sup>122</sup> Consequently, upon the US' request Australia and Japan began working on improving their interconnectedness. Their increased interaction is a direct result of the United States asking for the "spikes" of its Pacific network to connect.<sup>123</sup> The two hoped their compliance with the requests of the United States would invite Washington to increase its involvement in the area.<sup>124</sup> In 2016, the Australians and the Japanese

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<sup>118</sup> Percy, Sarah. "Maritime Crime in the Indian Ocean: The role of the Quad" *Centre of Gravity Series*. 39. 2018. 24

<sup>119</sup> Graham, Euan. "The Quad deserves its Second Chance." *Centre of Gravity Series* 39. 2018. 6

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Pollmann, M. Erika, and Tidwell, Alan. "Australia's Submarine Technology Cooperation with Japan as Burden-sharing with the USA in the Asia-Pacific." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69, no. 4 (2015): 395., Kwon, Jaebeom. "When the Kangaroo Encounters the Flying Dragon: The Growth of Balancing Elements in Australia's China Policy." 14.

<sup>122</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 471.

<sup>123</sup> Pollmann, M. Erika, and Tidwell, Alan. "Australia's Submarine Technology Cooperation with Japan as Burden-sharing with the USA in the Asia-Pacific." 397.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.406.

attempted to prove their commitment to the United States through tri-lateral security talks on the issue of China expansion.<sup>125</sup> The Australians and Japanese steadily built a relationship as the two nations grow closer to the United States and more dependent on its military for protection. The efforts on behalf of the Japanese and Australians here show that when their major ally makes a request, it will increase its burden-sharing effort to contest Chinese expansion together.

If Australia were just addressing threat, it would likely be building up as many alliances as it can in the region. However, the only major efforts made to balance have been with the United States, or under the direction of the United States. This continues as Australia signed a \$580 million deal with Washington to improve the four northern bases and increase wargaming,<sup>126</sup> while still making minimal connections with other allies. At the peak of American unreliability Australia was still hesitate to make agreements with other powers.

This case exemplifies the importance of balancing fear of abandonment as well. Just after the 2016 security talks with the United States, the Donald Trump won the US election and allies began to question the foreign policy commitments of the United States. The new administration presented the United States as an unreliable ally and as a direct result South Korea and Japan both took part in security talks with China in 2018. The alliance value of the United States had diminished as Japan and South Korea did not believe the United States was willing to ensure their security and Japan and South Korea needed to look for a new major power ally.<sup>127</sup> Then, in March of 2021, with the Biden administration in power the earlier foreign policy commitments

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<sup>125</sup> Kwon, Jaebeom. "When the Kangaroo Encounters the Flying Dragon: The Growth of Balancing Elements in Australia's China Policy.", 514

<sup>126</sup> Jose, Renju and Colin Packham. "Targeting Asia-Pacific defence, Australia to spend \$580 mln on military upgrades". *Reuters*. 28 April 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-upgrade-military-bases-expand-wargames-with-us-australian-2021-04-27/>

<sup>127</sup> Carr, Bob. "The Shrinking 'Quad': How the alliance is going nowhere as Japan and India Court China "

of the United States to restored and Washington reaffirmed their committed to these two nations.<sup>128</sup>

Australia never truly considered siding with China and this could result from the similar western cultures between the United States and Australia. Their aligned particular interests upheld the alliance value, so it did not drop as low in Japan and South Korea which have different cultural values. There is an ideal amount of doubt for countries to have in its alliance with Washington, however too much doubt and allies can turn to adversaries.

This theory also functions on the basis that the public must either appreciate the importance of the American alliance or the threat of Chinese expansion. The Lowy Institute completes surveys each year on various issues including Australian public opinion on China. These polls show us that public opinion sees both the importance of the American alliance and mistrusts the Chinese. First, a Lowy poll completed on the importance of the US alliance in 2020 showed that 71% of Australians viewed its alliance with the United States as important to Australian security. And overall, 43% view the American alliance as “very important.”<sup>129</sup> This poll also shows that the percent of Australians that highly value the alliance has remained over 70% since 2008 and above 50% since before 2005. Also, in a 2019 poll on superpower relations, 50% of Australians believed that the Australian government should put America as a higher priority despite potential harm to the Chinese alliance while only 44% voted for the inverse.<sup>130</sup> The people recognize the value of their alliance with the United States.

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<sup>128</sup> Greer, Tanner. “Biden’s First Foreign Policy Crisis is Already Here.”

<sup>129</sup> “Importance of the US alliance.” Lowy Institute Poll 2020. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/importance-of-the-us-alliance/>

<sup>130</sup> “Relations with superpowers.” Lowy Institute Poll 2020. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/relations-with-superpowers>

The Australians are not as decisive on what types of military actions should be allowed under the ANZUS treaty the people showed that as of 2020, 63% of Australians did not believe that it should join in military efforts in Asia for the sake of the US security alliance.<sup>131</sup> This shows that the public's willingness to fight for the alliance is limited; but it is not preventative. The Lowy Institute's poll shows that as of 2020, views of China as more of an economic partner than an adversary are still the majority but the group that sees China as a threat is steadily growing.<sup>132</sup> 12% of the population saw China as more of a threat in 2018 but in 2020, 41% of the population believes that. Another poll from the Pew Research center on countries' trust in China demonstrates this same pattern and concluded that in 2020, 81% of Australians view China unfavorably.<sup>133</sup>

The uptick in the number of people that view China as threatening has been a result of Canberra publicizing Chinese cyberattacks on Australian soil and a public backlash to communist bribery in Australia.<sup>134</sup> While the public recognition of the threat is new, the understanding of the importance of the American alliance is established and satisfied the condition for burden-sharing before threat was recognized. In conclusion, the Australian public both values the American alliance and sees a threat from the Chinese expansion; therefore, eliminating any hurdle the government may encounter in its effort to burden share with the

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<sup>131</sup> "Military action under ANZUS." Lowy Institute Poll 2020. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/military-action-under-anzus>

<sup>132</sup> "China: economic partner or security threat." Lowy Institute Poll 2020. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/china-economic-partner-or-security-threat/>

<sup>133</sup> Silver, Laura, Kat Devlin, Christine Huang. "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries." *Pew Research Center*. 6 October 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/>

<sup>134</sup> Greer, Tanner. "Biden's First Foreign Policy Crisis is Already Here" *Foreign Policy*. 10 December 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/10/biden-china-australia-threats-first-foreign-policy-crisis/>

United States. Therefore, the Australian government will continue to burden share until public opinion changes, or the government's opinion on the American alliance changes.

The Australian government and people both see China as a threat to its well-being because of its disregard for the rules of the international system and increasing aggression in the region. Therefore, it will work to balance the growing Chinese power. The government then had to decide how the Australians would fend off Chinese influence in the region. Because of its high valuation of the US alliance, this was seen as another opportunity to show the Washington that Canberra has and will continue to side with the United States when the United States needs them.

*Alternative Explanation:*

Another explanation for why Australia chose this path of burden-sharing may be that it is protecting the identity and values that benefit it. The ideological difference between the Chinese and the Australians are numerous and, as seen in the Vietnam case, the Australian people strongly identify with its western peers instead of its regional neighbors.<sup>135</sup> Therefore with the rise of China, Canberra may feel as though its identity and the liberal world order are threatened. Malcolm Turnbull told China, in a now-famous radio interview for a Sydney radio station 2GB, "We are an open-trading nation, mate, but I'm never going to trade our values in response to coercion from wherever it comes."<sup>136</sup> Australia is protecting its values, and, in many ways, those values are that of liberal world order.

Additionally, Erika Pollmann et al. (2015) writes on the topic of the burgeoning relationship between Australia and Japan as a result of them both aligning with the United States

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<sup>135</sup> Greenwood, Gordon. "Australian Attitudes Towards Pacific Problems." 165

<sup>136</sup> Needham, Kirsty. "Australia Faces Down China in High-Stakes Strategy." *Reuters. Canberra*. September 4, 2020.

against China. She makes a point to emphasize, “While being solidly grounded in such mundane concerns, USA–Australia– Japan cooperation is also unique and transcendent from a ‘realist’ perspective because it is deliberately being constructed based on a common liberal democratic identity and underpinned by shared values.”<sup>137</sup> This is strong support for the idea that Australia is protecting its identity and the world order. However, it may be that identity which makes the, a target. Australia, Japan, and other allies in the region that are helping to balance with the United States are adversaries of China because its ideals do not align with China. China is not targeting other communist nations that it can already manipulate. Instead, the coalition created against China is all liberal democracy as those are the nations that are targeted.

While the argument for this alternative is strong at face value, the states fighting for the liberal international order have all violated it in recent history.<sup>138</sup> Chengxin Pan reminds onlookers that Japan is continuing to ignore international criminal court rulings on fishing laws, Australia is critiqued for its poor treatment of asylum seekers, and the United States is enforcing the UN Laws of the Sea which it has not signed onto itself.<sup>139</sup> Pan puts it best as he writes, “...defending the rules-based international order is more likely a disguise for the Quad countries to constrain China’s rise and maintain a balance of power in its favour.”<sup>140</sup> Once again we see government reframing situations to increase the public backing for it, just as we did with Vietnam and Iraq.

This justification also does not explain why Australia did not move away from the United States when other states did. Japan and India both benefit from liberal international order and

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<sup>137</sup> Pollmann, M. Erika, and Tidwell, Alan. "Australia's Submarine Technology Cooperation with Japan as Burden-sharing with the USA in the Asia-Pacific." 397.

<sup>138</sup> Pan, Chengxin, “Qualms about the Quad: Getting China Wrong” Centre of Gravity Series 39. 2018. 9.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.



began to look balance China in different ways when the United States was not seen as particularly reliable. On the other hand, the high alliance valuation that pushed Australia to react to the threat of China by burden-sharing with the United States does explain the loyalty of Australia. Protecting national security can appear as them protecting its ideology, but the means used show that the alliance with the United States decided how it would be protecting themselves.

In conclusion, while protecting its identity was important to the Australians, it had a host of Western nations to balance with that could have minimized the Chinese response to its balancing. The importance of the US alliance to the Australian government pushed them to specifically side with the US, align with nations that also had close relationships with the United States, and increase its dependence on the American military despite Chinese reactionary sanctions to such decisions. In the end, the Australians balanced against the Chinese to protect its sovereignty; and it did so with the United States because showing commitment to that alliance ensures that the United States will come to its aid if tensions reach the point of conflict.

### **Conclusion and Prescriptions**

Australia proves that it will burden share with its major power allies when the alliance is highly valued by the government and domestic public opinion shares that evaluation of the major power alliance or perceives a national security threat. The strength of the cases, with the literature, suggests this theory can be generalized to secondary allies like Australia that also have a fear of abandonment from the major power. Since World War II, Australia burden shared

in conflict with the United States because of the importance of the alliance to its longevity. The government highly valuing the American alliance and understanding the gravity of losing it drew them into the conflicts with Vietnam, Iraq, and China alongside the US. In a liberal democracy, such as Australia, the public must also be on board with burden-sharing. I argue that the public must meet at least one of the two following conditions. The public either highly values the American alliance or recognizes a national security threat posed by the adversary in the conflict.

This was first demonstrated in the case study of Vietnam. The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies', decision to involve the country in the conflict in Vietnam was the result of moving away from reliance on the United Nations. The Australians needed a new protector, and they chose the United States as its candidate. Menzies just needed to ensure that the Australian public would not oust him for his decision. The Australian people were seeing the United States in a more favorable light when the war began, and they also felt the pressure of the encroaching threat of communists. Therefore, when allowed to prove their dedication, the Australian government displayed its commitment to its new ally by contributing to the Vietnam war. It went to war for the alliance.

Again, in Iraq, when some of America's major allies decided that war was a waste of resources the Australians noticed an opportunity to demonstrate loyalty to the United States. The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, eloquently wove the importance of increasing military ties with the United States into every speech as he worked to convince his colleagues and constituents its participation in Iraq was vital. His speeches also exaggerated the potential presence of weapons of mass destruction which pushed the public in favor of assistance. As a result, the Australian people did not stand in the government's way of joining the American war effort.

The pattern continues through today as Canberra continues to tackle Chinese expansion with the United States; instead of remaining a relatively neutral entity between the largest military ally on one side and largest economically on the other, as New Zealand did; or confide in any alliance other than the number one adversary of China to address the issue. Alternatively, Canberra gradually moved closer to Washington, increased its military commitment to the US, and committed to another alliance agreements. The Australian people supported these decisions as they have an established understanding of the importance of the US alliance and the emergence of the perceived threat from China increased support. The move to side with the United States resulted in economic sanctions from the Chinese but also increased the chances that its American ally will stay in the region to fight as tensions increase. Australia continues to show its loyalty to the American alliance through burden-sharing because it is dependent on US security and fears that without consistent reassurance of its commitment the United States will abandon them.

Each of these cases shows that Australia, a secondary ally, consistently burden shares with the United States to remain in its favor because that alliance is so valuable and public opinion is not preventative. The alternative states that Australia, and other secondary allies, may get involved to protect its identity and a world order that benefits them, often established by that major power ally. However, in the case of Australia, this does not prove to be the case.

In Vietnam, Australia fought against the idea of communism and that did oppose its capitalist western identity. However, it chose to fight with Americans in Vietnam which needed men and money, while the British were also addressing the issue in a more diplomatic manner that was less costly. The decision to side with the United States was because the Australian government knew the US alliance would benefit them more. In Iraq, the war was presented to the

people as us versus them war over ideology. PM Howard called on the Australian people to fight for the freedoms of all people. However, his actions did not follow that line of thinking. Howard said what he thought would get the public on his side, even if he did not believe it. The Chinese expansion threatens Australia's western societal foundations and the rules-based order that stabilizes the region. However, Canberra also tests the boundaries of the rules-based order by violating international policy on the treatment of asylum seekers leading to the conclusion that protecting the rules-based order is a cover for protecting its security. In the long term, having remained neutral Australia could jeopardize its future alliance with the United States.

Like Australia, all other secondary allies need security and support from major powers like the United States. Therefore, when the state that ensures its security requests assistance those secondary allies will almost always respond. It will not respond if the public does not recognize either a threat to national security or the importance of the American alliance. If not, that state's protections under the major ally are at risk of decreasing. This research undertook a variety of cases but focused on one ally and so can only be generalized for the group of allies, like Australia, which have similar relationships with the United States in that it fears abandonment in the face of a new threat. These countries potentially include Poland, Japan, and South Korea. Future studies should test the necessity for the fear of abandonment to be present of this theory to hold up. Research should also look at countries, such as North Korea, that appear to be burden-sharing with China instead to see how different major powers affect this theory.

This pattern is important to recognize as China's growth moves the world closer to a bipolar system. The United States must continue to balance against the growing giant and that will be impossible without allies. The US government must understand how to ensure allies will burden share to prevent the United States from having to protect the liberal world order and

democracy on its own. Countries like Australia and Japan, which never were America's number one or two priorities, are the countries that will decide where the balance falls on this issue.

The case of balancing Chinese expansion shows that the perception of the United States can threaten the valuation of our alliance in the eyes of allies. The Australians were warned that with Donald Trump as the president of the United States would become less reliable as an ally which inherently decreased that alliance value. And so, it should maintain its middle position and act as a common ally for both the United States and China.<sup>141</sup> While Canberra did not heed this advice, other countries did as Japan and South Korea entertained security talks with China. The United States needs to prevent this and restore the faith others have in their commitments. America must show that it values secondary allies and America will show up for them if it shows up for us.

This study showed that if America wants allies to come to our aid in future conflicts, then the United States must reassure its allies' governments and populations that US security commitments are reliable, and that America is an important ally to have. In the situation with Australia a little doubt is constant because of geography, and with most secondary allies the unknown number of priorities America puts before them creates sufficient doubt. There must a balance as with too much doubt these middle powers look elsewhere for protection like Australia moved away from Britain during the Cold War.

This reestablishment of the United States as a reliable and important ally requires the Washington to resume its deep engagement in international affairs. The United States' establishment of close military relations with Australia during peacetime allowed us to foster the relationship that causes them to intervene when conflict arose. This is an arrangement that is

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<sup>141</sup> Chan, Lai-Ha. "Hedging or Balancing? Australia and New Zealand's Differing China Strategies." *The Diplomat*. July 14, 2020

easily mimicked in other nations. The United States upkeeps bases all over the world and each country that with a base supports a relationship with America. The continuation of military exercise with allies increases these connections as well.

Also, in Vietnam, the United States gained the alliance of the Australians over Britain because it was seen as having a greater ability to protect. Again, in the warning for Chinese expansion, experts warn that the United States may not be willing and able to protect the Australian forces. To foster its major power status, it must fortify its identity as the strongest power. Whether this is through power projecting military practices or actual military action, the United States must prove that its military is still the strongest in the world.

Alliance valuation appears to be dependent on the secondary ally's belief that the power can protect them and is increased by the perceived reliability of the major power to follow through. In the Iraq case, Howard emphasizes the influence of the United States in maintaining stability in the Pacific as a reason that it is important. America proved that the region was one that America would protect. If that erodes, the United States cannot expect allies to continue to value the alliance. America must walk back its "America First" rhetoric that threatened to abandon American allies because it increases doubt to a dangerous level and pushed allies to look toward other powers for aid. This is clearly seen through the rising influence of Russia in the European Union.

More work should be done on what causes a country to be viewed as a valuable ally. Above, I have referenced the justifications given by leaders, but those words do not always follow reality. Additionally, we must find what causes the balance of productive fear of abandonment to tip and make an adversary out of an ally. This research will allow states to understand what it must do to gain and maintain allies that will fight with them. Overall, the

literature on burden-sharing is extensive but far from complete. Those before me researched a long list of conflicts and a longer list of countries. We do recognize the importance of the interconnections of internal and external elements but refining the theory down to the reality of the relationship can only be done through more study. Furthermore, there will be pitfalls to any study of burden-sharing as long as country motives must be deciphered.

The studies of what causes burden-sharing will help the United States to remain a hegemon through the return of major power conflict. As China rises and Russia continues to become more aggressive Washington needs to ensure that its allies that it is still the best option. The wider the reach of the United States the greater the chance that it will emerge once again as a unipole. If these conflicts occur through proxy wars, as the Cold War did, allies willing to engage simply for the sake of the alliance will be vital. Therefore, those bases must be maintained, the military exercises must continue, and Washington must represent itself as an undefeatable power.

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