

**PERCY SPENDER AND THE
ORIGINS OF ANZUS: AN
AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVE**

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The ANZUS alliance has been a peculiarly long-lived alliance.¹ There has been considerable dispute about the origins of the ANZUS Treaty upon which the alliance is based, and in particular the initiatives that Australia took to obtain the treaty, as well as differences about the value of the alliance to the continuing participants. The aims and, in particular the role, of Percy Spender in the original achievement of the ANZUS Treaty has been undergoing reassessment in some of the literature. This reassessment has given more prominence to the interest of the United States in having the alliance and downplayed the role of Spender in achieving the alliance. It also suggests that the outcome of the ANZUS alliance was a disappointment to Spender. The evidence amassed here supports Sir Percy Spender's claims for his role in achieving the alliance and shows American reticence and even reluctance to engage in such an alliance, a reluctance which persisted even beyond the signing and ratification of the alliance documents in some sectors of the US government, particularly the military. Far from being disappointed at this result, Spender proudly ²echoes Menzies statement describing the ANZUS Treaty as 'the keystone of our Pacific structure' and 'one of the major achievements' of the sixteen years of the Menzies administration.

Part of such disputation can be explained by a failure to understand the attitudes taken by the participants at the time of the negotiation of the ANZUS Treaty. It is proposed to examine the perspectives of the continuing parties, Australia and the United States at the origins of the Treaty, the question of Spender's initiatives in obtaining the treaty, and also to briefly consider the effect of Britain's attitude on the original negotiations.

Historical Continuity of the ANZUS Objectives

The Howard government's White papers on foreign affairs and trade, *In the National Interest* and *Advancing the National Interest* still refer to the relationship with the United States in terms which echo those that were used in the Australian foreign policy documents surrounding the formation of the ANZUS alliance and

¹ A point analysed by Henry Albinski and William Tow in their article, *ANZUS – Alive and Well after Fifty Years*, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* vol 48 no 2 2002, pp. 153-73.

² Percy Spender, *Politics and a Man*, Sydney 1972, p 304 and of course gives a detailed treatment in his *Exercises in Diplomacy* Adelaide 1969, part 1 pp 13-190, which displays no disappointment and again considerable pride in the achievement.

show similar preoccupations to those of Mr Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs, in his determination to achieve the Australian American alliance. The 1997 White Paper states '...Beyond its significance to the defence of Australia, the alliance strengthens United States strategic engagement in the region: an engagement which has underwritten the regional stability on which the East Asian economic miracle has been built....In short the United States will remain an indispensable participant in the security and the economic affairs of the Asia Pacific over the next fifteen years...'³ The 2003 White Paper says '...Australia has a vital interest in supporting long-term US strategic engagement in East Asia, because of its fundamental contribution to regional stability and prosperity...'.⁴ Although the relative strengths of the emphases placed between strategic and economic interests have varied from time to time, these interests in having the American alliance were those of Percy Spender when he negotiated the agreement. He was concerned for Australian strategic security and believed that the interest of the United States in the Asian Pacific region needed to be demonstrably secured so that Australia could pursue its interests in the region.

Spender's Claims Over the Origins of ANZUS

Sir Percy Spender had a relatively short period in his office as the first post-war Liberal Minister for External Affairs, serving from December 1949 until the election of April 1951 when Spender retired from parliament. Spender claimed the lion's share in negotiating, signing and ratifying the ANZUS Treaty.⁵ Support for Spender's claims has also come from major interpreters of Australian foreign policy.⁶ There have however also been authors who have inflated the role of the United States in the origins of ANZUS⁷ and do not give Spender his due recognition.

³ Commonwealth Government of Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, In the National Interest, ch 4 section 137, Canberra 1997.

⁴ Commonwealth Government of Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Advancing the National Interest, Overview p. xvi, Canberra 2003.

⁵ Percy Spender, Exercises in Diplomacy, Adelaide 1969, Part One, pp13-190.

⁶ Barclay, Bell, Edwards, Harper, Miller, O'Neil and Reese are among these authors. However not all these authors were able to work from the documentary material, as in many cases publication of their works preceded the release of the documents.

⁷ See for instance Joseph Camilleri, ANZUS :Australia's Predicament in the Nuclear Age, Melbourne 1987, chapter one. This chapter incidentally relies entirely on secondary sources although the documentation for the period was open at the time of writing. Camilleri, despite some recognition of Spender's initiative, makes it seem that Spender, even in this initiative was merely the puppet of the Americans, a perspective which this paper will

The recognition of Spender's role in the origins of ANZUS has most recently come under challenge by David McLean⁸ and David Lee⁹, who has closely followed McLean's view. Although many of the major interpreters of Australian foreign policy since the second world war have formulated their views before the documentary evidence became available, McLean and Lee have based their interpretations upon the documentary evidence but never-the-less underestimate the role of Spender.

McLean makes claims for American initiative in the matter of the ANZUS Treaty and has used the available documents (or at least some of them) to come to a conclusion, which overrates the American, and therefore underrates Spender's, contribution, to the origins of ANZUS. In this case the explanation lies in the focus on the February meetings of 1951 when the draft ANZUS Treaty was drawn up by the representatives of Australia, New Zealand and the United States. McLean draws the conclusion that when Spender later claimed the success for the origins and negotiations of ANZUS that he was inflating his own role in the process by underestimating American willingness to reach such an agreement in the February talks. Spender's claim to be the father of the ANZUS agreement however does not rest solely upon the February talks but includes the negotiations which preceded and succeeded them. By February 1951 the Americans were willing to negotiate on the matter, after many months of badgering by Spender and a careful consideration of both his arguments and his threats over the necessity for some American guarantee of Australian security in the Pacific. An expression of British disapproval over the membership of the possible treaty created last-minute complications for the Americans at the February talks which Spender's arguments, doggedness and tactics overcame. There was reluctance at the February talks but it was created by British rather than American reservations.

demonstrate to be a false one. Eric Andrews, who represents the Americans blackmailing Australia into non-recognition of Communist China in exchange for ANZUS was also mistaken in this view.

⁸ David McLean, "ANZUS Origins : a Reassessment", in *Australian Historical Studies*, vol 24 1990 pp 64-82.

⁹ David Lee, *Search for Security: The Political Economy of Australia's Postwar Foreign and Defence Policy*, Canberra 1995, pp 117-119.

The Historiography of ANZUS

A brief word on the historiography of explanations for Spender's success in obtaining American agreement to the ANZUS Treaty adds to the composite picture of the ANZUS negotiations and assists in evaluating Spender's performance. Dorling's monograph of 1989 gives a brief account of this in his introduction.¹⁰ Although it is widely understood that Australia was able to secure the ANZUS Treaty as a quid pro quo for agreement to a 'soft' Japanese Peace Treaty, Dorling cites with approval the view first put by Alan Watt, that "Australia could not have secured American assent to ANZUS simply by refusing to sign the Japanese Peace Treaty", and that a second crucial factor was American goodwill aroused by Australia's military participation in the Korean War. Dorling regards this view as being supported by Barclay, Bell, Camilleri, Harper, McGibbon, O'Neill and Pemberton. He further maintains that a major and perhaps the most important factor underpinning the successful conclusion of the ANZUS Treaty was the ability and the willingness of Australia and New Zealand to contribute to the defence of the Middle East in the event of a global war.¹¹

The argument to be pursued in this paper shows that the securing of Australian acceptance of the soft peace treaty with Japan was by far the most important consideration of the American administration. To add yet another fragment of the composite picture, it will also be argued that the means by which Truman chose to pursue this objective, in appointing John Foster Dulles to secure the agreement of all parties to the desired American version of the Japanese Treaty, was also important to the successful pursuit of the negotiations over ANZUS.

Spender's Performance as Minister for External Affairs

At the time of Spender's accession to the External Affairs portfolio in December 1949, the Pacific Pact was no new idea in Australian politics.¹² The post war situation had given this issue new urgency and the previous Labor administration, and in particular its Foreign Minister, Dr Evatt, had made considerable efforts

¹⁰ Philip Dorling, The Origins of the ANZUS Treaty A Reconsideration, Flinders Politics Monographs no 4. Adelaide 1989.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Trevor Reese gives a brief history which he dates back to the early days of federation in his book Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations 1941-1968, Melbourne 1969, pp 107-8.

towards forming a Pacific pact including the United States.¹³ These efforts had been made primarily to counter-balance Japan. All major Australian political parties were concerned that the terms of the peace settlement took insufficient precautions against Japanese rearmament, and felt that Australia had too little say in the counsels of the nations concerning the Pacific region.

At the Colombo Conference of January 1950 it became apparent to Spender that the Asian countries of the Commonwealth were not likely to agree with him on the importance of a Pacific pact. Mr Bevin of the United Kingdom had also seemed unenthusiastic and it was only the Australians and New Zealanders who appeared to be strong supporters of the idea¹⁴. His subsequent tour of Southeast Asia en route home to Australia convinced Spender of the worth of the economic assistance envisaged in his Colombo Plan but also of the necessity of a Pacific Pact with United States participation. Spender summarised his views in a speech in February¹⁵ in which he stated that a Pacific Pact without the United States would be a meaningless gesture. In response to the January speech of Mr Acheson defining the American defensive perimeter in the Pacific to exclude Australia and New Zealand and indicating that such countries would have to rely on their own efforts to resist armed attack together with possible support from the United Nations, Spender recognised that states in the Pacific region needed to give evidence of a readiness to defend themselves. If that were done, Spender suggested that it would be reasonable to hope for the support of the United States. A beginning could be made on a Pacific Pact by Australia, the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries and then other countries, especially the United States, could be invited to join them.

Throughout 1950 Spender promoted the idea of a Pacific pact through the press and in parliament. In June he told the Australian parliament that Australia would be prepared to have a bi-lateral treaty with the United States.¹⁶ In a press conference in Strasbourg in August he was asked to comment on the views of other

¹³ Trevor Reese, *op cit*, pp 108-116, Coral Bell, *op cit*, ch 2, T.B.Millar, *Australia in Peace and War*, 2nd edition, New York 1991 pp 163-4.

¹⁴ Accounts of discussions at Colombo can be found in AA CRS A1838 340/1 and PRO FO 371 84818

¹⁵ Percy Spender, speech to The Constitutional Club, Sydney on the 20th February 1950, AA CRS A1838 494/2/10 part 4.

¹⁶ Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs, speech to the Australian parliament, June 1950.

governments to his idea of a Pacific Pact and he indicated that not much progress had been made but that Australia was prepared to participate. Spender added that an unexpected effect of the Korean War had been to retard the process because some governments argued that Korea had demonstrated that the countries of the United Nations were prepared to join against aggression and there was therefore no need for a formal pact.¹⁷

Despite their own interests in Southeast Asia, the British were not keen on Australian defence attention being turned towards the Pacific. The British and American strategy in the case of the outbreak of a major international war required Australian defence of the Middle East. The triumph of communism in China, the issue of Formosa which was under their active consideration during 1950, and the Korean War led the Americans to reformulate their policy in relation to the Pacific. In talks between Mr Rusk of the United States and Mr Dening (later Sir Esler), of Britain in July 1950, Rusk queried whether the government of the United Kingdom would welcome, or expect, Australian sharing of responsibility for Southeast Asia, to help safeguard the area from Hong Kong to Burma. Dening replied that Australia, and to a lesser extent, New Zealand, were already helping the British in Southeast Asia. If Russian aggression were started in earnest however, the Middle East was the more important strategic area and Britain wanted the assistance of Australia and New Zealand there.¹⁸ During the visit of Mr Menzies to Britain in July 1950 he had been the subject of British pressure to commit Australia to the Middle East strategy and indicated that the Australian government accepted for planning purposes the idea of the Middle East as the focus of Australia's efforts in a major war. He had also indicated that the Australian public had still to be brought to accept it.¹⁹

Spender and the Pacific Pact

In his book Exercises in Diplomacy, Spender maintained that he discussed his proposals for a Pacific pact with both Bevin and Mr Attlee during his August-September 1950 visit to Britain and that neither of them gave him any

¹⁷ Papers of Sir Percy Spender, NLA MS4875/13 box 3.

¹⁸ Talks between Dean Rusk of the United States and M.E. Dening for the United Kingdom in Washington, July 1950, PRO FO 371 83014.

¹⁹ Ibid

encouragement or even displayed any interest in his plan.²⁰ The documentation prepared in the Foreign Office both in anticipation of and during the visit, supports this contention. It stated that there had been Australian references to the desirability of a Pacific Pact.²¹ However in his talks with the Canadian Ministers in Ottawa, Menzies had agreed that the idea was unrealistic and described it as “an attempt to erect a superstructure on a foundation of jelly”. The British brief also indicated that Menzies had said that the pact was “Percy Spender’s baby” but that no-one took Spender seriously on the subject and that he hoped that the Canadians would not do so either.²²

Bevin and Spender discussed the Pacific Pact among other topics in early September. Bevin stated that economic co-operation in the Asian region was a real possibility and that later military co-operation might become possible. Spender argued however that some form of defence organisation was needed in the Pacific. The Korean War had revealed a lack of preparation. He agreed that the Pacific countries did differ from the Atlantic ones but still thought that the question of a Pact should be discussed with some urgency in New York. The United States had begun to show some interest. Spender had offered the Americans bases in the north of Australia. The Americans had responded that they were not necessary at present but that they would bear the idea in mind. Bevin concluded this matter by stating that he would be happy to explore the idea of a Pacific arrangement informally in New York.²³

In September Spender had talks in the United States with President Truman, Mr Acheson, Mr Rusk, Mr Dulles and various US Senators on the Pacific Pact. Menzies had visited the United States in July and August and spoken with the President and Mr Acheson, prior to his trip to Ottawa. The briefs prepared by the State Department in anticipation of his visit, included material on the Pacific Pact which

²⁰ Percy Spender, *op cit*, Adelaide 1969, pp 35-37.

²¹ PRO DO 35 2776.

²² PRO FO 371 83014.

²³ Discussion between E. Bevin of the United Kingdom and P. Spender of Australia at the Foreign Office 1 September 1950, PRO FO 371 84537 and Mr Bevin’s private papers, FO 800/462.

the Americans expected him to discuss.²⁴ In the event Menzies did not raise the issue of a Pacific Pact.²⁵

One of the difficulties which Spender experienced in dealing with the Americans on the subject of the Pacific Pact was that he was not sure what group of possible participants would most appeal to the Americans, or even whether the group should be extensive or narrow. His list of suggested participants on the occasion of his September talks consisted of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico and appropriate Central and South American Pacific states.²⁶

A major plank of Spender's arguments for the necessity of a Pacific pact during these exchanges was the fact that Australia made a valuable contribution to global defence whilst having no real say in global strategy.²⁷ Australia could be relied upon to resist aggression but felt that she was entitled to some assurances with regard to her own security. The Americans expressed some sympathy for Spender's position and acknowledged Australian dependability in global defence thus giving some credence to the supporters of the Korean War argument, although the Americans were also taking into account Australia's role in World War Two and her proposed role in case of the outbreak of another major war. Never the less the American officials were not empowered to hold out any hope that the United States would be able to give any guarantee of Australian security either individually by a bi-lateral arrangement²⁸ or by participation in a regional pact of the kind proposed.²⁹

Spender then associated the pact talks with the issue of the peace settlement with Japan. He pointed out that the terms of the Japanese Peace Treaty which were envisaged by the United States, were unacceptable to Australians who feared

²⁴ See Background Memoranda prepared in the Department of State, 24 July 1950 US NA RG 59 743.13/7-2450 and Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Perkins, to the Secretary of State, 27 July 1950, US NA RG 59 743.13/7-2750.

²⁵ Report prepared by the Department of State on the visit of Menzies RG 59 743.13/8-750.

²⁶ Memorandum of Conversation by H. Smith of the meeting between Spender, Makin and selected US Senators, US NA RG 59 611.43/9-1450.

²⁷ Memorandum of Conversation by J Simmons of Spender's talk with Truman, US NA RG 59 611.43/9-1350

²⁸ Spender had raised the possibility of a bi-lateral arrangement in his talk with Acheson on September 18 1950, US NA RG 59 Lot 53D444.

²⁹ PRO FO 371 84537

Japanese rearmament. There could be no assurance that Japan would remain in any particular camp. Under these circumstances Australians felt the necessity for a Pacific Pact in which the United States would have a role.³⁰

The US Attitude to the Pacific Pact

In the first week of October Spender made an effort to hurry proceedings by telling the United States Delegates to the United Nations that he wanted a definitive answer from the United States on a possible Pacific Pact within a week.³¹ As a result of their September meetings with Spender the officers of the American State Department had been giving considerable attention to the question of a possible Pacific Pact or some other alternative arrangement which would satisfy Spender's suggestions as the Americans perceived them.³² After receiving Spender's request for a definitive answer, Rusk instructed Mr Hickerson of the United States delegation to the United Nations to speak informally with Spender in order to ascertain more specifically what he had in mind.³³ Rusk stated that it should be made clear to Spender that the formulation of any plan with such vast implications could not be accomplished speedily. The State Department was open-minded on this subject but was aware of the tremendous difficulties which would have to be overcome before any arrangement such as the Pacific Pact could be consummated. While no United States position had been established, Rusk could see no reason why Hickerson should not indicate general sympathy on the part of the United States with the efforts of non-communist states to form regional associations. Specific complications would involve the inclusion or exclusion of India, Nationalist China, France, the Netherlands and Latin American west coast states. Spender should be asked for his considered view on these problems and for an exposition of Australia's conception of a Pacific Pact, its membership, objectives,

³⁰ PRO FO 371 84537 and Talk between Spender and Acheson, September 18 1950, US NA RG59 Lot 53D444.

³¹ Emmerson to Rusk, 9 October 1950, US NA RG 59 790.5/10-950.

³² See for instance the Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Matthews), October 9 1950, US NA RG 59 790.5/10-950, Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Perkins) to the Secretary of State of October 27 1950, US NA RG 59 743.5811/10-2750 and The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defence, Acheson to Marshall of November 24 1950, US NA RG 59 743.5811/11-2450.

³³ Rusk to Hickerson, 12 October 1950, US NA RG 59 790.5/10-1250, also Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) vol VI for 1950 pp 148-152.

form of organisation and method of bringing it into being. Acheson also signed this document and a copy was forwarded to Canberra.³⁴

In response to Rusk's orders, Hickerson and Mr Allen immediately called a meeting with Spender and Sir Keith Officer on the subject of a Pacific Pact. Hickerson opened by making it clear that while the United States had a background of sympathetic interest with respect to regional pacts, there were a large number of questions relating to a Pacific Pact, regarding the participants, scope of the area, the nature of obligations and so on, on which Spender was invited to comment. Spender responded that as far as obligations were concerned, he wanted a provision embodying a definitive and general obligation similar to article V of the North Atlantic Treaty; and for machinery, a continuing council with some adjunctive mechanism, though not as elaborate as that of NATO. Spender had varied lists of possible participants. To be realistic, Spender believed that the parties should be Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, those states capable of undertaking military commitments in the area. ³⁵ Hickerson queried whether without a non-white country the Pact would be regarded as a white alliance. Spender and Officer were inclined to dismiss this concern and thought that the Pact could be sold to Asians on the grounds that it would prevent war and keep it from Asia. Hickerson pointed out that with such a membership the Pact could hardly be effective to protect the mainland to which Spender responded that it would be difficult to defend in any case. Allen wondered whether Spender had in mind that the Treaty would become operative in the event of attack on certain countries even though they were not parties to the treaty. Spender indicated that the strategic area extended through Indonesia, Malaya and Thailand but that the question required further consideration. In response to American doubts about the need for such a pact, Spender argued that no Pacific war could be fought without Australia and that the pact would serve a real strategic purpose in helping Australia to discharge its world responsibilities. There was a rising feeling in the Australian Labor Party

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Memorandum of conversation between F. Officer, P. Spender for Australia and J. Hickerson and W. Allen for the United States, New York, 12 October 1950, US NA RG 59 790.5/10-1250.

against overseas service, and although if war came, Australia would send its troops where needed, Spender argued that it would be much easier if Australia had the assurance of a Pact. Australians did not understand why, when they were prepared to stand with the United States if it was attacked, they got no response. Every time the NAT was extended, as in the case of Greece and Turkey, Australians felt that they were 'not getting a fair go.' Spender further argued that a Pact would have a preventive value and would improve general stability. He did not think that other means to let Australia's voice be heard, such as intensified diplomatic consultation, would serve the same purpose. However he agreed that some bi-lateral agreement would help. Hickerson concluded these talks by saying that the United States government saw the Australian problems and were sympathetic but there were major difficulties involved and the United States did not yet have the answers.³⁶

In the following months the officials of the State Department canvassed the arguments which Spender had presented in the September and October meetings and continued to address the issue of the meeting of Australian concerns.³⁷ The chief focus of American concern centred on the threat that Australia would not agree to a 'liberal' Japanese Peace Treaty without firm guarantees against Japanese aggression in the form of a Pacific Pact or treaty arrangement.

Spender's argument that Australia had played and would continue to play a role in the Pacific and elsewhere and yet had little formal representation for its views, was also received with some sympathy.³⁸ The State Department, and to a greater extent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff³⁹ were concerned about the possible membership and scope of such an alliance as the Pacific Pact, but the suggestion of a tri-lateral pact began to assume importance in the last months of 1950 and the early months of 1951.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ See footnote 31 for a number of these considerations.

³⁸ See for example US NA RG 7695.00/10-250 and Percy Spender, Exercises in Diplomacy, Adelaide 1969, pp 44-8.

³⁹ More will be said of the nature of the concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff later in this paper.

The Appointment of Dulles to Secure the Japanese Peace Treaty

As their concern over finalising the Japanese Peace Treaty grew, Truman decided to allocate the responsibility for pursuing the matter to John Foster Dulles. Dulles was asked to meet with UN delegation members in New York to sound them out on the Japanese Peace Treaty during the last months of 1950. When Dulles reported to Truman and Acheson on his progress in November, Truman decided to authorise Dulles to continue the negotiations, suggesting that they should meet and review the matter in December in the light of any further information that they would receive and decide on the next steps to be taken.⁴⁰ Acheson and Dulles had become convinced that Australia, and possibly also New Zealand, would not agree to the terms of the liberal treaty with Japan that the Americans favoured, without some form of Pacific Pact. In mid December Acheson in a letter to the Secretary of Defence proposed that the American government should explore the possibilities of a mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations and by early in January the discussions between the Departments of State and Defence had become concentrated on a possible Pacific Pact.⁴¹

Truman in a letter of 10 January 1951 gave Dulles the personal rank of Ambassador, Special Representative of the President, with the responsibility for conducting the negotiations which were necessary to conclude the Japanese Peace Settlement. The crucial issue for Australia was Truman's attitude that the US would commit substantial force to the defence of the island chain of which Japan was a part, that the US desired that Japan should be increasingly able to defend itself and that in order to implement that policy the US was willing to make a mutual assistance arrangement among the Pacific island nations (Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the US and perhaps Indonesia) which would have the dual purpose of assuring combined action as between members to resist aggression from without and also to resist attack by one of the members. Truman emphasised that the US should agree to such a course of action only as the other

⁴⁰ Memoranda of Dean Acheson, November 16 1950, Acheson papers, Truman Library.

⁴¹ Letter from Acheson to Secretary of Defense (Marshall), December 14 1950, Dean Acheson Papers, Harry S Truman Library, Independence.

nations would accept the general basis on which the US was prepared to conclude the Japanese Peace settlement. Dulles was to avoid giving the impression that he could finally commit the US government on the matter.⁴² Dulles was to make a tour to discuss these issues of the Japanese Peace Treaty and possible security arrangements. Accordingly he cabled Menzies in London in mid January a few days after Makin, at Spender's behest, had once again urged the Americans to report any progress on the Pacific Pact.⁴³ Dulles offered to visit Australia in order to discuss the two issues.

Although it was true that the British had shown little interest in Spender's initiatives for a Pacific Pact, and that the British had accepted the idea that Australia and New Zealand should have a guarantee from the United States which might take the form of a Pacific Pact,⁴⁴ when the time came the British became anxious about the negotiations and the agreement itself. A perusal of the Australian, British and American documents indicate that there were differences within the British cabinet about how the issue ought to be handled and that the differences in the British administration resulted in some conflicting advice being received by the Americans in particular.

The Japanese Peace Treaty and the Pacific Pact

Spender, not being privy to the American discussions and documentation of the previous months, was unaware that of all his arguments, the one upon which the Americans had focused was Australian unwillingness to see a liberal peace settlement for Japan without some American guarantee of Australian security. Dulles proposal to discuss the two issues of the Japanese settlement and the Pacific Pact, indicated a willingness to associate the two issues. The existence of such willingness however appeared questionable, when upon Dulles' arrival in Australia, he made no mention of the Pacific Pact in his opening remarks.⁴⁵ It was for this reason that Spender presented a picture of American reluctance in his subsequent description of the February talks. MacLean dismisses such reluctance,

⁴² Letter from Truman to Dulles, January 10 1951, PSF, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

⁴³ Memorandum of conversation between Makin and Webb, Washington 11 January 1951, US NA RG 59 743.5/1-1151.

⁴⁴ For example at the Sixth Meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in January 1951, as reported in the Cabinet Meeting of PRO CAB 129/45.

⁴⁵ PRO CAB 129/44 number 64 of 27 February 1951.

suggesting that because the Americans had initially come prepared to make some security agreement with Australia, Spender overemphasised the difficulty of obtaining the agreement. The difficulty was real enough but it was of British rather than American origin at this juncture. The explanation of Dulles' failure to mention the Pacific Pact on his arrival in Australia was his encounter with Sir Alvary Gascoigne in Tokyo en route to Australia.

The US/UK Interaction Over the Pacific Pact

The British and Americans had been conferring on the matter of Pacific defence over a long period. The Americans had gained the impression that some form of American guarantee of Australian security in the form of a Pacific pact, or some other arrangement was acceptable to the British. The British seemed unprepared for the speed with which matters had moved in the last months of 1950 and when the United States government canvassed the possibility of some security arrangement with those nations with major Pacific island territories with the British Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks in January 1951, Counsellor Graves asked whether the United Kingdom would be included. Dulles replied that British membership had not been contemplated since it had been thought best to limit the area to the major island nations of the Pacific and that any fuller participation might raise the question of French, Dutch or Portuguese participation.⁴⁶

Dulles called on Sir Alvary Gascoigne while in Tokyo in order to obtain the British reaction to the latest American proposal for a Pacific defence council consisting of the "Island Chain" of the United States, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. The British Cabinet had taken a most unfavourable view of this proposal. Although the British Chiefs of Staff recognised the undeniable advantage of giving assurance of United States protection to Australia and New Zealand, they considered the proposals for a Defence Council to be unacceptable because it would be interpreted as British renunciation of their responsibilities and the exclusion of the Asian mainland countries would

⁴⁶ Memorandum by Allison of conversation on the Japanese Peace Settlement between Franks and Graves of the British Embassy with Dulles, Magruder, Babcock and Allison on January 12 1951, US NA RG 59 694.001/1-1251. There is also an account of this meeting in a background paper prepared by the State Department on July 24 1952 in readiness for Acheson and American delegates to the first ANZUS Council meeting in August 1952, Acheson Papers, ANZUS folder, Truman Library.

encourage communist aggression against them. The American documents indicate that Gascoigne gave the unfavourable views of the British Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff and at the conclusion of his summary said: "That is the end of that, but there is a..." He then paused, leaving the sentence incomplete and continued, "This is from the Foreign Office, not from Her Majesty's Government but the Foreign Office and myself. We feel strongly opposed to the idea of a Pacific Defence Organisation which would exclude the United Kingdom and I would stress that most emphatically to you, sir."⁴⁷

The February Talks between the US, Australia and New Zealand

Spender, however, was determined to associate the two issues of the Japanese Peace Treaty and the Pacific Pact in the February talks and informed Dulles and Mr Doidge of New Zealand that the Australian cabinet could not accept a treaty such as that provisionally outlined by the United States, which imposed no limitation on Japanese rearmament, unless there were accompanying arrangements to ensure Australian security. The nature of the security arrangements arrived at for Australia would condition its approach to the terms of the settlement with Japan. The cabinet had also noted that Australia's capacity to live up to its obligations in the Middle East would depend directly upon the extent to which it was secure in its own territories. The Prime Minister desired an exploration of possible security arrangements. A tri-partite agreement of the United States, Australia and New Zealand seemed best to Australia, but if a stalemate developed over this or alternative arrangements, the Australian government could not approve a treaty permitting unrestricted Japanese rearmament. Spender mentioned that he had received a cable the previous day from Rusk who said that he had been impressed by the possibility of achieving a three-cornered arrangement. Australia had put up a case for a Pacific Pact in the previous October but Spender did not know what, if any, progress had been made. The idea of a Pact seemed to have dissipated in the course of Ambassador Dulles's travel. Spender was aware of the objections interposed by other countries but he felt that Australia's position must be recognised by the United States. If Australia was asked to accept a Japanese treaty

⁴⁷ Memorandum by Allison of conversation between Dulles and Gascoigne, February 2 1951, US NA RG 59 694.001 Box 3007.

without attendant arrangements for Australia, it could not do so. Some one of the various possible types of security arrangements, could and must be concluded and the objections were not something to which to bow, but must be overcome.⁴⁸

Dulles' response indicated that he had left Washington with the broad authority to make a security pact which would include Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, Japan, the United States and possibly Indonesia. The British Ambassador in Washington had been informed but that it was not until Dulles had reached Tokyo that he had been told of United Kingdom opposition. This had thrown the United States off balance and would mean that the matter would have to be reconsidered and a number of pertinent factors reopened. Dulles conveyed that he now felt that things could no longer be finalised in Australia. Dulles outlined a series of possible security arrangements and concluded that there was no hesitation or reluctance on the part of the United States regarding the substance of what was wanted by Australia and New Zealand. The Americans had thought that they had a satisfactory formula but the British did not like it.

Spender commented that he was surprised that the Americans were so deterred by British objections. Australia regarded itself as the principal in the area since Australians lived there. Dulles responded that they had not indicated to Britain that they regarded the objections as valid, but that they saw difficulty in proceeding if the British felt so strongly. Spender thought that the British objections could be met by a series of bi-lateral arrangements and proceeded to comment on and attempt to circumvent the British objections individually. Doidge asked why there should not be a tripartite arrangement which would give time to condition the minds of the peoples to the bigger concept. Dulles then inquired whether Australia and New Zealand had any written outlines of possible arrangements so that substantive issues could be studied while leaving the question of participation aside.⁴⁹

The following day the three men went through the text of a possible treaty article by article. Spender returned to the idea of a tri-partite treaty and stated that

⁴⁸ Notes on conversations between Dulles, Spender and Doidge by R. Fearey, 16 and 17 February 1951, US NA RG 59 lot 54D 423.

⁴⁹ Ibid

discussion with the British plenipotentiary Sir Esler Dening who was in Canberra during the talks, had indicated that there would be no objection on the part of the United Kingdom. It was Spender's view that there could not be any such objection. Having gone through the treaty article by article, Spender said that he proposed to make the following recommendations to his government. That, pending determination of whether the proposed pact was satisfactory to the United States Government, Australia reserved the right to propose limitations on Japanese rearmament in the treaty; that if the pact was acceptable to the United States, Australia not insist upon provisions for the restriction or supervision of Japanese rearmament in the treaty; that if the pact was acceptable to the United States, Australia proposed that after the treaty was signed, Japan of its own accord enter a unilateral or multilateral agreement with Australia and possibly other countries, under which it would agree not to revive militaristic policies and not to accumulate dangerous military might. Dulles responded that the United States were anxious that the Japanese would not recreate adequate armed forces which the Americans wished to see used for purposes of collective security.⁵⁰

The British Again!

It was clear that the British expected to be included in, or at least closely informed of, the discussions between the United States, Australia and New Zealand on the Pacific Pact. Their expectations of inclusion were dashed and even, to some extent, their expectation of being closely informed while the talks were in progress. In his correspondence with the British Foreign Office Sir Esler complained of this and attributed it, rightly, to Spender's influence.⁵¹ Spender's views on the matter have been subsequently set out in both his Politics and a Man and his Exercises in Diplomacy, which reveal his consciously independent conduct of these affairs.⁵² When the talks were concluded Spender related that he communicated the result of the discussions and the draft treaty directly to the Labour Government of Britain, seeking not approval but a statement that Britain was not opposed to it. Spender regarded this as critical because of the British

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Sir Esler Dening to Sir William Strang, 5 February 1950, PRO FO 371 93016 and Sir Esler Dening to R. Scott, 17 March 1950, PRO FO 371 92236

⁵² See particularly Percy Spender, Politics and a Man, Sydney 1972, pp 266-8.

objections raised with the United States and because British influence with the United States might be important.⁵³

Dulles's message to Acheson of February 19 indicated that the four day conference with Spender and Doidge had resulted in a tentative agreement on a draft of the security pact. The Commonwealth had preferred a tri-partite form but Dulles made clear that the United States had some reservations and might still want to include the Philippines. It had been made clear that the United States was not committed in any manner but also that the security arrangement and the Japanese Peace Treaty were interdependent so that none of the parties was obligated to accept the one without the other.⁵⁴

Menzies was also in communication with the British Prime Minister, Minister for Commonwealth Relations and the Foreign Minister over the Canberra talks and the proposed security pact. The Australians, with the scent of victory in their nostrils, were not prepared to entertain any suggestions that might hinder or delay reaching agreement with the United States. Menzies conveyed these views to the British in a letter of 22 February. The Australian Government, in entering negotiations with the representative of any foreign country, bore in mind the interests of the Commonwealth and the United Kingdom in particular. The talks with Dulles had been 'exploratory' and there would be ample time for consultation with the United Kingdom before decisions were reached. The 'island chain' had been an American proposal. Australia preferred a simpler arrangement including only the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Before the talks Australia had doubts as to whether the United States would enter into such a limited arrangement in view of their responsibilities to the Philippines and Japan. However, the result had been a draft treaty prepared for the consideration of the three governments. Menzies continued by stating that his Government regarded the adoption of a treaty of this kind as of the first importance and took it for granted that the United Kingdom Government would lend its utmost efforts to achieving that end. Menzies firmly believed that the treaty did not conflict with United Kingdom interests and that

⁵³ Percy Spender, *Politics and a Man*, Sydney 1972, p 268.

⁵⁴ Dulles to Acheson, 19 February 1951, US NA RG 59 790.5/2-2151.

Australia regarded its adoption as an outstanding contribution to the security of Australia and New Zealand which would facilitate the carrying out of responsibilities in the area outside the Pacific. Menzies was confident that after careful consideration the United Kingdom would take the view that even if the United States insisted upon the inclusion of the Philippines, such inclusion would not be prejudicial to the United Kingdom or Allied interests in the Far East.⁵⁵

Spender/Dulles Communications over ANZUS

The British Joint Chiefs of Staff were generally favourable to the draft treaty, as was the Prime Minister Mr Attlee, but some delay was created by differences in the Cabinet.⁵⁶ The delayed response and the hint of British concern caused Spender to write a personal and secret communication to Dulles on 8 March.⁵⁷ He had appreciated Dulles's personal message about his (Spender's) appointment to Washington. He had followed Dulles's statements with interest and hoped that he had interpreted them correctly as meaning that favourable consideration was being given in Washington to completing a Pacific security arrangement. Spender recounted that immediately after Dulles had left Australia, the draft agreed text had been sent to London. The Australians had made it clear that Dulles had reserved the position of the United States on the matter and also on the inclusion of the Philippines. The Australians had given at length answers to United Kingdom arguments against certain forms of pact and strongly pressed for British support for the arrangement discussed in Canberra. The Australian High Commissioner in London had personally conveyed these views to Attlee and had received a sympathetic hearing. He had been informed that the British Chiefs of Staff and the Cabinet would give urgent consideration to the matter. Despite this assurance he had received no word from London. Dening had conveyed in Canberra that he could see no objection to the treaty as drafted except possibly for some verbiage in the preamble but Spender was unaware whether there had been any variation in this view. Having regard to what Gascoigne had conveyed to Dulles, Spender wondered whether some people in London would express opposition to any

⁵⁵ Menzies to Attlee, 22 February 1951, PRO CAB 129/44 Appendix 'B'.

⁵⁶ PRO CAB 129/44

⁵⁷ Spender to Dulles, 8 March 1951, Percy Spender papers, ANL MS 4875 Box 1, file 5.

security arrangement in the Pacific, even one on the tri-partite basis discussed in Canberra.

Spender continued that he knew that Dulles would not mind him saying that Australia was a metropolitan power in the Pacific and he hoped that the Australian view would predominate, even though there were objection from elsewhere. It was difficult to assume otherwise than that London had been in close consultation with Washington on the subject and Spender would be grateful for any information Dulles could convey by any channel. Dulles might take it as the view of the Australian government clearly and unequivocally that Australia did not intend to be deflected from the policy she had deliberately arrived at. Spender felt that his primary task was to follow up the views he had expressed for Australia in Canberra. Although parliamentary reasons would make it difficult, these matters were so important that, if necessary, Spender could make a quick trip to London or Washington or both to personally expound the Australian point of view and to meet any possible objections which, in Australia's considered view, were unjustified. It would greatly assist Spender in making his plans if Dulles felt able to give him a lead on these subjects.⁵⁸

Within a few days, Dulles responded with a personal and secret letter to Spender, indicating his thanks for Spenders 'good' letter. Dulles had been glad to learn that the Australians had presented London with the draft agreement and that the United States position on the Philippines had been made clear. Dulles had discussed the matter with the British Ambassador and requested him to obtain the official views of the United Kingdom on the inclusion of the Philippines. Pending further word from London, he had not attempted to obtain final clearance of the Canberra draft but informal discussion led him to be optimistic. Dulles agreed with Spender that every effort should be made to get ahead as fast as possible. Among other reasons were the state of public opinion in Japan, which called for a prompt affirmative action on the peace settlement and the Americans knew that the Australians considered that the peace treaty and the subject of the Canberra talks should move ahead *pari passu*. Dulles would keep Spender informed of

⁵⁸ Ibid

developments and would have communicated earlier except that he had been daily expecting to hear from London. If there were trouble, Dulles might suggest that Spender make a quick trip to London or Washington or both but he still hoped that the representations which they had both made, would make it unnecessary.⁵⁹

Finally in the first week of April the British Ambassador informed the Americans of his government's formal viewpoint. They opposed a single arrangement incorporating Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, or the latter four. There was no objection to a tri-partite arrangement between Australia, New Zealand and the United States and a similar, even simultaneous bi-lateral arrangement between the United States and the Philippines. Dulles decided to approach the President to issue a statement embracing the tri-lateral security pact.⁶⁰

The Concerns of the US Military Over ANZUS

The British however, were not the only ones making difficulties and delays over the treaty drafted in Canberra. The United States Chiefs of Staff were also putting up a stiff opposition and they were opposed to any form of a formal pact, preferring instead a "simple understanding or public declaration".⁶¹ If a pact was to be made it was to avoid any reference to military plans, planning or organisations for such purposes. Article VIII of the proposed treaty was unacceptable to the military.⁶²

Dulles's response was to argue that the particular concerns of the military could be met by adjusting the wording of the proposed treaty to make it clear that any organisation under the treaty would not have the right to demand knowledge of and to participate in planning by, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the Organisation of American States or any other security organisations not directly related to the Pacific area. He completely ignored other of their suggestions as, for instance their suggestion that the statement on Pacific security ought not to be made by the President but by some less authoritative source. Dulles was clearly

⁵⁹ Dulles to Spender, 13 March 1951, US NA RG 59 790.5/3-1351, also in FRUS vol VI, 1951, pp178-9.

⁶⁰ Dulles to Marshall, 6 April 1951, US NA RG Lot 56D527 box 3.

⁶¹ Marshall to Acheson, 13 April 1951, US NA RG 59 790.5/4-1351, also in FRUS vol VI, 1951, pp201-2.

⁶² Ibid

concerned that his mission to obtain Pacific peace in the form of acquiescence to the Japanese Peace Treaty would be imperilled by the suggestions of the Chiefs of Staff.⁶³ Dulles was anxious that the President should make his statement on the acceptability of a security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand prior to the Australian election.⁶⁴

Acheson and Spender conferred over the possible date and substance of the Presidential announcement and the announcement of the Australian Government on the subject of the proposed pact from the first week of April. Finally on April 18 Acheson was able to convey to Spender that the President had made an announcement indicating America's intention to press forward to an early conclusion of the Pacific security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁵ His statement made it clear that the initiative for the agreement came from Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁶ Despite the continued objections of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President approved the Treaty on July 10 and it was made public on July 12.⁶⁷

Summary of Spender's Role

This survey of the American and British documentation about the origins of ANZUS leads to the conclusion that Spender's role in the origins of ANZUS could scarcely be overrated. Though neither the British nor the American governments eventually proved unwilling to entertain the idea of such an agreement, neither of these governments displayed any initiative in the matter. The Americans were, and saw themselves as, responding to Spender's initiatives in the matter. The issue of the security treaty became inseparable from the successful conclusion of the Japanese Peace Treaty in the minds of the Americans and it was this issue that provided the impetus to a serious discussion of the Pacific Pact. Lee sees McLean as having convincingly refuted this interpretation⁶⁸ but in view of the evidence of the American documents, it would not be possible to convincingly refute this connection.

⁶³ Memorandum from Dulles to Acheson April 13 1951, US NA RG 59 Lot 54D423.

⁶⁴ Memorandum from Dulles to Acheson, April 13 1951, US NA RG 59 Lot 54D423.

⁶⁵ Acheson to Spender, 18 April 1951, US NA RG 59 790.5/4-1851.

⁶⁶ Statement by Harry S Truman 18 April 1951, WHCF:OF 48D; Truman Papers, Truman Library.

⁶⁷ FRUS, vol VI 1951, p 222.

⁶⁸ David Lee, op.cit., p 117.

President Truman's handling of the issue also had its impact on the successful conclusion of the Treaty. The singling out of Dulles as early as October 1950 to elicit what was required to reach a successful completion of the Japanese Peace Treaty and the subsequent commissioning of Dulles to obtain that completion, was fortuitous in view of all the concerns of the Administration in the subsequent months. Dulles was able to single mindedly pursue his task and Spender had convinced him that Australia and New Zealand would not agree to the American version of the Japanese Peace Treaty without an American guarantee of Pacific security. The determination of Dulles to succeed in his assigned task, led him to claim that his arrangements met the objections of the Chiefs of Staff, though he was certainly fudging the issues, a matter which concerned Allison who felt that the Chiefs of Staff would have to be met head on.⁶⁹ Dulles however continued to gloss over the differences, with the result that the resistance of the Chiefs of Staff to various proposals arising from the completed treaty continued for some time even after its signing.⁷⁰

ANZUS/Pacific Pact

Truman made a priority of bringing the Japanese Peace Treaty to a conclusion that would enable Japan to begin to take its place again in the world community on the American side of world politics. This priority, together with the other arguments that Spender had advanced, caused the Americans to become more and more sympathetic to the so-called Pacific Pact. Both Spender and the American officials referred to the ANZUS agreement interchangeably as the Pacific Pact. What later became the ANZUS Council was also initially referred to as the Pacific Council, which created some later difficulties for the Americans.⁷¹ It needs to be recognised however that whatever the terminology and rhetoric surrounding it, this ANZUS agreement was not a broad Pacific Pact, but a tri-lateral security arrangement between Australia, New Zealand and the United States and that is what it remained. This does not necessarily mean that this was less than Spender

⁶⁹ Memorandum by Allison to Dulles, 23 April 1951, US NA RG 59 694.001/4-2351.

⁷⁰ See Memorandum on the Substance of Discussions at a Department of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting, Washington 23 April, 1952, Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, vol 12, part 1 pp 80-84, Washington, USGPO, 1984, for some examples.

⁷¹ Allison refers to this use of terminology and the problems it subsequently created in the proofs of his book Ambassador From the Prairie included in the Allison papers in the Truman library, pp 223-229.

wanted,⁷² or that the suggestion of a narrower pact originated with the Americans as McLean indicates⁷³ and Lee reiterates.⁷⁴ As previously shown in this paper it was Spender who had made the initial suggestion of a bi-lateral treaty as well as the broader Pacific Pact. Spender was aiming for a security arrangement with America that would reassure the Australian public and give the Australian government a more secure environment in which to pursue their foreign policy, and whether the agreement was broad or narrow seems to have been of little concern to him⁷⁵.

At its negotiation it was Dulles who reminded Spender and Doidge that the tri-lateral arrangement was envisaged to be the beginning of a Pacific Pact. Spender acquiesced readily enough with this view as Australia had been pressing for such a pact over a long period. Doidge was more non-committal according to the records kept by the Americans.⁷⁶ The Treaty itself contained the seeds for expansion into a Pacific Pact in Article VIII to which the Chiefs of Staff had taken exception, one of the many issues over which they had disagreed with the State Department. At the initialling of the Treaty in July 1951, Dulles pointed out that the tripartite treaty was one of a series of arrangements being worked out by the United States to strengthen security in the Pacific, that these arrangements were 'initial steps' which would be followed by others to achieve what the preamble and article VIII described as 'the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area' and Spender observed that the draft agreement was 'but one but nonetheless an exceedingly important step in building up the security of the Pacific area'. Acheson and Spender expressed similar sentiments at the signing of the Treaty in September 1951.⁷⁷ The other immediate steps were to be bi-lateral agreements between the US and Japan and between the US and the Philippines, thus linking all these western Pacific countries in a series of treaties, an alternative to the "island chain" proposal that had upset the British.

⁷² David Lee, *op cit*, p 118.

⁷³ David McLean, *op cit*, p 69.

⁷⁴ David Lee, *op cit*, p 118.

⁷⁵ Percy Spender, *Politics and a Man*, Sydney 1972, p.266.

⁷⁶ See the memoranda by Robert Fearey of the Canberra meetings between Dulles, Spender and Doidge, US NA RG 59 Lot 54D423 of 14 February, 16 February and 17 February, particularly the morning of 17 February.

⁷⁷ Background Paper entitled ANZUS Council Preparations Honolulu August 1952, prepared in the Department of State 24 July 1952, ANZUS folder, Acheson Papers, Truman Library.

However the membership of the ANZUS Treaty itself was not subsequently expanded, nor was there significant pressure from Australia to expand it, which suggests that Australia had achieved what she desired, whatever the quibbles of McLean and Lee. The Australian public felt that they had an insurance policy against future Japanese expansion and the Australian government had a direct access to strategic planning of the United States and a secure environment in which to unfold and expand their self consciously independent foreign policy. This was due to the international circumstances of the time which helped to persuade the American administration that they needed to direct attention to the security of the Pacific area but in the immediate sense to Spender who had taken the initiative to establish a security pact with the United States and continued to badger the Americans until all opposition was overcome and the ANZUS Treaty was signed and ratified.

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