Chapter VI

AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMACY AND THE SEATO PACT

The answer is tomorrow and tomorrow
We shall give up our lives tomorrow.
Today? this hour? this minute?
We are secure under the Stars-and-
Stripes.
- R. ZULUETA DA COSTA, Filipino poetess and writer.

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Quiet may be imposed by outside compulsion for a time, but Peace comes from the inner spirit, from the power of sympathy, the power of self-sacrifice — not of organization.

- RABINDRANATH TAGORE.
ANZUS was "a new form of Monroe Doctrine for the West Pacific". (1) With it was completed the first round of Australia's national quest for security, which started with the fall of Singapore in February 1942. But the view of Asia from their own shores was far too comforting to the Australians. China was in news headlines. Its Revolution and the success of its "volunteers" in Korea were regarded as defeats of the West by the Asians. It was perhaps something that gave satisfaction to the Asian ego of a good many of them. The comment made by an eminent American after the successful aggression of Japan against China, in eighteen-nineties, could now be applied to China:

Japan had won in her jiujutsu. Her autonomy is practically restored, her place among civilized nations seems to be assured; she has passed forever out of Western tutelage. What neither arts nor her virtues could ever have gained for her, she has obtained by the very first display of her new scientific powers of aggression and destruction. (2)

Then there was India, which, as a member of the Australian Parliament put it, was "sitting on the fence trying to follow the only policy that cannot be followed,

1 The expression is of Senator A. Wiley of the United States. See Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 13 July 1951.

2 Quoted in Rupert Emerson, Malaysia (New York, 1937), pp. 519-20. The remark is attributed to Lafcadio Hearn.
which is that of having a foot in each camp." (3) This also was the policy of the Indonesian Republic of 3,000 islands, some of which were a few hundred miles away from Australia's northern shoreline. Between these two realms were Burma and Siam (Thailand), which shared "a precarious freedom in which peace is almost a day-to-day gift of the Soviet." (4) In Malaya, Britain and Australia were "at war" with Communists. Then there was the French Indo-China, "where the Red thrust is inching towards us - the dagger that is now aimed at Australia." (5)

Despite the open clash of arms with the Chinese in Korea, Australians did not have the emotional resentment against the mainland Chinese, as the Americans had. Emotionally, they still resented the Japanese, despite the Peace Treaty they had signed with the latter along with 46 other countries. In contrast, Americans displayed their resentment against the Chinese, while their "Cherry-blossom sentiments" were reserved for

4 Ibid. It may be added here that on the eve of the conclusion of the SEATO Pact, Marshal Pibul Songgram of Thailand asserted that 20,000 Thai Communists were massed at the Chinese border and might invade the country through Phong Saly and Sam Neua in Laos. For this, see Study Group of the R.I.I.A., Collective Defence in South East Asia: The Manila Treaty and Its Implications (London, 1956), p. 121.
the Japanese. The American and Australian nations were not one with each other in their comparative assessments of the two major countries of East Asia. Australia, however, reconciled itself to the American susceptibilities in the spirit of its newly achieved alliance. She also did not have sizeable investment or trade relations with China to warrant early recognition of the new regime, as was the case with Britain. Prof. Fitzgerald was, therefore, right when he pointed out that Australia had hardly a policy at all in relation to the "largest and most powerful Asian state bordering upon the Pacific Ocean."(6)

Australia, however, could not ignore (what she considered) the Chinese-inspired activity in Malaya and Indo-China. Gradually she came round to sharing the Western assessment of the real goals of communism in East Asia, which were outlined with clarity by the American Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. (7) According to this official, the Communists had three objectives, namely, (i) the manpower of China - not 450 million human beings, but 450 million units of manpower; (ii) the industrial capacity of Japan, which was 50 per cent

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of that of the Soviet Union; and (iii) the rich strategic resources and excess food supplies of Southeast Asia. (8) He then pointed out that the Communists had nearly achieved their first goal by overrunning China. The attack on Korea was aimed at Japan. The battle for Indo-China was designed to open up Southeast Asia. China was accused, on the floor of the Australian Parliament, of waging a war by subversive means in Southeast Asia "by the age-old method of supporting a rebel warlord against the rulers, and then ruling through him." (9)

All this affected the Australian Government's view of the nature of war in Indo-China and the part being played by France in it. During the visit of a member of the French Government to Canberra, at the request of the Government of Australia, Casey made a categorical statement, saying that "France was fighting a great battle in Indo-China on the outcome of which depended the security of many other countries, including Australia." (10)

Australia and the Conflict in Indo-China

Almost since 6 March 1946, when the French troops under Gen. Jacques Laclerc landed at Haiphong and

8 Dulles, next day, called it the "rice bowl" of Asia. Ibid. For economic importance of the area to Australia and the world, see Casey's statement in CPD, HR, vol. NS 4 (10 August 1954), p. 102.
10 Current Notes, vol. 24, no. 3 (March 1953), p. 166.
occupied Hanoi, France had been locked in a deadly combat with its erstwhile Asian subjects. As the resistance of the people grew, the twin currents of nationalism and communism were, in due course, intertwined – the latter getting an edge over the former – because the French would not budge an inch from their avowed object of subduing the peninsula, which they had ruled for sixty years. Gradually it became an episode in the world-wide "Cold War" of the fifties. The French were compelled, by their Western allies as well as the situation on the spot, to develop an iron hand, disguised in the velvet glove. The iron hand was meant for the Communists, who were to be crushed as far as possible. But the velvet glove was for the liberal nationalists, who were offered limited self-government. The velvet glove was revealed through the creation of the semi-sovereign States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia within the French Union. {11) Australia, in line with other Western Powers, accorded recognition to these States on 8 February 1950. "Prompt recognition of the three new states", explained Spender, the Minister for External

11 International relations, defence and some functions of a federal nature were still in the hands of the French.
Affairs), "... should encourage moderate leaders of Indo-China who did not wish their country to become a satellite of Moscow or Peking." (12)

After shoring up the political front, France girdled her loins for a quick and decisive victory through the well-known Navarre Plan. (13) The United States promised France, prior to 1954, resources upto $385 millions. In November 1952, Australia also sent a military mission to study land and air warfare, not only in Malaya but also in Indo-China. (14) In March next year, Canberra invited M. Jean Latourneau, the French Minister in Charge of Relations with Associated States. During his stay in the Australian Capital Territory, he was closeted with the Prime Minister, the Chief of Staff and others who mattered. (15) In his speech to members of Parliament,

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13 For a good account of this plan, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change (New York, 1963), p. 358. Also see the Dept. of State Bulletin, vol.30 (19 April 1954), p. 583 and the New York Times, 6 April 1954. As testified by American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on 5 April 1954, the plan was designed to break the organized body of Communist "aggression" by the end of 1955. The remnants of the Vietminh guerrillas could then be crushed by 1956 by the indigenous troops of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.


15 He also saw and conferred with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament, the Leader of
he observed:

We now have the southern half of Indo-China completely free and we think it will not be long before the northern half is free also. (16)

Australia offered military equipment to France from its ready stock. (17) Plans were also formulated to supply Colombo Plan aid to the Associated States. Latoureuau's visit was followed by that of a French Technical Mission of five service officers to examine military and air equipment offered by Australia for use in Indo-China. (18) The Australian assistance to the French had a good press in Australia. (19)

In mid-1953, it became clear that the war in Korea was at last going to be over after a negotiated settlement. The smiles of the Communists at Panmunjon gave hopes, to some in Australia, of the possible change in the behaviour of the Communists, which would lead to the easing of tensions in Southeast Asia as well. But Casey, who had succeeded Spender as Minister for

the Opposition and others.

18 Ibid., no. 5 (May 1953), pp. 289-90.
External Affairs, put out a rather lengthy statement explaining the close relation between Korea and Indo-China. (20) The sweetness of the Communists, he cautioned, might be a trick to cover new aggression in Indo-China—"one step backwards" which Lenin had regarded desirable in order to consolidate and build up strength for further steps forward at a more suitable time. He also pointed out, on the basis of the information received from the Australian missions in Singapore, Bangkok and Saigon and other sources, that the Vietminh had committed aggression in Laos and, a week earlier, had almost over-run the Royal capital of Luang Prabang.

In July, Australia joined the representatives of the Governments, whose troops had fought in Korea under the United Nations, in issuing a declaration warning the Communist bloc against disturbing peace in other parts of Asia. (21) Secretary of State Dulles also repeated the warning later. (22) Australia, however, did not feel secure enough to reduce budget estimates for defence for 1953-54. (23) Trouble was expected in Southeast Asia and Australia felt that she could not remain off guard.

23 Fadden in CPD, HR, vol. NS 1 (9 September 1953),p.57.
France was fighting not only on the military front, but also on the political. Politically, her fight was with elements inside the territories she still held, and here her anxieties were no less. In Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, disgusted with the protocol of 9 May 1953, openly revolted and exiled himself to Bangkok. He demanded that the Constitution of the French Union should follow the model of the Commonwealth of Nations. (24) On 3 July, France offered to negotiate autonomy with each of the three Indo-China States. Laos signed a treaty of "Amity and Friendship" with France on 22 October. In Vietnam, Emperor Bao Dai tried to negotiate with the French, but opinion within Vietnam was averse to giving him any backing and demands were voiced for complete independence. All these events profoundly influenced the French and affected their subsequent attitudes. They realized that even if they fought on and saved Indo-China from the Communists, they would have to quit because of the pressures from the nationalists. France then tried to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh for ending the war, but did not succeed. The war had cost France £ 3,000,000,000.

Similarly, Emperor Bao Dai is also reported to have told President Auriol of France: "We want to be independent, but are willing to enter the French Union - so long as it is a Union, not a sort of club and not a nursery.... We want something like the British Commonwealth, where we can feel like Canada.... We want an army, we want to command an army." Quoted in Bernard Newman, Report on Indo-China (London, 1953), p. 200. Emphasis added.
which was just about fifteen times as much as Australia spent on defence each year. (25) Almost 100,000 French troops - the very flower of the country's youth - were killed and the number of the wounded reached 250,000. (26) As the material and human losses mounted up, the French began to be weary of it. It was the longest war that the French nation had ever waged in its history. (27) In October 1953, the National Assembly of France decided by 315 votes to 257 to achieve peace through negotiation in the peninsula of Indo-China.

Australia, like other Western Powers, wanted France to carry on the fight for the common cause of stemming communism. The United States suggested that the matter might be brought before the United Nations. (28) France emphatically refused, pleading that the matter lay strictly within her own domestic jurisdiction. A precedent here would have affected the position of France in Algeria and her other colonies. Later Dr Evatt made much of this attitude and claimed that if the issue had been brought

26 Ibid.
27 After 1954, the war in Vietnam was destined to become the longest that the American nation has ever waged in its history.
up before the world body, the West would not have suffered the consequences of the French intransigence. (29) The military position of the French was indeed hopeless, but they were hiding the fact from the world. (30)

Despite this bold face outside, uneasiness grew in France. It was a relief to her when, in the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Berlin in February 1954, Molotov accepted the Western proposal for discussing Korea and Vietnam in a Conference in Geneva. Secretary of State Dulles, however, advised France to go ahead with the "Navarre Plan" without being affected by the prospects of the parleys in Geneva. France sent a team of two - a politician and a soldier - to assess its chances of success in Indo-China. The two gave different reports. The politician, Rene Pleven, found that the situation was hopeless from all angles, while the soldier, General Paul Elly, felt that it was not all so bleak for the French in their Empire in the East and that success was achievable. In a rather swift and dramatic move, the French occupied a strategic position in Dien Bien Phu. General Giap, the Communist strategist accepted the challenge. On 13 March,

29 Dr Evatt in CPD, HR, vol. NS 4 (10 August 1954), pp. 104-5.

30 As late as 19 February 1954, Gen. Henri Eugene Navarre made the statement that the conflict in Indo-China was nothing more than a domestic incident which could be dealt with. He further said that the Communists had exhausted their advantage during the wet season and would be wiped out during the dry one.
the Vietminh launched the offensive. So ferocious was the Vietminh charge that the French informed the United States that they could not resist Giap's men without further American assistance. This was one single event that contributed to the change in the American attitude towards Southeast Asia, a change which Australia had been seeking ever since the end of the war. The Western setback in Indo-China was too momentous to be ignored. From 24 March, a distinct departure was noted in the traditional attitude of Washington. On 29 March, Dulles talked of "united action" to thwart the Communist threat. (31) In the same speech, delivered before the Overseas Press Club, the Secretary of State pointed out:

They [i.e. Communists] have burrowed and tunneled to gain forward positions so that the inner citadels can be subjected to mass assault from close positions. (32)

On 3 April, Dulles explained to the Congressional leaders the desirability of attacking the beseigers of Dien Bien Phu, even if it had to be done without the assistance of other Western allies. The Congressional leaders, however, advised him to seek the support of the allies. (33) on 7 April, Dulles called for "instant and massive

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32 Ibid., p. 203.
retaliation". It was this call that created fissures in the Western camp and put to stern test the Australian will and capacity to help bridge the differences between the Mother Country on the one hand and the mighty United States on the other. How the antipodean diplomacy tried its hand in solving the crisis and achieving another wider pact, this time including Britain, will be discussed in the following pages. Here, it is enough to say that the defenders of Dien Bien Phu had at last to surrender on 8 May and thus the last nail was driven into the coffin of the French Empire in Indo-China. As it is well known, after this, the French, jaunty in defeat, marched out of Indo-China and the Americans, in time, marched in. But for the people of the "Golden Peninsula" (Lam Thong), as some Southeast Asians like to call it, peace remained a mirage.

**Australia and the Anglo-American Differences**

In 1956, dust had settled down on the issues which had clouded the minds of men in all countries in the recent past. At this time, Secretary of State Dulles revealed fragments of his mind to the Chief of the *Time-Life* Washington Bureau in an exclusive interview.(34)

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He said:

You have to take chances for peace just as you must take chances in war .... The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. (35)

He asserted that once in 1953 and twice in 1954, America got "to the verge", but war in East Asia was avoided at the last moment. The first threat came when the Chinese could break off negotiations in Korea, as President Syngman Rhee had released North Korean Prisoners-of-War. The third instance of near war was in the autumn of 1954, when the Chinese appeared to be about to invade Taiwan (Formosa). In both instances, Dulles seriously rattled the sabre and let China hear it, first, through India's Nehru and, last, through Burma's U Nu.

The second instance of the use of Dullesian "brinkmanship" concerns us most for the purpose of this study. It came in April 1954 when, in face of the impending débâcle of the French in Indo-China, he and President Eisenhower urged a link-up of the United States, Britain, France and friendly Asian States to put down Communist onslaughts in Indo-China. At the same time, they warned that if such a move brought open Chinese intervention, then, assembly-points in South China would be destroyed by the American atomic bomb. These pronouncements gave some anxious moments to others in the Western camp and, more particularly, to the Government in Canberra. The

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35 Ibid., p.78.
Secretary of State, as pointed out by an Asian scholar in his unpublished doctoral work, was in the era of diplomatic rigidity in East Asia created by four men - Mao Tse-tung, Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee and Dulles himself. Our purpose here is to show how Australia steered clear of the controversies generated by the "brinkmanship" of the American statesman and attained, at last, a security pact, in which some nations of the Asian mainland, including two from Southeast Asia, were members.

The defences of Dien Bien Phu were gradually crumbling down and the fall of this last bastion of the French was only a matter of time. General Paul Elly rushed to America to tell the Pentagon about it. Though for the West, there was darkness all around, a decision in January-February 1954 by the Foreign Ministers of the Big Four in Berlin left some hope shimmering on the horizon. According to this decision, an international conference was to be called in Geneva for discussing Korea and Vietnam. For the French, it was a godsend. They wanted to pull out of the quagmire of Indo-China, saving as much face as they could, though the American view, as expressed by their Ambassador in Saigon, was

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that "the French would not be allowed to skedaddle unless China gave absolute guarantees." (37)

The Dulles' call for the "united action" had its echoes throughout the Western world. On 7 April, the Australian Leader of Opposition, citing a broadcast by the Australian radio, informed the Parliament in Canberra about the confirmation by the French Foreign Office that America had proposed that Great Britain, the United States, France, Australia and New Zealand should make a declaration proposing a five-Power warning to the Communists in Indo-China. (38) On this, however, Britain did not see eye to eye with America. She felt that the move might lead to a war, in which success was doubtful. It would also create a rift in the Commonwealth of Nations. For making the latter plea, Britain had good reasons too. The Prime Ministers of India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia were in conference in Colombo between 20 April and 1 May. When the American Secretary of State called for "united action", they asked for "cease fire". Among the Asians, Thailand and the Philippines supported the United States. (39)

Though Australia was opposed to a hot war in East Asia, the sudden change in America's indifference towards Southeast Asia was noted and welcomed by her. She almost rejoiced at the thought of direct American involvement in Southeast Asia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* described the pleas for "united action" as "the greatest contribution to Australia's national security since the signature of the ANZUS Pact." (40) Both the United Kingdom and Australia wanted France to carry on the fighting till a settlement was reached in Geneva, even if this settlement resulted in the partition of Vietnam. But when it came to exchanging blows with the Vietminh (and the Chinese) before the talks in Geneva, both Britain and Australia demurred.

Intervening in a supply debate, both Casey and Evatt spoke on Indo-China. The Leader of Opposition cautioned the Government against "impetuous" Australian consent to intervene and suggested that recourse might be had to the machinery of the World Organization, especially, if the Geneva Conference failed. (41) Casey too was in favour of a reference to the United Nations, but was discouraged by the real difficulty of getting France to approve the move. (42) As for the *ad hoc* coalition of America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and the

40 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 1954.
41 Evatt in *CPD, HR*, vol. NS 3 (7 April 1954), pp. 127-29.
Associated States of Indo-China for intervention against the Vietminh and, possibly, the Chinese, the Australian Minister for External Affairs evaded a straight answer, saying that the proposal from the United States required further exploration before any new statement of the Australian policy could be made on that point. (43)

While the technique of "sudden diplomacy" adopted by Dulles had created a flurry in the Administration Building in Canberra and, also, in its Parliament House, there were signs of uneasiness among the informed and animated groups of opinion-makers in the country. The basic assumptions of the country's Indo-China policy were subjected to doubt. On 8 April, a letter was published in The Age and The Canberra Times asking the Government not to give unqualified support to the United States "without the fullest consultation of members of the British Commonwealth and its own Parliament." (44) The signatories to the letter also challenged the uncritical acceptance by both Casey and Evatt of the position that the Vietminh movement was Communist, which was "not in accordance with fact." (45) The signatories to the letter included Bishop Bergmann and Professors C.P. Fitzgerald,

45 Wentworth in ibid., p. 239.
Manning Clark and Davidson. This letter had its echoes in the Parliament House. Casey recalled that one could agree with two-thirds of it, but not the remainder and condemned the writers for what they had said in the letter. (46) The Government thus took exception to an expression of views by senior members of the Australian National University and challenged, as has been observed, "not the facts, but the right to express them." (47)

The Minister for External Affairs, however, conceded that there was need to know the situation in Indo-China and Asia at first hand, before formulating the future course of the country's policy. He informed Parliament that after his departure for Geneva on 12 April, he would make stopovers in Singapore, Saigon and Washington. (48) These visits left quite an impression upon the Minister. His discussions with statesmen in Britain, India and other Asian countries removed whatever hesitation he had in cold shoudering the idea of physical intervention in Indo-China. Later on, he made a convincing case for non-intervention in his country's Parliament. (49)

46 Casey in ibid., p. 245.
49 The oft-quoted remark of Casey on the subject was: "/Intervention/ would not have the backing of the United Nations. It would put us in wrong with world opinion, particularly in Asia. It would embroil us with Communist China. It would wreck the Geneva
It was indeed a decade sooner for the adoption of the "All the Way With LBJ" attitude for Australia. Every new crisis in the world around Australia revealed that its interests were bound up with that of the United States, but as Prof. Crawford stated in 1952, Australians would not support the United States "in the manner of a parrot-like satellite" and that they "will press their own views to the point of outspoken criticism." (50) At the same time, the dilemma for the Australian nation was that the sympathy of the United States could not be thrown overboard at a time when, at last, the latter had extended the area of its interest to Southeast Asia. Besides sympathy, it was also the aim of the Australian statesmen to make the United States participate in a regional organization in the area, without which, they felt, this organization would lack power and influence. It was only the United States, the Australians felt, which could give a lead to the urge for stemming the contagion of communism in the mainland of Asia. The Minister himself asked Whitlam, then a promising, young Labourite, and others in the Opposition, not to aim "snides and backstairs kicks" at the United States. (51)

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50 Conference and it was most unlikely to stop the fall of Dien Bien Phu." CPD, HR, vol. NS 4 (16 August 1954), pp. 96-7.


The opposition to the "united action" proposal deeply annoyed the US Secretary of State. His later assertions indicate that he himself thought that there would be no war and that the manifestation of the resolve to take united action would be enough to shelve the Communist plans in the "Golden Peninsula". A little bluff and a little brinkmanship would give the desired result, he seems to have thought. But the opposition of the Allies and criticism in the un-committed realm led to the modification of his plan.

He then proposed an ad hoc coalition comprising Great Britain, United States, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and the three Associated States of Indo-China. (52) The coalition, Dulles suggested, should declare its readiness to take concerted action and should set about organising a collective defence pact for Southeast Asia. President Eisenhower wrote a personal letter to Prime Minister Churchill urging him to fall in line. (53) On 7 April, the President described Southeast Asia as a "row of dominoes" with Indo-China being the first in the row. If it fell, the President asserted, the last would go very quickly. (54) This "domino" theory continued to influence the American approach to Southeast Asia for years to come.

52 Eden, n. 37, p. 92.
The new move of America was a trump card. She had offered to most of the countries threatened by China what they had been asking for all those years. As a sop to India, Dulles proposed exclusion of Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. Though Britain and Australia welcomed it, they could not easily swallow the idea that the ad hoc coalition should go into action before the proposed pact to warn China against interference in the peninsula of Indo-China. Both felt that if France continued a holding war, the ad hoc coalition would be hardly called for and could even be dangerous. (55)

On 11 April, Dulles and Eden met personally. Eden opposed the idea of an ad hoc coalition, but suggested a Southeast Asian pact. The joint statement referred to the re-examination of the possibility of establishing collective defence for Southeast Asia and the South-west Pacific. (56) On 28 April, the American Secretary of State was rather upset. He was shown by the French a telegram from General Navarre notifying that the French position in Dien Bien Phu was going from bad to worse. Only a massive strike could save it.

54 New York Times, 6 April 1954. Also The Hindu(Madras), 8 April 1954.
55 Eden, n.37, pp. 93-4.
This meant that the other side was preparing to come to Geneva with Dien Bien Phu in its pocket.

Dulles again thought in terms of the "united action", but two factors - one internal and the other external - sealed the fate of his plan. The external factor was the final refusal of the British Government after the meeting of the Cabinet, Service Ministers and Chiefs of Staff, to go with the idea. (57) Internally, all but one of the Chiefs of Staff of the United States pointed to the military hazards, if such a course was adopted, and opposed the plan. (58) On the joint military intervention, Australia's attitude was the same as that of Britain. However, Britain and Australia did not go as far as the Asian neutrals in their disapproval of the American policies. The latter opposed intervention as well as the proposed regional security pact. Australia, like England, did not resent the American decision. She only felt that the action was not going to give the desired result. At the same time, a regional security pact was warmly welcomed in Canberra. The proposal of a security pact was, however, not as innocuous as it looked. It led to new strains in Anglo-American relations and, consequently, anxiety in Australian Government circles.

57 The Times, 26 April 1954.
As we have seen, Dulles first proposed "united action" and then *ad hoc* coalition. Now he was proposing a defensive alliance in Southeast Asia, which was to be organized even before the conclusion of the Geneva Conference. The pact, if concluded before the end of the East-West negotiations in Geneva, would be a diplomatic counterblast to the likely setback in Dien Bien Phu. All his eggs, however, did not hatch. Britain argued that a hastily signed military alliance would wreck the Conference in Geneva. She also argued that the free Asian States should be asked to join in the guarantee of the Geneva settlement and should also be brought into the eventual defence treaty. (59) Feelings in the State Department were ruffled at this British obstructiveness. Senator Knowland asked for a Southeast Asia defence pact without the United Kingdom. (60) On the British side, Sir Hartley Shawcross, said publicly that the Anglo-American relations were at "an unhappy low ebb." (61) Australia was distressed at this state of relations between London and Washington. She now sought "to bring about the basic unity between the Commonwealth \(^{59}\) of Nations\(^{7}\) and the United States of America and so \(^{7}\) to\(^{7}\)

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61 Ibid., 7 May 1954.
avoid a future that is fraught with the gravest perils for us all," (62) the role which Dulles had himself suggested in American-Australian Society two years ago. The evidence of this role was a move, which came out of the Geneva meeting of the ANZUS Council on 2 May. Thus, what was suggested two days later was a compromise between a pact after Geneva (the British view) and the one before Geneva (the American view). Accordingly, Britain and the United States agreed to start staff talks on the defence of Asia in the near future.

However, the initiative that came out of the ANZUS meeting did not lead to the bridging of the gulf between American and British approaches. On 10 May, the Secretary of State in the British Government, Selwyn Lloyed, told his country's Parliament that Britain's participation in staff talks did not involve commitment. (63) In a fast move on 16 May, America announced its decision to hold separate talks with France on the defence of Indo-China. (64) On this, Churchill stalled even the military talks. Next day, he announced that Britain was taking no part in Franco-American talks, but was not averse to holding staff talks. The American delegation

in Geneva was also told about Britain's willingness about staff discussions. On 19 May, the American President told a Press Conference that Britain was not "indispensable" and his country could go ahead with the pact without her. (65)

Australia was now confronted with the dilemma - not for the first time, however - of entering into a regional pact with America and without Britain, or not joining the pact at all. Both Australian and New Zealand delegations at Geneva thought that the move from the White House was a "mistake". (66) New Zealanders, however resolved the dilemma, the way the Australians could not. They plainly told America that they could not join another pact for Asia and South Pacific without "the Mother Country." (67) The old warrior in Churchill asserted itself, and he announced to the Commons that the American policy was inconsistent with the spirit of the Western Alliances. (68) This was a hint, the implications of which were not missed in Washington, and nothing was subsequently heard about the pact-without-Britain.

67 Ibid., 21 May 1954.
In Australia, the Parliament, the Press and the public reflected the anxiety of their own Government. The *Melbourne Age*, though emphasising the need for the pact, praised London for restraining Washington in Indo-China. (69) The *Sydney Morning Herald*, however, took a different view. It chided Churchill for his "cautious" approach and insisted that the pact was needed right there and then, and not on some future date. (70) The paper had earlier praised Senator Knowland's demand that the allies of America should tell where they stood and asserted:

> For America and Britain, the defence of South-East Asia may be seen as strategically desirable, for France it is a matter of national prestige; but for Australia it is a matter of life and death. If the cork is forced out of the bottle, in Mr Eisenhower's graphic phrase, and aggressive Communism floods over the peninsula into Indo-China, Australia will be placed in immediate and deadly peril. The security of South-East Asia is Australia's security. (71)

Throughout the controversy, the Government's view was that the pact should follow the conclusion of the Geneva conference and not precede it. In 1 May, Casey had said that positive steps on the pact should be taken after the pattern of the Conference in Geneva became obvious and that it should be defensive in nature. (72)

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69 Cited in Albinski, n. 19, p. 359.
70 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1954.
71 Ibid., 29 April 1954.
72 Ibid., 3 May 1954.
On 22 May, America announced that the five-Power military talks would begin "in the next few days or two weeks."(73) Casey, however, took care to point out that these talks did not mean that the Geneva Conference was breaking down. He also stressed that participating countries were not bound by the conclusions of the group. (74) On 2 June, President Eisenhower himself conceded that the proposed negotiations were "tentative and non-political".(75)

Staff talks were held among the five nations early in June, but their findings were not announced. In a determined bid to resolve the differences between the two great allies, it was announced on 15 June that Churchill and Eden would see Eisenhower and Dulles in Washington on 26 June. Before flying to Washington, Eden gave one last jolt to Dulles. On 23 June, he told the House of Commons that, firstly, the pact should be "akin to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" and, secondly, there should be a non-aggression pact between the Communist and non-Communist Powers - an Eastern Locarno - as the pact would be "a future safeguard"only and not "a present panacea". (76) Casey, however, was at hand in Washington with New Zealand's Clifton Webb. Both had come for the ANZUS meeting, but sought and worked for the principal aim of the antipodean diplomacy, namely,

76 Ibid., 24 June 1954.
to bring the two leaders of the Anglo-Saxon world closer on the issue, which had divided them.

The main differences centred on the timing of the Southeast Asian pact. America's declared position, as stated earlier, was that there should be a Southeast Asian pact without delay, Geneva or no Geneva. Britain, on the other hand, stood for the pact, but her firm view was that it should be concluded only after Geneva had pronounced its verdict over the thorny questions in Southeast Asia. However, Washington parleys contributed to the softening of Britain and this was first disclosed, surprisingly enough, through a statement by Casey on 27 June. He reportedly said on that day that Her Majesty's Government was now willing to discuss the formation of a mutual security pact for Southeast Asia, even before the formal ending of the Geneva Conference. (77) The fact that this change in the British attitude was disclosed in Casey's statement indicated that the Australians were involved in a big way in what was going on. They were at least aware of the change in the British view, if they were not responsible for it. Also, not only that Britain had compromised her publicly stated position, but Australia too had given up the stand of 1 May (78) that the pact should follow the results of Geneva parleys.

78 On p. 250, para 2.
So the net result of the exertions of the Anglo-Saxon statesmen, meeting in Washington, was that America gave up her insistence on an immediate pact in Southeast Asia and Britain withdrew her objection to the setting up of a working party to draft the treaty. And, of course, the British idea of an Eastern Locarno silently went back to the limbo from which it had come so surprisingly that quite a few in America and elsewhere had been taken aback by it. In the interest of securing a pact for the security of Southeast Asia, with America's leading role in it, both Britain and Australia gave up their earlier qualms about taking a precipitate action before the results of the Geneva Conference were out. (79)

The Australians could now have the satisfaction that, partly through the efforts of the statesmen from the ANZAC countries, an element of certainty had been added to the otherwise fluid situation. Antipodean diplomacy had now succeeded in achieving a reconciliation between the two leading members of the Anglo-Saxon family, namely, Great Britain and the United States. (80)

The much sought after Southeast Asian pact was at last in sight, though some hurdles were yet to be crossed.

79 An American scholar has thus commented on this transformation in Anglo-Australian positions: "Anglo-Australian position on waiting for the outcome of Geneva had given way to American intransigence, but both Britain and Australia were about to obtain their desired agreement." Albinski, n. 19, p.362.

80 "It is sufficient to say", asserts a learned opinion, "that the contribution of ANZUS to the signature of
Australia and the Geneva Conference

On 29 June, the Liberal-Country Party coalition, led by Sir Robert Menzies, was again returned to power by the Australian electorate. Intervention, by this time, had become a dead issue. The new Cabinet now proceeded to grapple with live ones. At least two demanded its immediate attention. One was the settlement that was being worked out in Geneva between the Communist and non-Communist sides. The other was the much-sought-after defensive alliance in Southeast Asia, being carved out of a maze of differing viewpoints and conflicting interests within the Western camp itself.

In Geneva, Australia shared the general predicament of the West, which had almost nothing on which bargain could be made. Even before his country's humiliating surrender at Dien Bien Phu on 8 May, Bidault, the French Foreign Minister, had confessed to Eden and Dulles that "he had hardly a card in his hand, perhaps just a two of clubs and a three of diamonds." (81) On

81 Quoted in Eden, n. 37, p. 110.
4 June, the Cabinet in Canberra held a long session entirely devoted to Indo-China. It laid down six points, (82) which the Australian diplomacy had to impress upon the Powers directly involved in the negotiations, started formally a day after the débâcle of Dien Bien Phu. The first point was that in considering Indo-China, Laos and Cambodia should be treated apart, and not mixed up with Vietnam. Secondly, the Vietminh should vacate these two countries. As the Cabinet in Canberra viewed it, the conflict in Vietnam was a civil war, but the same could not be said of Laos and Cambodia. There, it was a clear case of Vietminh invasion. The third point was that the partition of Vietnam was to be accepted by the West on the best possible terms available. The fourth was that whatever be the settlement, it should be guaranteed internationally and provisions should be made for the enforcement of the guarantee. The fifth was that the free Asian States, particularly India, should be associated with the settlement. Lastly, the Cabinet felt that the settlement should be buttressed by a Western arrangement, namely, a Southeast Asia defence treaty. Casey had departed for Geneva for the second time after this crucial meeting, with his Government's six-point plan in his brief. Though his country was not represented at the Conference for Vietnam, he held informal discussions with leaders of the American, French

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(82) For these decisions, see Current Notes, vol.25, no.8 (August 1954), pp. 576-7.
and British delegations and sent copious reports of these to Canberra. (83) Lobbying arrangements were maintained with the French and Vietnamese delegations. (84) Over and above all, Casey saw Chou En-lai as well, though care, it seems, was taken to play it down and nothing was heard of what transpired between them. The conference in Geneva ended on 21 July. The Australians came back from Geneva with the first three conditions fulfilled "due in part to Commonwealth's \"Australia's\" representations." Disappointments came on the fourth and fifth. India and others did not join the guarantee, as they felt that their sole guarantee meant next to nothing in the absence of the American guarantee. The only satisfaction that Australia could have was that India with Canada, another Commonwealth partner, were in the International Commission for Supervision and Control, with the former as its Chairman.

The settlement, as it came out of Geneva, was no comfort to Australia. It was a victory to the Communists and not to the West. But diplomacy is always the art of the possible, and Australia could not have got anything better either. Casey saw three advantages in the settlement. The first was that the independence of Laos and Cambodia was preserved and the Communist side

promised to respect it. Secondly, the fighting was stopped and its extension in other parts of Southeast Asia was prevented. In the last place, a neutral buffer zone ("a protective pad", as Eden called it in his Memoirs) was created against the Communist world. (85)

In the Parliament House in Canberra, the settlement in Geneva was hailed by members of the Treasury benches as "another nail in the coffin of White prestige in Asia." (86) Wentworth, known for his acid comments on communism, compared it not only to Munich but also to Vichy and Yalta settlements, explaining to his listeners that the second was made after the capitulation of France and the third resulted in the partition and later "destruction" of Poland. (87) Members saw the settlement with grim forebodings. "The Geneva Conference", complained one, "may have solved some problems for France, but I doubt whether it has done the same for Australia." (88)

A few members viewed it differently. "For the first time since Japan invaded Manchuria", observed Whitlam of the minority Labour Party, "there is peace on the continent of Asia, and for the first time since World

War began 40 years ago, there is peace throughout the world." (89) In Canberra, he was giving expression to the sense of relief felt by many people in many places - London, Paris, Delhi, Saigon, Jakarta and so on - at the end of the shooting war in Indo-China. But little did they all realize, as did Wikham Steed, that for each such single year of peace, mankind has had fourteen years of war. Soon the Golden Peninsula was again to plunge into another bout of war, in which the Australian soldier would go into action, side by side with the American, but not the British.

**Australian Diplomacy and the Southeast Asian Alliance**

The last remaining task for the Cabinet in Canberra was to realize the sixth point, namely, an alliance in Asia for securing its neighbourhood from the menace of Communist expansionism. The regional pact, it was hoped, would not only meet the needs of Australian security but would also be a forum through which Australia would have a continuous dialogue with as many Asian States in its proximity as possible. The task was by no means easy. The controversies, which had clouded the relations between the two Anglo-Saxon giants had died out, but some ambers were still left and a sustained effort from this young Anglo-Saxon nation was needed to put them out.

The first report of the working group on 20 July revealed differences between the British and

89 Whitlam (ALP) in ibid. (12 August), p. 273.
American approaches towards the pact. While Britain wanted a wider membership for Asians, America wanted to extend membership only to Thailand and the Philippines. The Australian view was closer to the British. Britain, in the second place, felt that the pact should deal with "the complex economic, social and cultural problems of the area," while America wanted one modelled on the NATO and the ANZUS, which implied an altogether different emphasis. (90) The next day, another proposal came from America suggesting the inclusion of Taiwan in the pact. (91) Two days later, however, Dulles accepted the British (and Australian) position that the pact should take into account the milieu in Asia and remained silent on the question of the entry of Taiwan. (92) On 30 July, Britain, supported by Australia, approached the Colombo Powers for joining the proposed pact. Australians of all shades of opinion understood the importance of the inclusion of these Powers into the defence organization they were planning. (93) It was soon apparent that Pakistan was favourable and Ceylon sympathetic, but Burma, Indonesia and India remained firmly aloof from the pact, which was in the offing.

93 For example, see Pollard in CPD, HR, vol. NS 4 (12 August 1954), p. 269. "Those nations [Colombo Powers] to a greater degree than the Australian Government," remarked
The pact, which now loomed on the Southeast Asian horizon, thus fell short of Australian expectations. Casey made an effort to salvage whatever he could, at a time when hopes of the participation of all Colombo Powers were fading. He suggested a two-tier treaty. In the one tier, membership would be limited and members would be devoted to taking concrete measures to meet the further expansion of the Communists. In the other tier, there would be more members, including the Asian neutrals, and it would be hortative. (94) Australia really acted as a bridge between Asia and the West, in the sense that Casey patiently explained the West's policies to the Asian statesmen during his personal meetings with them. He also transmitted their comments and objections to the Western capitals via Canberra's Administration Building. Despite the earnest efforts of the Minister, the scheme of dual system of treaties did not materialize. Australia's one great consolation was that there was now harmony between London and Washington. The regional pact, on which both Evatt and Spender had lavished so much of their devotion, was at last taking

Pollard: (of the Opposition ALP) in the Parliament, "comprise one of the greatest influences in the preservation of world peace that we have known."

shape. Australia was conscious of the burdens she was going to assume through the pact and was prepared to shoulder it. Prime Minister Menzies told Parliament and the nation in no uncertain terms on 5 August:

"... We will become contributing parties to the Southeast Asian Alliance. We will, in association with other nations acting similarly, accept military obligations in support of our membership." (95)

On 14 August, it was announced that a Conference would be held in Manila for concluding the pact. From here, the scene shifted to Manila.

**Australia Concludes the Manila Pact**

In Geneva, Australia was not a participant, but Casey was an essential man. He spearheaded the ANZAC effort to reconcile the differences between Eden and Dulles. Paradoxically, in Manila, Australia was a participant, but Casey's role was auxiliary, rather than principal. Here Australia sought the indulgence of America and got what the latter willingly gave her. The alliance that came out of Manila was a much watered-down version of what Australia had sought and worked for. Her major gain, however, was that, at long last, the mighty United States had felt, as pointed out by Dulles, "a sense of common destiny" with the countries of Southeast Asia, (96) where lay the key of Australia's future security. Casey told his country's Parliament later:


... The acceptance of the United States of America of a specific commitment to assist in the struggle against communism met the most direct and immediate objective that confronted us all, and that in fact met the present danger. (97)

High hopes were raised in the country in 1954, which the later developments did not justify. But to many in Australia at that time, the treaty represented "the greatest step forward that Australia has made during the whole of its history, to safeguard its security." (98) In fact, it was the "American guarantee" aspect that prompted all political parties in Australia in accepting it. To the Leader of Opposition, Dr Evatt, it was the first experiment of its kind in grouping together European nations and Asian nations and "the experiment", he declared, "no doubt will have to be proceeded with .... " (99)

In terms of the geographical area covered by it, the treaty concluded in Manila on 8 September 1954 was the greatest that Asia had known. It extended as far west as West Pakistan, right over the borders of Iran. In the north, it went up to the parallel just below Taiwan and Hong Kong. It extended as far south as New Zealand and Australia and included all the vast area between, with, of course, vast gaps left owing to the

non-accession of certain Asian countries. A Pacific Charter was added to it at the initiative of President Ramon Magsaysay of the Philippines.

The views which had prevailed in the shaping of the pact were those of Britain and America, and not of the smaller Powers, namely, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines, which demanded an Asian version of NATO. The British view was that the pact should be as non-provocative as possible. The American view was that the country should not be committed to stationing sizeable troops in Southeast Asia, lest its military arm over-reach itself. (100) Pitted against these was the Australian view, as expressed by Sir Robert Menzies, of "a great defensive organization" with "binding commitments". (101) This view was echoed by the Philippines, New Zealand and others. (102) Later, at the first meeting of the SEATO Council, held in

100 The Hindu (Madras), 19 August 1954.
102 For the Philippines draft, see the Statesman (Calcutta), 24 August 1954. Thus, the Philippines pleaded for an equivalent of the NATO for military purposes and Marshall Plan for economic purposes. For the view of New Zealand about the nature of the pact, see Jha, n. 39, p. 213. The New Zealand Minister for defence, D. Macdonald, said on 12 August that his country was "vulnerable" in several ways to "precipitate action" and would try for a Pacific equivalent to NATO.
Bangkok, Marshal Songgram of Thailand himself pleaded for the formation of a permanent military force under the Manila Treaty and offered bases within his country for that force. (103) But America firmly told its allies that she did not contemplate anything like a joint military force with joint headquarters. Dulles conceded that there had been "an unfortunate tendency to refer to this treaty as SEATO, which immediately conjures up the image of an organization similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)." (104) During the Congressional hearings, the Secretary of State took pains to deny any such implication in the Manila Pact. The Atlantic Pact spoke of the determination of the parties to safeguard the Western civilization and their common heritage, but this basic unity was non-existent in the "Treaty Area" of this pact and there were "substantial cultural, political and geographical differences" here. The problems envisaged by the decision-makers in this area were of subversion, internal dissent etc. and the counter-measures were to be mostly political and not military. Casey himself defended in a broadcast the failure to have standing armies. He said that the frontier with Communist states designated in the treaty was 500 miles long. This length

103 Study Group of the R.I.I.A., n.4, p. 121.
of territory would be impossible to garrison. The "other side" could always leapfrog it and get through somewhere else. So, it was better, he asserted, to rely on mobile allied power which could be applied at any threatened point. (105) All these considerations led to the creation of an organization, which, to use the phrase of Walter Lippman, "did not create collective power to cover the collective liability." (106)

The illusion of security created by the fiesta in Manila could hardly disguise the reality of its shortcomings, which were inherent in the treaty organization created there. The creators of SEATO, as we know, had China at the back of their minds. They had fought China in Korea and had, at least indirectly, confronted it in Indo-China. The arrangement was thus meant to face this newly resurgent Asian giant. The Chinese army then, as now, was the largest in the world. (107) In 1954, the Chinese military budget of £ 750,000,000 (plus another £ 250,000,000 under cover of less military purposes) was two-thirds of Britain's defence budget, though the

107 The Peoples' Liberation Army of China comprised 2,250,000 plus 700,000 public security troops in the background. Some fifty Chinese Divisions had been identified in Korea. For these details see Lord Birdwood, "The Defence of Southeast Asia", International Affairs, vol.30, no.1 (January 1955), p. 18.
Chinese *per capita* income came to one-fifteenth of that of Britain. (108) To match this, the most powerful of the signatories would be relying on "mobile striking power, and the ability to use that against the source of aggression, if it occurs." It has, therefore, been rightly observed that SEATO military planning is "highly theoretical" because it has "no standing army to play with, because in any serious war, the puny land forces of which SEATO might immediately dispose could be swamped by the Chinese, and because the Americans refuse to tell SEATO what action they would take in such an emergency." (109) The threat to Thailand has always been SEATO's central issue. But the result of this planning would be that in the initial stages, a good deal of Thailand would be over-run, at least temporarily. Plans to meet aggression without troops on the ground, it was argued, did not make for sound defensive preparations. Besides, there were other structural defects in it, such as, the unanimity rule, adopted in the first meeting of the SEATO Council, which was likely to hamstring, rather than facilitate, an effective response from it.

108 Ibid.

The SEATO was Australia's first defensive treaty with Asian countries. Casey was anxious to encompass as much of South and Southeast Asia in it as possible, or if they did not come in, then "to secure their understanding for our objectives and their co-operation with us." (110) Throughout the period of its inception, Australian diplomats were active in the Asian capitals and Casey himself saw a number of statesmen in the neighbouring countries. Australia fully agreed with Eden's view that no permanent Southeast Asia Collective defence would be effective unless it enjoyed the support of the more important Southeast Asian Powers and, also, India. The only satisfaction that the Government in Canberra had was that at least "a working nucleus" had joined the pact." (111) Though the pact was hailed as "the accomplishment of a historic alliance between East and West" and "a negation in global sense of Kipling's philosophy ...", there is some justification in the opinion expressed in an Indian study on the origins of SEATO that it was non-Asian and that its form, content and even the timing of its birth, was determined in the West. It was non-Asian, the White Book further states,

in the sense of personality, because it did not reflect the working of the Asian mind in given circumstances. (112) This Indian view had its support not only in the utterances of some leading public figures in Asia, (113) but also in the writings of Australia's own academic luminaries. (114)

This alliance retarded the possibility of the creation of a less controversial but more influential organization in the Near North, in which broader Asian support could be obtained for measures to ensure stability and peace in Southeast Asia. The SEATO appeared to shine in borrowed lustre and thus did not impress Asia. In the eyes of a vast majority of Asians, it brought no credit to those who joined it, whatever be their reasons. Asians had suddenly burst out of the colonial chrysalis and independence was among the greatest of the virtues they prized. It is surprising that Casey, with all his

112 Jha, n. 39, p. 225.

113 For example, Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia, reflected the same view, when he said: "... peace in our part of the world cannot be assured by military pacts such as recently concluded in Manila." He further said, "Asian problems cannot be solved without Asian nations." The Hindu (Madras), 24 September 1954.

114 For such views, see W. Macmahon Ball, "A Political Re-Examination of SEATO", International Organization (Winter 1958), pp. 24-5. He wrote: "It [SEATO] is designated in the West, controlled by the West, and inspired by the Western, not the Asian, view of basic values." Similar views were expressed by Prof. Sawer in G. Sawer, "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, June 1956-June 1957", Australian Journal of Politics and History, vol. 3, no. 1 (November 1957), p. 11. He commented that "in its present form, SEATO
acquaintance with the ferment in the East, paid such a scant regard to this aspect. Asians, there is no gainseying the fact, were emotionally attached to the regional idea and could join a Southeast Asian organization, if it was sponsored, as pointed out by Burma's U Mong earlier, by "the right people", by which he meant "those who have no axe to grind." (115) But how could such people be expected to enter into military commitments with non-regional Powers, such as France, whose very bona-fides were in question (more because of Algeria than Indo-China)? Looking back on all the time and energy wasted by Casey and others on the construction of this clumsy and valueless alliance, one feels sad that it was traded for a possible genuine Austral-Asian endeavour, howsoever nebulous in its form and substance. Critics in Australia agreed with Werner Levi that "in so greatly assisting in the birth of the organization, the Government ... might have won a pyrrhic victory." (116) Many in Southeast Asia would agree with Prof. Ball that "SEATO has brought more political losses than military gains." (117)

appears an association of threatened non-Asian powers seeking to provide themselves with some Asian allies in order to conceal their fundamental nature and interests."

115 The Hindu, 17 August 1949.
117 Ball, n. 114, pp. 24-25.
Australia herself took its commitments under the new treaty quite seriously (118), but she did not consider it good enough to supersede the older and more intimate ANZUS connection. Even when SEATO was in the formative stage, Casey stated in London that he would prefer to retain ANZUS and to allow it to function side by side with any new and wider treaty complex. In the debate on SEATO, the leader of Opposition also pointed out:

...I maintain emphatically that our obligations under the Anzus /sic/ Pact are clearer. That agreement is enormously more important to our security than is this treaty. (119)

It has, therefore, been aptly said that "while SEATO was a welcome addition to Australia's defence, the smaller, more intimate, more homogeneous ANZUS relationship was still believed to offer marked advantages." (120)

SEATO and Parliament

In Parliament, the ALP Opposition voted for the Pact. They, however, moved two amendments, which were outvoted. One was that the ratification of the treaty by Australia should be made only after other major participants and, particularly, the United States, had done that. The second was that no Australian troops could be committed in Southeast Asia under the treaty without the prior approval of the national Parliament. In making the plea, members of

120 Albinski, n. 19, p.374.
the Opposition expressed the fear that Australian soldiers would be used for crushing genuine nationalist movements in Asia, a possibility, which was denied from the Treasury benches.

There was, however, something more that invited bitter comments from the southern side of the House. As we have seen, the alliance was not an anti-communist one, at least in its form. The only party that committed itself to fight only a Communist aggressor was America. Australia made the reservation that it would not fight in a war between two members of the Commonwealth of Nations. The advantage which the delegations in Manila saw in avoiding anti-Communist outbursts was that it would not be too favourable to the Asian neutrals. But when the Bill came up before the Parliament, a special Preamble was added to it. This Preamble was anti-Communist in its contents. It said that the independence of Southeast Asia and South-west Pacific was threatened by the aggressive policies of communism. These policies, it further said, were in violation of the Principles and Purposes of the Charter and were a common danger to Australia and others. As such, it said, the countries of the area had joined together for meeting a common danger. (121) The Government argued that the Preamble had no legal significance except

that it indicated that SEATO's foreseeable enemy was communism. (122) To the Opposition, it was superfluous and was rather a "rugged and offensive" slap at neutral Asia. (123) To Evatt, it was "a little placard" to enable Casey to sail under the anti-Communist banner, presumably, within Australia itself. Actually, this manoeuvre on the part of the Government has since baffled students of Australian affairs. One possible motive, it has been suggested, was to strengthen Australia's bargaining position at the Bangkok Conference, to be held in February 1955 for giving shape to the organization, as created in Manila. To an American scholar, "the preamble could not be regarded as anything but a foolish gesture." (124)

In the absence of clear-cut divisions on the Manila Treaty, the Government benches devoted their time to criticising Dr Evatt (and members of his party) for past errors and leanings towards communism, which was a burning issue in the country's domestic politics. Only next to Dr Evatt, it was the Indian Prime Minister who received some share of the wrath of the Government benches. Leaders of the Government were subtle and dignified in their comment. They made their criticism without naming any country or individual. "In this century",

122 Casey in ibid., p.2695.
124 Albinski, n. 19, p.383.
said Sir Robert Menzies, "neutralism will invite aggression, but will never defeat it." (125) Casey said that he had seen it suggested that Chou En-lai's stated intentions of living at peace with the neighbours should be taken at its face value, and tested. Meanwhile, it was maintained, there should be no defensive grouping. If Chou En-lai did not stand by his word, then, there will still be time to consider such an alliance. Thailand and the Philippines did not adopt this view because they were in the direct path of an aggressive China, as they would be under attack from short range and would hardly have time enough to join a pact before sacrificing their statehood. He then quoted Mahatma Gandhi who once told Casey that if a man refused to take a certain action, and if things went wrong by his refusal, then he had to accept responsibility for consequences of his inactivity. (126) The significance of his remarks could hardly be missed.

This dignity and this poise was thrown to winds when some other members spoke on the subject. A member saw that India was hurt at the failure of forming a powerful All-Asian neutral bloc owing to the creation of the SEATO pact. (127) Most vituperative was Downer, a promising young Liberal, who was on his way to Ministerial position. Criticising the whole gamut of Nehru's policies,

126 Casey in ibid., p. 96.
some of them unconnected with SEATO and Australia, he said:

Mr Nehru's hostility to the Manila treaty is disappointing to the extreme. It is explicable, I suggest, partly on a basis of antiquated prejudices. Surely it is unreal of him to continue chewing the cud of satisfied grudges .... His recent actions indicate more an obsession with national aggrandizement than a genuine desire for international freedom. For example, towards Pakistan he has shown nothing but intransigence over Kashmir. He has adopted a minatory attitude towards the Portuguese in Goa. He has been quick to pounce upon the French, writhing in their defeat and humiliation in Indo-China, with the sadistic opportunism of a Bombay vulture. Most cleverly, he has engineered their ejection from Pondicherry .... (128)

It is true that Indian policies, among many other factors, had resulted in an imperfect Southeast Asia Pact. It is also true that Indian views and postures hurt some people, but coming from a country, whose policies and leadership was not subjected to such criticism in the Indian Press and Parliament during the

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128 Downer in ibid., p. 2639. The member continued to speak in a similar vein later as well. For example, see CPD, HR, vol. 21 (5 December 1957), p. 2963 for his remark of a similar type. He said: ".... If their ways are not our ways, if their aims are not our aims, if they feel we are so wrong as one of them /India/ continually claims, then I say that for the sake of an effective Commonwealth of the future, it would be better if a dissident member gracefully retired and continued on its own course in the full exercise of its own judgement but without corroding our own joint councils." Also quoted in J.D.B. Miller, ed., India, Japan and Australia : Partners in Asia ? (Canberra, 1968), pp.21-22.
period under review, such an outburst of uncontrolled fury was not fair enough. Much to the regret of people on both sides, India and Australia moved into opposite directions (129), only to meet, on a political plane, in a later decade, when the trauma of Tawang and Bomdi La (130) had crept into the soul of India, as the trauma of Singapore had once stirred the Australian nation out of dreaming. But it was true in 1954 that the hopes of creating a genuine political organization of the White, brown and yellow people of the Near North and South-west Pacific, conceived earlier, had received a setback in the face of the reality of a sectional, non-regional, controversial military alliance.

129 For a similar view by a former Secretary of the Australian Department of External Affairs, see Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 220. Sir Alan Watt admits here that the relations between the two countries "deteriorated somewhat - though not disasterously - under the Menzies Government between 1950 and 1962..."

130 Two border positions in the Himalayas, where Indian soldiers fought the Chinese in 1962.