PREFACE

Australia, faces tremendous strategic challenges. The peculiarity and uniqueness of the factors determining its policy-structure, particularly that of defence and security policies have led them to ponder over their loyalty to the west. They are trying to have closer relations with South-east Asia and Asia-Pacific region as a whole in the post Cold War era.

However, Australia's defence and security policy dealt with nationalism, regionalism and internationalism in quite a satisfactory manner, with certain inevitable loop holes. Australia has come to be acknowledged, as a Middle Power, like Canada. Its new militaristic stance, led the country to possess sophisticated weaponry like F-111's and F/A-18's along with the capability of Over The Horizon Radar's (OTHR) and acquiring Air borne Early warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft's. It has also gone through developing RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs) facilities and maintaining interoperability with US and to some extent with some of the ASEAN countries. Australia, in the post-Cold War era preferred to have a 'technological edge' which would allow it to overcome the deficiency on the context of population, size, defence's cost maintenance etc, in comparison to its neighbors.

There is change and continuity in Australian defence policy. Its self-reliance posture coupled with US alliance, which is revived by the coalition
government led by, Mr. John Howard, is taken up along with its old policies of ‘Forward Defence’. Its regional cooperation is enmeshed with various defence exercises and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). Indonesia comes under the ‘Area of Direct Military Interest’ (ADMI) and so is the most important country strategically. Followed by Malaysia and Singapore, with which it has the British legacy through FPDA. The government has used quite many rhetoric while dealing with the region. With South-east Asia, Australia wants to have ‘Strategic Engagement’ while with South Pacific ‘Constructive Commitment’ and with the rest of Asia it is ‘Strategic Contact’. It remains to be seen how Australia deals with two different policies like ‘self-reliance’, which usually leads to militarism and ‘regionalism’ which means interdependence and transparency and cooperation. Australia’s effort in the multilateral forums like ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Council for Security and Cooperation in Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), and in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), is quite applaudable. While the ASEAN countries do not want any superpower interference in the region Australia being a major ally of US, might lead to tensions in the long-run.

Australia’s alliance with the US is ‘the’ most important policy stance, started by ANZUS in the post World War II period and revived from then on through various ministerial visits. The coalition government has strengthened the importance of US alliance further by emphasizing that
Australia would support and defend Western ideals and values anytime and anywhere. Just the way Menzies emphasized the involvement of 'great and powerful friends' in the region. US bases on Australian soil, at North-west Cape, Nurrungar and Pine Gap were revived every ten years. Why the alliance in the post-Cold War era, when NAM was not considered appropriate, since it would have to ally against whom? What is ANZUS and FPDA? Why military alliance and not non-military cooperation?

These duality and ambiguity lead to misunderstanding and room for conflict. The South-east Asian countries feel apprehensive towards Australian defence policy. The implications of Australia's policy over South-east Asia is clearly visible, though some would like to ignore it, especially Australians. But from Asian point of view, Australia is quite a militaristic country.

The thesis is divided into 6 chapters. The first chapter is the introduction giving a brief overview of the rest of the chapters. The second chapter deals in detail about Australia's defence and security policy and its capabilities. The third chapter is about Australia's foreign and trade policy. While the fourth chapter deals with Australia's defence relation with South east Asia, its various bilateral defence exercises and cooperation's. The fifth chapter deals with the implications of Australia's defence and security policy in the post Cold War era over South-east Asia. While the last chapter deals with the various conclusions I have drawn.