Chapter-6

CONCLUSION

The 20th century had seen lots of changes in the theory and practice of war, philosophy of life and the society. Two world wars and the end of the equally devastating Cold War, have at last brought the world to ... what?, complexity?, confusion?, unpredictability?. The need to draw meaning out of this confusion has led almost all the countries into a frenzy of acquiring more and more of sophisticated weaponry and the defence budget of each country is more today than yesterday. It is what Adorno, called ‘doing things’ to which we humans are so accustomed that we, not even for a single moment wait and think what would happen if we don’t do it. The answer lead to saving the human species from demise. But we have already accepted that the world is an anarchic system. In order to bring stability and defend ourselves, defence capabilities are important if we want peace and stability i.e. come to war if you want peace. The states are, though going through an arms race which is accepted by International Relations theorists as arms-dynamics, has been hankering for peace in an ameturistic manner. But then the hope lurks in everybody’s mind that we would reach to peace someday. The 20th century has shown some remarkable changes in this context, the hegemonies and power-politics has been replaced (not in an absolute term)
by the want of liberation by the individuals, independence of nations and transformation of societies\(^1\).

Australia, ever since it started making its domestic and foreign policy has been strongly influenced by the west; the western ideas, values as well as its prejudices. Being geographically attached to the Asia-Pacific region, it is hardly a logical approach. The east has its own notions of democracy, internationalism, economic structure and culture that are quite different from the west. This thesis has been an attempt to bring a balanced view of Australia’s realist stand in defence policy and its implication on the Asia-Pacific, especially the South-east Asian region. The east, the ex-colonies, doesn’t follow the realist school of thought to the extent the west follows. The ‘real politik’ defence and security policy, especially of the NATO countries is appalling. Australia’s trend towards militarism and its continuation to ‘alliance’ relation with US, under the ANZUS; in a no-war, no-threat situation is quite ironic, when they (the western countries, Australia included) felt NAM has become obsolete with the end of Cold War, since the war situation has been erased from the face of the earth(?)

Australia, as pointed out earlier, maintains a defence policy, that of the realist stand. Its relation with Indonesia is ‘real politik’. When ‘fear psychosis’ is given so much emphasis, than acquiring security through

CBM's and CSBM's has to be seen in a longer stretch of time. Hegemonism, Power politics and Cold War mentality has to be clearly removed while making a defence and security policy. But then Australia has not managed well in this stance. Its policy structure, under the Defence White Papers of 94 and 97 shows clearly its confusion. Maintaining 'self-reliance' under alliance, and its regional cooperation stance, the two extremes on one thread is quite an interesting process to observe in the coming years. Its defence policy is and will be even in the 21st century a mixture of 'forward defence' and 'self-reliance', as Steward Woodman and David lee mentions in the book of Mohan Malik's "Australia's security in the 21st century".

Australia being cushioned between South-east Asia and the South-Pacific Island countries, has to face a situation entirely different from that of the countries in the west. The approach also needs to be starkly different from the west. Australia's security and defence policy has a multidimensional approach in which a comprehensive range of policy instruments like diplomacy, military capabilities, economy and trade relations, overseas development assistance, immigration policy, cultural relations etc compound to enhancing Australia's security. These issues have to be dealt with care and caution by organizing and coordinating them. Its meddling, muddling and middling tendencies like an errand child has to be replaced by
a matured, organized and sophisticated planning structure in order to enter and earn respect in the international society in this new era of hope.

Australia, also needs to have a concrete knowledge and understanding and respect for the Asian values. The 'cultural shock' which is faced by the Westerners, for Asians not wearing shoes in their houses, which they treat as temples where you shed everything which shows authority, shows this lack of knowledge or respect of their culture. Asian also have their set of ideas, values and prejudices regarding human rights; having a strong social base is also to be understood by the high handed western theorists. Australia needs various people-to-people, government-to-government, NGO-to-NGO cooperation and increase cultural, educational, economical and technological exchange apart from the only defence cooperation which Australia is so keen to maintain with the South-east Asian countries. Australia's logic behind the numerous defence cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally with the Asian countries is their 'strategic' importance inflated by proximity. It seems that only defence relation could reduce the feeling of uncertainty and fear, which could bring two nations together. Can't it be for friendly reasons and the urge to know, to learn the diversities and then find similarities, which could bring two nations together? Australia needs to work on it in the next century probably it could make an agenda for this sole purpose.
Australia’s Security Concerns

It could be seen clearly, that the Defence White papers pointed out a number of times, that its threat does not come ‘from’ the region, but there is a probability of threat coming ‘through’ the region, especially from the South-east Asian countries. Australia is keen on sharing various defence relations with these countries, shown in chapter IV, so that their remains a good rapport among these states in the region, and also be strong enough to refute any potential threat on the Australian land. In order to thwart such advancement, ‘if and when’, it happens, Australia has taken up the task of strengthening its ‘sea-air gap’ with alacrity, as shown in chapter II. What Australia is actually doing with the South-east Asian countries is that it’s treating them as buffer zone or frontier zone and is trying to prepare them, in its own image (a white man’s burden) against the inevitable aggressor/s of either China, Japan or India, as shown in chapter V

Australia and US Alliance

Gary Smith says quite aptly that ‘just as economic protection was a genuine attempt to come to terms with historical fears of Australia’s economic vulnerabilities, military protection may have represented a genuine attempt to come to term with historical fears of military
vulnerability. Such fears of military vulnerability are prevalent in every country, but is strengthening ANZUS today a pragmatic or rational answer? NAM today in disproved and asked 'alliance against whom?' Then ANZUS is an alliance against whom and what?

US today is faced with increasing domestic contradictions, with notably structural problems including high deficits, mounting debts and low savings and investments. Still US is trying to hold on to its superpower status quite frantically and taking almost all the wrong moves, through UNO and recently through NATO. When US is the hegemonistic and an imperialistic power, in what terms Australia is trying to maintain its alliance with US or its friendship with US, when most of the countries in the region is absolutely against the presence of any big power to have a say in the region? How could Australia achieve its authenticity in the region's cooperation bids when it is almost always toeing the path of US?

Australia and Regional Security

The regional security literature in particular functions to marginalise and delegitimise non-state, non-military and non-elite issues, it also silences theoretical and critical perspectives that reveal how the analytical categories

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that constitute security as a powerful political discourse ‘circulate through the discursive circuits’ of modernity.

Australia’s identity in the region is recognized through various issues as pointed out by Paul Dibb, “due to its geographical location between Pacific and Indian ocean, its military size, capability and professionalism and also because it shares with ASEAN the characteristics of a medium sized military power and shares the concerns of long-range future about the changing global balance of power and about the potential for reduction in the long standing US military presence in the region”. Quite a demanding statement which some in the Australian academic would refute as they say that ‘Australia is too insignificant to South-east Asian countries’.

How Australia would /could achieve cooperation in the region could be analysed through its different bilateral and multilateral cooperation in defence under FPDA (with Singapore and Malaysia), the Agreement on Mutual Security with Indonesia and economic and security cooperation though ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Council for Security Cooperation

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5 In a personal informal conversation with some at the strategic and Defence Studies center in Canberra during 18th to 22nd December 1998.
in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Most of the defence and security analysts along with the Australian academia feel that whether or not the region will be able to maintain peace, stability and economic dynamism will partly depend upon the success of the ARF. ARF consists of ten ASEAN members along with seven dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the US and also Russia and India). ARF is largely a forum for dialogue on regional security concerns, through three stages from confidence building to preventive diplomacy to conflict resolution. It also plays an important role in encouraging regional support for international regimes against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the missile delivery systems. CSCAP is a very important second track institution for ARF. APEC, an economic institution where security issues are not formally discussed. It is the region’s preeminent economic institution and a strong force for furthering regional integration. The Australian government is committed to implementing the Bogor Declaration for free and fair trade and investment. What Australia needs to remember is that the name of the game is the Asia-Pacific region is not ‘defence’ but ‘economy’. As economies of various nations develop and become more intertwined, the impetus is there for countries to avoid conflicts through development of their
own capability for national resilience as well as cooperating with each other to create regional resilience.

A vision of common security is emerging as most countries in the region develop self-reliant defence policies and a sense of regional resilience and self-confidence, which is a necessary precondition for confidence-building measures.

South-east Asian countries apart from being important strategically also provides excellent market for Australia’s arms exports. Kim Beazley, former defence minister had stressed that the development of a strong military-industrial base will serve not only Australia, but also the needs of the region, as is pointed out earlier in the same chapter that Australia is trying to make the region strong. Australia’s anti-ship glide-bomb, minehunter, Catamaran, Jindalee OTHR, and anti-Submarine Warfare System and AEW&C systems have all been highlighted as potentially large export earners also woomera rocket range. But is this the way Australia would be taking up security issues and furthering peace? What Australia needs is not a militaristic approach but as Joe Cammillire and St. John Kettle points out that the six principles for security-building in Australia should be

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realignment, demilitarization, economic security, democratization and regionalisation and John Kettle’s sixth point the environmental security. Not only Australia but also every county should try to go through this path in order to see the world free of fear, war, chaos and destruction.

Implication of Defence and Security Policy of Australia on South-east Asia

The ambiguity and duality in its defence policy along with its new militaristic tendencies, as described in chapter V implies regional imbalance. Most of the South-east Asian countries feel Australian militarism as aggressive and has gone a long way towards achieving the feat of a regional power. Marshall Teedy Rusdy describing Australia as a military ‘nuisance’ confirms that Australia has reached ‘adolescence’ as Richard Bolt says. The implications were discussed under various manifested issues like; its dualism in the policy area, in both ‘foreign’ and ‘defence and security’ policy, its threat perceptions theoretical and practical overviews, how Australia plays under the South-east Asian fears. Moreover the difference of opinion between the labour government and the coalition government’s, on how to deal with the region shows their confused attitude. While the labour government called ‘regional engagement’, the coalition called ‘forward defence’. This duality is not only found between two government’s but also two ministries under the same government, which is explained in the chapter V. This ‘confused rhetoric’ led to confusion and uncertainty not only among
the Australian policy-makers but also among the South-east Asian strategists. Australian Policy-makers need to be clear in today's unclear world' a task quite hard to take up. Latent issues in the policy making where it's shown that Australia gives major emphasis on Defence Cooperation rather than on economic cooperation with the South-east Asian countries, which in not the logical way to deepen relations between countries. Secondly, the relevance of FPDA is also dealt. Thirdly, how Australia perceives the South-east Asian countries is as frontier zones to ward away the big powers which are threatening the region's stability like China majorly, and Japan and India to some extent. Lastly; the human rights issue which Australia takes is not really humanitarian but that of 'real politik' especially with Indonesia; as Greg Fry said it in a personal interview. These policy issues implies negatively on South-east Asian security concerns and Australia's role in the regional security agenda. What Australia needs at this moment of ambiguity is to draw a line between 'self reliance' under alliance, and the 'regional security' stance clearly.