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The appalling attack on Malaysia Airlines’ Flight MH17 over rebel-held territory in Ukraine has removed from media headlines the continuing search for MH370, which disappeared earlier this year. In all 27 nations participated to varying degrees in the largest search and rescue (SAR) mission ever undertaken. The collective response to this tragedy is very welcome.

Especially welcome in view of the heightened tensions between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and legacy issues has been their common deployment of military aircraft from the same Royal Australian Air Force base. This shared humanitarian endeavour offers grounds for hope that both countries will consider building on it to move towards overdue dialogue on the major issues in their relationship.

Despite the number of nations that have contributed to this mission, however, co-operation has not been as smooth or as effective as the international community, and especially the relatives of the passengers and crew on board that ill-fated flight, could reasonably have expected. The search quickly revealed significant gaps in international co-operation especially within ASEAN.

In this article I will highlight those gaps, comment on their implications, and suggest how they might be bridged to strengthen search and rescue co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region. I will also discuss why China will play a more significant role in regional search and rescue and other humanitarian missions in the years ahead, and the need to factor this development into SAR and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HR/DR) planning.

Unco-ordinated response

The ASEAN countries have had decades of experience in working together. ASEAN prides itself on conducting more than a thousand meetings a year across a very broad spectrum of activities. Yet although many of the ASEAN members made important contributions in the early stages of the search, these were largely individual unco-ordinated efforts. To external observers it seemed odd given the grouping’s emphasis on collective effort that in a field of endeavour with a strong humanitarian focus ASEAN was unable to deliver a collective response.

There was, for instance, the undignified public spectacle of a testy exchange between Vietnam’s deputy transport minister, Pham Quy Tieu, and his Malaysian counterpart. Minister Pham noted that ‘five days after the plane went missing, Vietnamese authorities only exchanged information with a Malaysian military official, who refused to provide any information about the search mission carried out by Malaysian authorities’. In response Malaysia’s minister of defence, who is also their acting transport minister, Hishammuddin Hussein, said the information was ‘too sensitive’.

The Royal Thai Air Force took ten days to announce that it had tracked MH370 after it turned west. Not disclosing that information in a timely fashion cost valuable time and resources. The early stages of the search were thus characterised by a reluctance to share vital information and by poor lines of communication.

Possible implications

ASEAN aims to establish an effective political and security community by 31 December 2015. Unless the unwillingness to share information, especially in a humanitarian situation, is overcome, it is difficult to envisage an effective transition to this objective. Moreover, next year ASEAN is also expected to put an Open Skies policy in place. We can expect more flights and greater competition. Issues exposed by the MH370 search need to be addressed if this policy is to be successfully executed.

There could be wider consequences for ASEAN. Failure to demonstrate a unified and cohesive response to a humanitarian issue does little to promote ASEAN’s efforts to demonstrate a unified position in negotiations on a code of conduct with China in respect of the South China Sea. Given the centrality of ASEAN to the region’s security architecture, it is difficult to be optimistic about progress towards a broader
regional collective effort in times of emergency.

Might there also be other repercussions for ASEAN’s relationship with China as it moves towards great power status? In a S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies commentary of 20 March, Dylan Loh noted that from a Chinese perspective ASEAN’s mis-step ‘presents the perfect opportunity to assert itself over the South China Sea’. Loh suggested that China could make a case for regional leadership, given ASEAN’s lack of ownership. ‘There would’, he wrote, ‘be no better case than now for it [China] to impose an Air Defence Identification Zone over the South China Sea’ that would point to the need to ensure civil aircraft safety, for more effective search and rescue efforts and for the protection of China’s citizens who now travel throughout the region in increasing numbers.

Gap bridging

National sensitivities will always be an issue in sharing information, especially if that information might expose important capability gaps, knowledge of which could be considered detrimental to a country’s security. But such concerns must be balanced by the need to be able to respond to an emergency in a manner that gives those affected a degree of comfort that everything possible is being done to achieve a resolution that will either save lives or at least bring a degree of closure to families who have lost loved ones.

The region is not starting with a blank sheet when it comes to ideas for a regional approach to search and rescue. For instance, ASEAN has an existing humanitarian assistance mechanism known as the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT), a capability first deployed in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated parts of Myanmar in 2008. Regular courses are conducted to provide collective training for ASEAN officials. It would seem logical to expand its mandate to include search and rescue operations and train personnel accordingly.

It is disappointing that little progress has been made in taking forward some of the excellent work done by the ASEAN Regional Forum inter-sessional meeting (ARF ISM) on search and rescue that took place in Singapore as far back as March 1997. The co-chair’s report of that meeting suggested increased sharing of training facilities and expertise to enhance the capabilities of search and rescue personnel; the development of a registry of training courses available in ARF member countries; and the expansion of both bilateral and multilateral training programmes.

It called for standardised search and rescue manuals and procedures, and the development of paper and field exercises and activities such as the attachment of search and rescue personnel to the rescue co-ordination centres of other ARF countries to share expertise and knowledge.

Other proposals

Other proposals included regular search and rescue workshops, the preparation of a set of guiding principles and code of conduct on SAR co-operation, facilitation of interaction among existing SAR agencies, whether civilian or military, as a confidence-building measure and the establishment of an internet website between rescue co-ordination centres. The meeting also noted the importance of good media management of maritime and aviation incidents and the importance of timely and accurate information. The desirability of training search and rescue officials to manage media issues was highlighted. These latter recommendations are very pertinent given the considerable criticism of media management in the search for MH370.

It was not until 2010 that ASEAN picked up on some of these ideas in its Declaration of Cooperation in the Search and Rescue of Persons and Vessels in distress. The declaration encouraged members to designate a national rescue co-ordination centre, to establish direct communication channels to share information and promptly to extend support upon request to assist in SAR operations.

The declaration also encouraged members to intensify capacity-building for SAR missions, to promote co-operation with dialogue partners and to maintain a directory of national rescue co-ordination centres. It called for developing and strengthening co-ordinated regional approaches and for regional policies, operational mechanisms and a communication system to prepare for and to ensure a rapid and effective response to a ‘distress situation’.

The general thrust of the declaration was given further emphasis in the chairman’s statement following the 23rd ASEAN Summit held in Brunei last October. The statement noted that ASEAN leaders looked forward to ‘developing the ideas of establishing hotlines of communication to further enhance
trust, confidence and to respond to emergency situations at sea and cooperate in the area of search and rescue for vessels in distress at sea’. Although there was no mention of SAR operations for missing aircraft, the ideas put forward in the declaration and in the statement are welcome indications that ASEAN recognises the need to adopt a co-ordinated approach.

Yet at the time MH370 went missing only three ASEAN countries had thought it necessary to ratify the Search and Rescue Convention adopted by the United Nations in 1979. They are Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam. I should add, given its South China Sea claims, that China also ratified the convention. The most recent list of countries that have now ratified this convention, up to date as at the end of July, indicates that Malaysia, despite the loss of MH370, has still not ratified, nor has Brunei, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar.

Revised convention
A revised convention came into force in 2000. It clarifies the responsibilities of governments and places greater emphasis on a regional approach and co-ordination between maritime and air SAR operations.

Why has the convention attracted so little interest in a region where all ten ASEAN countries operate national airlines and all except for landlocked Laos have maritime interests? It may be because the search and rescue regions designated by the International Maritime Organisation do not coincide with claimed national maritime boundaries. Most of the ASEAN members that have not ratified the SAR Convention have contested boundary claims. But that is also true for Indonesia and Vietnam, both of which have been prepared to ratify the convention.

In the wake of the disappearance of MH370 it is highly desirable that ASEAN moves beyond declaratory statements and focuses on capacity-building and practical, as distinct from paper, exercises. The ASEAN Maritime Forum established in 2010 subsequently spawned the expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum whose membership includes New Zealand. Neither have yet addressed SAR co-operation issues. These two forums met in August in Da Nang and search and rescue was on their agendas. This focus on SAR issues was timely.

Working groups
There is another regional forum that could be tasked to strengthen the habit of SAR co-operation. In 2010 the ASEAN Defence Ministers plus Forum (ADMM+) was launched and five expert working groups were established to develop capacity-building programmes to promote practical co-operation among military and civilian defence officials of the eighteen participating countries in fields that would contribute to regional peace and security. A sixth group was added last year. (The eighteen countries are ASEAN plus Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States.)

The forum, which includes a maritime security expert working group now co-chaired by New Zealand and Brunei, is a logical vehicle to take up this challenge and search and rescue has now been added to the group’s agenda. This provides a leadership role for New Zealand on an issue of great importance to all international travellers.

Turning now to search and rescue co-operation between ASEAN and China, the 2002 ASEAN–China Declaration of Conduct included SAR co-operation among a range of proposed co-operative activities. But it was not until 2011 that agreement was reached on setting up four working groups one of which would focus on SAR. Some table-top exercises have since taken place and a workshop held in June 2013 on strengthening SAR co-operation in the South China Sea. But a harmonised regional approach to search and rescue is far from being achieved.

The South Pacific provides a useful pointer to regional SAR co-operation. At a June 2013 South Pacific maritime SAR workshop, delegates committed to a plan to accelerate acceptance of a non-binding arrangement to promote search and rescue co-operation among 24 South Pacific countries and territories. The Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum is co-ordinating the development of the arrangement in collaboration with SAR authorities in Australia, New Zealand, France and the United States. A similar non-binding regional arrangement that facilitated responses to
major emergencies in the South China Sea would be a significant and very practical confidence-building measure.

**China’s role**

In deploying ten naval ships to the Indian Ocean in the search for MH370, China demonstrated that it now has the ability to deploy a fleet of ships and maintain them on station at a considerable distance from home. China also deployed maritime security vessels and search aircraft. While this contribution could be said to reflect the large number of Chinese passengers on board the ill-fated flight, it also announced China’s intention and ability to take a more active role in humanitarian assistance/disaster relief and search and rescue operations.

For several years China has been active in evacuating Chinese citizens from regional trouble-spots, and in assisting in the search for survivors following natural disasters. In 2006, a Chinese aircraft flew to Honiara to pick up Chinese who had been the victim of anti-government riots in Solomon Islands in the South Pacific, even though the Solomons recognises Taiwan and not China. More recently, China undertook a similar but very much larger evacuation of Chinese citizens who had been working in Libya during the chaos that followed President Gaddafi's demise.

In New Zealand, the swift arrival of a Chinese urban search team in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake in 2011 signalled that Beijing was prepared to do whatever it deemed necessary to look after the interests of its citizens. I recall a senior Chinese army officer telling me at a subsequent ARF meeting that the Christchurch earthquake had claimed more Chinese lives than any other single overseas event up to that point. He added that there were now strong expectations on the part of China’s citizens that their government would respond whenever and wherever Chinese were considered to be in danger. Growing numbers of Chinese taking holidays abroad will reinforce those expectations.

It was not surprising, therefore, that immediately after the disappearance of MH370, China established a high-level Joint Ministerial Conference on the Security Protection of Chinese Overseas to map out a response strategy. The new mechanism is headed by the Foreign Ministry and includes representatives from a broad range of government agencies. It apparently has its antecedents in the emergency response system established after the SARS outbreak in 2003.

**Permanent feature**

We can expect that this new mechanism will become a permanent feature of the Chinese bureaucracy empowered to break through structural barriers that would otherwise delay responses both at home and abroad. Presumably it will report to the Central National Security Commission, which was established at the Party’s third plenary session last November. The commission is headed by President Xi Jinping. Moreover, the most recent Chinese defence white paper commented that where there is a war, riot or other such disturbance overseas, the People’s Liberation Army should be able to evacuate Chinese people without delay.

The region should, therefore, be prepared for future Chinese interventions on behalf of its citizens, even if those interventions have not been requested. Indeed, we have already seen one instance of this in May when China evacuated its citizens from Vietnam during anti-Chinese riots over the deployment of a Chinese drilling rig into waters claimed by both China and Vietnam.

In the circumstances regional countries should invite China to take part in exercises to build co-operation in responses to humanitarian disasters. That in turn requires the sharing of information with Beijing, but if China is to play an effective role in such operations it likewise must also be prepared to share information with its fellow contributors.

**Wake-up call**

The disappearance of MH370 was a wake-up call for the Asia-Pacific region. While notable for the unparalleled international effort, the search has also highlighted that much more can and must be done nationally and regionally to enhance the region’s ability to respond quickly, effectively and in close collaboration in such emergencies. The early ratification of the Search and Rescue Convention by those regional members yet to do so would be a good start. Regionally, the challenge should be taken up by both the ASEAN Expanded Maritime Forum and ADMM+.

Looking ahead, China’s high profile role in the search for MH370 signals an intention to play a leadership role in future humanitarian missions in the Asia-Pacific region, especially those in which Chinese citizens are affected. China must be engaged in the development of a regional SAR model and in regular practical exercises to ensure that the model is maintained in good working order.

An object floats in the southern Indian Ocean in this picture taken from a Royal New Zealand Air Force P-3K2 Orion aircraft searching for the missing Malaysian airliner

A Bluefin submarine robot of the type used by American searchers in the Indian Ocean

A Bluefin submarine robot of the type used by American searchers in the Indian Ocean
Projecting Canberra’s international goals

Ken Ross reviews post-1945 Australian prime ministers' global diplomacy.

‘During the twentieth century Australia’s foreign policy has oscillated between two views about its role in the world. The question was whether the country’s security demanded the unswerving support of great and powerful friends, or whether it should take a more independent stance.’ (Robert Garran, 2004)

‘In one sense no country except New Zealand can be compared with Australia: these are the only two “western” nations that, strategically, are part of Asia. (What happens to Australia cooks New Zealand’s hash too.)’ (Donald Horne, 1964)

‘New Zealand opinion has a built-in tendency to seek out differences with Australia… New Zealanders are inclined to see Australia as bigger, more vulgar and more compromised by power politics than they are.’ (Hedley Bull, 1971)


Australia’s prime ministers are the most important individuals projecting Canberra’s international goals. Global diplomacy is what prime ministers do to advance their government’s foreign policy. I have watched them for the past five decades; most usually professionally. Sometimes close enough to report back that usually they did not have uranium on their breath.

This article’s genesis is that in my forthcoming book I need to be on top of assessing Australia’s fourteen prime ministers’ global diplomacy since 1945. So I am doing to them what I do to the New Zealanders — putting my intellectual concepts to work. I consider most closely Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Kevin Rudd. I want to measure just how progressive they were when undertaking their global diplomacy. None of the Australians has as impressive a portfolio for progressive global diplomacy as Norman Kirk, our best.

Canada’s post-1945 prime ministers will be similarly considered. Most did middle power diplomacy with more acumen than their Australian colleagues. Stephen Harper, who took on the prime ministership in 2006, ended that reputation. Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau were high calibre global diplomatists — their respective legacies are well ahead of Kirk’s.

New Zealand prime ministers have their Australian counterparts right at the top of their list of global interlocutors. It is not an equal partnership — a New Zealand prime minister seldom inhabits his Canberra counterpart’s inner circle of ‘speed dial’ foreign contacts. Since 1945 a close, strong understanding between trans-Tasman prime ministers has been a rare thing indeed.

Minimal contact

Even today there is minimal contact between the trans-Tasman prime ministers on a two-some home-and-away basis. Throughout the seven decades, they have met most often at multilateral occasions beyond Australasia. In Tony Abbott’s first year as prime minister none of his eleven overseas trips involved visiting New Zealand: he encountered John Key in Canberra (October 2013), Bali (APEC), Brunei (EAS), Sri Lanka (Chogm), South Africa (Mandela’s funeral service) and Sydney (February 2014).

Since 1945 Canberra and Wellington have more often gone separate ways at critical moments of international developments than marched together. The sharpest instance is the contrasting nuclear policies since 1985. The March 2003 split on the non-UN backed military intervention in Iraq is another. Except

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for when Malcolm Fraser and then Hawke were vigorously opposing South Africa’s apartheid regime in the early 1980s, no Australian prime minister has been ahead of their New Zealand counterpart in weaving threads of progressive idealism through their global diplomacy. Even when seemingly together, they played different styles: military contributions were made in the 1960s to the Vietnam War. But, New Zealand dispatched only regular forces; most of Australia’s 60,000 military personnel were conscripts. (Then, Keith Holyoake was the ‘most dovish of the hawks’, while Harold Holt was ‘All the Way with LBJ’.) The Omega controversy that the Holyoake government speedily shut down in 1968 went on to bedevil the Whitlam government, which was deeply divided on this US military installation being constructed in Australia. In 1995 the two capitals were barely co-ordinated on protesting the resuming French nuclear testing at Moruroa, which saw Jim Bolger receive much global kudos for his leadership while Paul Keating engaged in belated catch-up. Currently, it is climate change: Abbott’s disbelief is not replicated in Wellington.

Just twice have there been major moments when Canberra and Wellington danced intimately — backing Sir Anthony Eden throughout the 1956 Suez Crisis and then when Kirk and Whitlam through 1973 worked together opposing the apartheid regime in South Africa and French nuclear testing.

**Intellectual scaffolding**

Dag Hammarskjöld’s ‘maturity of mind’ and Henry Kissinger’s ‘intellectual capital’ concepts were explained in an earlier article. My associated matrix of issues used to discern each leader’s global diplomacy performance has been adapted for the Australians to take account of their respective endeavours:

- emphasis given to ‘a more independent stance’ versus ‘unswerving support’ to Britain and/or the United States;
- handling of bilateral relations with the United States;
- handling of bilateral relations with Britain;
- handling of bilateral relations with Indonesia, Japan and China;
- stance on nuclear issues — uranium sales, French testing, Chinese testing, ANZUS, and endeavours at multilateral negotiations concerning disarmament;
- stance on race — Springbok rugby encounters (1949, 1956, 1960, 1965, 1969, 1973 and 1981); other sporting boycotts (Commonwealth and Olympic games); South/Southern Africa, including Rhodesia/Zimbabwe; and associated discussions at Commonwealth heads of government meetings and in United Nations forums;
- performance at the United Nations (distinct from the Security Council terms);
- contributions to Commonwealth, South Pacific and Asian summitry;
- impact of Australian protest movements concerned with global issues, such as disarmament, racism, and the environment;
- quality of their support teams — mandarins or lemons;
- bilateral and regional endeavours in the South Pacific;
- dynamics with their New Zealand counterparts; and handling of bilateral relations with New Zealand.

The leaders’ memoirs and their biographers’ efforts are complemented by astute chroniclers of Australia’s federal politics. Alan Reid’s trilogy is the best account of the period from when Sir Robert Menzies began his prime ministership in December 1949 to Whitlam’s dismissal as prime minister in November 1975. Paul Kelly gives the best commentary through Fraser’s prime ministership to John Howard’s initial years (1996–2001). The years after 2001 await their prime chronicler.

Donald Horne’s *The Lucky Country: Australia in the Sixties* (1964) is the most thought-provoking reflection on Australia’s place in the world. The eight years from its publication to Whitlam’s election as prime minister in December 1972 is the most fertile intellectual period for Australians considering where their country best slots into world affairs. There was a plethora of events — conferences, summer schools and publications — stimulating the dramatic growth of a national collective ‘intellectual capital’. Gordon Greenwood, then the doyen of Australia’s relevant academics, recorded the major threads of this period. Hedley Bull, the most astute brain for outlining how Australia could skilfully assert a more independent stance, was important for Whitlam as he honed his ‘intellectual capital’. Bull...
was prolific in his writings and frequently spoke out while at the Australian National University for the decade 1967–77: Robert Ayson’s Hedley Bull and the Accommodation of Power (2012) is a fine account of Bull’s top-of-the-class standing during his Canberra decade.

**Whitlam’s role**

No other Australian prime minister was as match-fit for global diplomacy as Whitlam was when he became prime minister, or as intent on asserting a more independent stance in world affairs for Canberra. Whitlam had done the hard-yard apprenticeship prior to becoming prime minister. He had learnt world affairs, travelled purposefully to educate himself, and had marked out the big issues where he wanted to have an impact — recognition of China and Papua New Guinea’s independence — while also actively opposing the apartheid regime in South Africa and French nuclear testing at Moruroa. Whitlam thought hard and shrewdly about how to engage the Americans following Nixon’s November 1969 Guam Doctrine declaration that had heralded Washington’s pull-back from Asia.

Whitlam is the only prime minister to have made a sustained pursuit of a more independent stance. Ben Chifley, the first of the fourteen prime ministers, encouraged Herb Evatt, his deputy and foreign minister, to pursue a similar goal. Chifley himself did not engage in sustained global diplomacy. Evatt is the solitary outstanding foreign minister that Australia has produced since 1945 who was not also concurrently prime minister. (Even though he has some impressive accomplishments, Gareth Evans, the second best, is well behind Evatt.)

Whitlam’s global diplomacy was a mixed performance. Even so, he rates well ahead of John Gorton and Rudd, the only others who sought to include a more independent stance in their global diplomacy. Fraser came to this club late — long after he stood down as prime minister.

**Hawke shortcoming**

In contrast to Whitlam, Hawke’s preparation was limited. Blanche d’Alpuget, Hawke’s best biographer and second wife, records that in the late 1970s Hawke ‘read at least four newspapers every day and stacks of committee reports, but it was years since he had read thought-provoking books, and the effect of a barrage of shallow ideas and trivial facts was becoming obvious’. She added: ‘hours that could have been passed in thoughts were given over to the bogus intellectual stimulation of boozey argument’.8 Hawke’s prime ministership was to show he did not overcome that shortcoming. In addition, he did not have a first-class support team to handle global diplomacy — too often he presumed to be his own ‘support team’.

Hawke’s larrikin dynamic was his strength for most of his public career. In due course, it became his fatal political weakness and ended his prime ministership in tears. Bill Hayden ruminated after it was all over that a big complication for Hawke was seeking to have the ALP adopt a non-nuclear stance akin to what their New Zealand cousins subsequently introduced. The immediate result was Hawke replacing Hayden in February 1983 and soon after becoming prime minister.

But the party was restless at Hawke’s actions and struck back in early 1985 by reacting against the prime minister’s quiet concurrence with his predecessor’s willingness for the Americans to test long-range MX missiles into the Tasman Sea near Tasmania’s coast. A major sub-text in that opposition within the ALP was a symbolic gesture of support to the New Zealanders then being blasted by Hawke for their emerging non-nuclear stance.

The longer term consequence has been that when in government the ALP ever since has put prime priority on ‘unswerving support’ to Washington. Throughout the prime ministership of Paul Keating this was ensured by Kim Beazley, Hawke’s ‘political son’. After Keating’s demise Beazley continued to ensure the ALP’s ‘unswerving support’ to Washington. While Rudd wanted to re-introduce the party to Whitlam’s ‘certain grandeur’ he envisaged this could be accomplished alongside the ‘unswerving support’. He largely failed. When prime minister, Julia Gillard did not buck the Beazley perspective.

**Marked contrast**

Throughout the six years of their governments, notwithstanding that the foreign policy was the same, Rudd’s and Gillard’s respective prime ministerial global diplomacy contrasted markedly. Bob Carr’s Diary of a Foreign Minister (2014) is an elegant eye-opener on this story. Paul Kelly’s Triumph and Demise: The Broken Promise of a Labor Generation (2014) is a forensic diagnosis of the pair’s leadership during those years. Patrick Weller’s Kevin Rudd: Twice Prime Minister (2014) is invaluable for explaining the destructive style of Rudd’s ‘political management’ when prime minister.

Gillard killed her prospects for global diplomacy when she emerged from her first appearance internationally as prime minister, at the ASEM gathering in Brussels in early October 2010: she declared ‘foreign policy is not my passion. It’s not what I’ve spent my life doing.’ Appreciating her humongous gaffe, Gillard strove throughout her prime ministership to recover — she came up short by a long mile. She presents her defence in her just-published memoirs, My Way.

Rudd’s global diplomacy had brilliant moments. Retrieving Australia’s international reputation by signing the Kyoto climate change convention and apologising to Australia’s Indigenous peoples were a great start to his megaphoning the world that there was a new order in Canberra. He cleared away diplomatic
cobwebs — on China and the 2003 military intervention in Iraq. Rudd impressed by leading Canberra’s response to the global financial crisis and pushing for the G20 to step up from a finance ministers’-level gathering to one for world leaders.

Much interest was generated in just how capable his global diplomacy might become. Two of his later initiatives could yet gather him further credit — Australia’s term on the UN Security Council in 2013–14 and taking the Japanese to the International Court of Justice to stop whaling in the Southern Ocean.

Fine balance

Rudd’s many jaw-dropping episodes leave his legacy finely balanced, for now. His monumental failures in global diplomacy were his chaotic performance at the December 2009 Climate Change conference in Copenhagen and his last-minute opting out of the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, President Obama’s first major international initiative. Obama had prepped Rudd to be one of his prime lieutenants at the latter; while he was a ‘friend of the chair’ (special envoy) for the Copenhagen conference, he contributed little of substance there and became a distraction to other leaders’ efforts. Rudd’s enthusiasm for impressing Washington had him fall into a deep black-hole in Afghanistan.

Rudd’s flag-ship initiative was proposing an Asia–Pacific community. His old mentor, Richard Woolcott, became his emissary. The proposal’s quick dispatch by other leaders exemplified Rudd’s shortcomings. He came to extraordinary grief with his border protection policy in late 2009, when the Oceanic Viking was for three weeks at an Indonesian port with 78 Sri Lankan asylum seekers refusing to disembark.

The Chinese perplexity regarding his shenanigans, premised on Rudd being a Chinese expert, fascinated many observers. But nothing beats, for me, the looks on Obama’s senior staff as the president saw Rudd out of the Oval Office after his surprise visit following the November 2009 Chogm in Trinidad and Tobago (and ahead of Copenhagen, the next month). A very telling ‘what have we here?’ moment was the balloon message!

It need not have been so. An outstanding briefing paper had awaited him when he became prime minister, and only then contemplated his prospective global diplomacy role. Coral Bell’s November 2007 Lowy Institute Paper The End of the Vasco Da Gama Era helpfully reminded him that he would need ‘to navigate some difficult diplomatic waters in a world where power is shifting away from uni-polarity and towards an Asia-centric multi-polar order’. She sketched for him ‘the probable future landscape of the society of states as it emerges from the twilight of the US paramoutncy.’

Rudd’s predicament was that he had not, like Whitlam, prepared himself for global diplomacy. He had no matured world-view. Once prime minister, Rudd was hit hard by reality — it was nothing like the ‘Sunrise’ television studio, Rudd’s legendary ‘training ground’. Rudd lacked also a capable and experienced ‘support team’, both of ministerial colleagues and of senior officials.

Megaphone diplomacy

In his first year as prime minister Abbott has been thrust into ‘a national security guardian’ status: Paul Kelly highlights this development as one that ‘fuses his moral fervour with political gain’. But, Abbott’s raucous megaphone diplomacy is an inauspicious start, and at a higher octave than any of his rowdy predecessors. His performance at the United Nations in late September was in this mould. It will be fascinating and unexpected if he improves his global performance.

Abbott’s vision is essentially cooked by Menzies and Howard — the 1950s is the future. Menzies and Howard are the prime ministers whose political emotions had them as most dedicated capable loyalists with London (until Harold Wilson became prime minister in 1964) and then increasingly with Washington. (The smartest such loyalists have been Hawke and Rudd, but their support for Washington was less emotional and much more calculating.) While Menzies and Howard are due general credit for their handling of that association, they have a much more dubious legacy — for being the pair who most discredited Australia globally: Menzies with his undying loyalty to London through the 1956 Suez debacle and Howard with his gung ho alignment alongside George W. Bush and Tony Blair in the military charge into Iraq in March 2003. Canberra is still reaping consequences from Howard’s folly that may yet match the tragedy the intervention initially prompted. Abbott appears intent on joining that pair — he seems to be blunder-bussing into a debacle that will place him alongside his heroes.

NOTES

5. The Power Struggle (Sydney, 1969), The Gorton Experiment (Sydney, 1971) and the Whitlam Venture (Melbourne, 1976).
6. The end of certainty: The story of the 1980s (Sydney, 1992) and The March of Patriots (Melbourne, 2009).
Old attitudes in Japan’s new leadership

Stuart McMillan examines the Abe government’s approach to international affairs and finds some worrying aspects.

In December 2012 Shinzo Abe, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, was elected as Japanese prime minister on economic grounds. At the same time he was known to want revision of constitutional restraints on the use of Japan’s defence forces. His views on this subject had been expressed many times and he had sought such changes in his earlier short term as prime minister in 2006 and 2007.

During the first year after re-election he concentrated on seeking to revive Japan’s economy, but in December 2013 he made a visit as prime minister to the Yasukuni Shrine, a war memorial in Tokyo which has a profoundly symbolic significance for Japan and its neighbours. During 2014 he managed to have the Diet pass a reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. While this reinterpretation did not alter the Constitution it is not unreasonable to conclude that it went quite some distance towards gutting Article 9, which reads:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised.

This article looks at some of the changes within Japan including the Constitution reinterpretation, makes an assessment of the security and strategic effects of the changes in the region and examines effects on New Zealand.

Abe’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine is only one action that has caused some strong reactions but it crystallised attitudes and is worth dwelling on. The visit was kept secret until he had made it. The Shinto shrine is viewed as housing the souls of those who have died fighting in Japan’s wars. Some fourteen Class A war criminals are also listed there. A museum in the same grounds as the shrine contains some versions of history of Japan’s part in the Second World War that are pronouncedly nationalist and revisionist. Visits by Japanese prime ministers and ministers are interpreted by some of Japan’s neighbours as evidence that Japan has not repented for its actions during the Second World War nor renounced its conduct. For China, a part of which was colonised by Japan, and for the Korean peninsula, which was ruled by Japan from 1910 until 1945, the memories extend further than Second World War years.

Strong response

The strongest reactions to the visit came from South Korea and China. But Russia and Singapore also expressed regret. Without directly referring to the Yasukuni visit Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general and a South Korean himself, said that it was regrettable that tensions from the past still plagued the region. But it was the reaction of the United States, which said that it was ‘disappointed’, that rocked the Japanese government. The Japanese government at first suggested that this was not a considered response. The United States had asked Abe not to visit the shrine and some high American officials had paid their respects to another war memorial. They were hoping to encourage Abe to do the same. The United States had read correctly how some of Japan’s neighbours would react.

From a security point of view the United States had long encouraged Japan to move towards a greater regional defence involvement but did not want relations between Japan and China, already strained, to worsen. It wanted Japan and the Republic of Korea, which are bound to the United States in separate security treaties, to draw closer together, particularly because of China. Abe was undermining those hopes.

A number of other moves taken by Abe’s government included:

- The passing of a state secrets law which enabled officials to decide what should or should not be published. For instance, some material related to the Fukushima nuclear plant was declared off limits. Because aspects of this law were not defined it made the task of journalists very difficult. When there is vagueness there is always a tendency for journalists, including editors, to err on the side of caution. Freelance journalists are particularly at risk. The penalties for breaching the act are severe.
- The setting up of a National Security Council, based on the US National Security Council.

International hopes were high that Shinzo Abe, prime minister of Japan, with his ‘Abenomics’ plan, would revive Japan’s stagnant economy, but he also brought with him some nationalist leanings that have complicated security relationships within the Asian region. His visit to the Yasukuni Shrine is one of several actions that have caused some strong reactions. Others have included passing a state secrets law which enabled officials to decide what should or should not be published and having Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution reinterpreted. His suggestion for an Asian security organisation may have significant implications for New Zealand.

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- The appointing of some people of very conservative disposition to various posts. For instance, the man appointed to head NHK, the public broadcaster, sought to cast doubts on the Japanese imperial army’s use of ‘comfort women’. He also expressed the view that NHK should not go against the wishes of the government. He did not want NHK to say left when the government was saying right. (This was not a view that endeared him to NHK’s journalists, who believed that the broadcaster should abide by the principles of independence. About 170 former journalists from NHK called for the chairman’s resignation.) NHK did not report the death of a man who burned himself to death as a protest against changes in Japan’s defence posture.

- The tasking of a conservative historian to revise school textbooks. Teachers’ freedom to choose textbooks was curtailed.

- The setting up of an Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security. The panel members, who were of Abe’s own choosing, were strong on defence issues and lacking in strength on constitutional matters.

### Constitutional reinterpretation

The reinterpretation of the Constitution came into force on 1 July of this year. There are provisions for changing Japan’s Constitution. Article 96 of the Constitution lays them out:

- Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification that shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon, at a special referendum or at such election as the Diet shall specify. (2) Amendments when so ratified shall immediately be promulgated by the Emperor in the name of the people, as an integral part of this Constitution.

There was no way that the Abe government could have fulfilled the requirements of Article 96. Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito Party had a two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives, but it was highly improbable that all of the LDP members would have voted for a change in the Constitution and the New Komeito would certainly not have so voted. The House of Councillors would not have given the required two-thirds majority and a public referendum would almost certainly not have given majority backing. Hence the path was chosen to reinterpret Article 9, not to change it. There was some surprise that New Komeito agreed to as much as it did in the reinterpretation. Some of the changes enabled by the reinterpretation include:

- Collective self-defence in limited conditions
- Military protection of allies
- Sending Self-Defense Force troops, ships and aircraft to support US military activities in conflict areas and to join internationally sanctioned security activities.

During the discussions between the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito, much of the argument seemed to be based on specific examples, for example, should Japan intercept missiles aimed at the United States, or should Japan’s Self-Defense Force take action to protect a United States Navy ship, even if the attack on the ship posed no direct threat to Japan? A further argument for strengthening the military was to be able to evacuate Japanese from the Korean peninsula if hostilities broke out. The moving to safety of Japanese citizens on the Korean peninsula at war was found to rank very low in American priorities.

Throughout the debate the argument was constantly used that what the change would amount to was that Japan would become a ‘normal’ country. The notion that Japan would be able to engage in ‘collective self-defence’ was emphasised.

### Changed outlook

Admittedly Japan was finding itself in a changed security position, of which there were four major elements. First, China was actively challenging Japan’s possession of the Senkaku atolls, known to China as the Daioyus. This challenge came though the 2013 declaration by China of an East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone requiring aircraft to file a flight plan before they entered the zone. China also sent ships to the area. At the same time China was being assertive over other territorial claims in the region.

Secondly, China’s defence spending was increasing markedly. Thirdly, doubts were growing among some Japanese about continued US commitment to the region. Even if those doubts were exaggerated, the fact that they existed was significant.
Japan has long relied on US commitment to defend Japan and to provide a nuclear umbrella.

Fourthly, China had overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world. Japan, nevertheless, remained a powerful country and was not willing to accept China’s domination of the region.

While these factors need to be acknowledged, they were not the driving force in Abe’s determination to change the restraints on Japan’s military. This came from his personal disposition and background. Nevertheless, the issues Japan was facing are not trifling and lend some weight to Abe’s moves. They are discussed later.

**Significant effects**
The argument is not being advanced here that the reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution or other security shifts will make Japan into an aggressive nation, but the changes in Japan’s security posture have had effects within the region and within Japan itself.

The changed security situation includes:

- The basis of the post-war security arrangement was being changed. China made that point very strongly. Leaving aside China’s own significant and unhelpful contribution to changes in security in East Asia, there is some truth in its claim. The situation had been based on US domination, growth in South-east and East Asia, and Japan’s pacifism. One of the legs of that triangle was being removed. It will take some time for a new security arrangement to develop.

- Japan’s plans to be more active in defence co-operation with the United States will probably lead to Japan becoming more assertive in the relationship with that country. Whether, because of pressure from Japan, the United States will get itself into situations which it would not otherwise have chosen remains to be seen. Washington will have to balance its support for Japan against its own interests in the region, including its relationship with China. At the very least the present government in Japan will complicate the US–China relationship, the key to stability in the region.

- Japan will become a much bigger weapons supplier. Having one more country prepared to sell arms might not make a great deal of difference regionally. It might, however, give more military weight to links between Japan and other countries. Arms manufacturers within Japan may acquire a greater influence within the country.

- Japan will readily take part in such operations as mine-clearing. That in itself should not alter much regionally but will be part of the continuous stretching of the new defence role the present Japanese government sees for itself.

- The tensions created will make it harder for Japan to be a useful member of the Six-Party Talks with North Korea over its nuclear programme.

- The moves have already stocked nationalism in Japan and there has been a responsive rise in China and South Korea. One would have thought that Japan might have been more careful, particularly with South Korea, another democratic country. The rise in nationalism in Japan was observed by Gideon Rachman, chief foreign correspondent of the Financial Times, who wrote of meeting someone with close connections to Japan’s politics:

  He adds that some of those in Mr Abe’s circle gave the impression that ‘the only thing wrong with the second world war was that Japan lost’. This kind of thinking alienates not just China, but also the US — upon whose protection Japan relies. It harked back to some nasty precedents. Taro Aso, the deputy prime minister, distinguished himself with a comment about the Nazis providing a model for Japan’s changes:

  “We should proceed quietly. One day people realised that the Weimar constitution had changed into the Nazi constitution. No one had noticed. Why don’t we learn from that approach?”

  (An official spokesman issued this clarification: The Abe administration does not perceive Nazi Germany in a positive light.)

  Aso’s comment might make it into some collection of the best political gaffes of all time, but if it is typical of some thinking within an inner circle in Japan then it is worrying both in its comment and in the lack of grasp of how it would be received.

**Nationalism danger**
When Professor Rosemary Foot gave her Kippenberger lecture in Wellington earlier this year, she cited ‘strident nationalism’ as one of the things that could go wrong with the development of a peaceful region. Japan is adding to the strident nationalism condition. The United Nations has recently told Japan that it should curb hate language in the country.

But to come back to the issues Japan is facing. There is a reasonable argument to say that a country should be able to defend itself. Japan retained that right under the UN Charter notwithstanding Article 9. What is unfortunate about the present developments is that a whole baggage of revisionism, historical denial, doubtful constitutional practices and a fostering of extreme nationalism has been involved. There has long been a strain of this in Japan — ultra-nationalist groups harangue people with loudspeakers. Abe does not come from such a background but his method of changing the country’s security structure will undoubtedly encourage the sentiments embraced by these people and may expand their membership.

Much of the Japanese public is thus far showing itself wary of the rhetoric and moves by the Abe government. An election in Shiga prefecture returned a Democratic Party of Japan candidate instead of the LDP candidate who had been expected to win. Part of the reason appeared to be a reaction against the Japanese government’s rapid moves over defence posture.

**Wide travel**
Abe has travelled extensively since becoming prime minister, including visits to Australia and New Zealand, South-east Asia, Europe and Latin America. By the beginning of August this year he had visited 47 countries. Narendra Modi, India’s prime minister, visited Japan and economic and strategic ties were strengthened.

In Australia he was invited to address both houses of Parliament. Trade and defence agreements were signed. Tony Abbott, the Australian prime minister, sought to assure
Australians that the increased security ties with Japan were not directed against China. Nevertheless, both Australia and Japan seem to have settled on the view that they will do all they can to preserve United States primacy in the East Asian region. Malcolm Fraser, a former prime minister of Australia, has questioned this choice, arguing that Australia would be on the losing side if it were to ally itself with the United States in a conflict with China. His wry comment was: ‘If America couldn't beat Vietnam, do you think they could beat China? Not one hope in a thousand.’ Fraser's pragmatic view should be hard to ignore for any country that favours realism in its conduct of foreign relations.

Whatever Abe's purposes were in his visits to other countries, nothing has emerged from them that has altered the over-all security situation in East Asia. Such changes as there have been are the result of the attitudes fostered by Japan's new leadership as well as China's growing assertiveness.

**Direct impact**

New Zealand would be directly affected if Abe's suggestion for an Asian security organisation, based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, gained momentum. New Zealand would not want to be in or to feel excluded. New Zealand should argue against this proposal if it seems to be advancing. There is nothing like the European Union or the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Asia. The closest arrangement is the ten-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Even if it is doubtful whether the north-east Asian nations are strongly influenced by ASEAN, in the absence of anything else, New Zealand should continue to support that grouping. ASEAN's consultative style should be backed. With such influence as it has in East Asia, New Zealand should follow its traditional stance of supporting rules-based conduct. Australia's rather wholehearted identification with Japan's view of preserving the primacy of the US position in Asia may be modified by pragmatism in future, but in the meantime New Zealand will have to avoid overtly distancing itself from Australia.

Of course, New Zealand has a treasured relationship with Japan and Japan has played a generous role in the development of South-east Asia in particular and in regional disasters. Presumably none of that will change. If New Zealand were to be more vocal on aspects of Asian developments, as Robert Ayson argued so convincingly in the last issue of this journal, the history of Japan's generosity should not be forgotten. It would be sad and unfair if the revival of older attitudes came to be seen as characterising Japan's relationship with the region. Japan has much to be proud of in its history. Abe is right to assert this. It is unfortunate that some of his actions revive a sadder aspect of Japan's history.

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Engaging with the world

Terence O’Brien discusses angles and aspects of New Zealand’s approach to external relations.

The way in which a country engages in external relations with the rest of the world is shaped by its physical geography, by its resource endowments, by its interests and by its values. In this article I will look at New Zealand’s engagement under those headings. What now follows involves a quick skate over thin ice and includes broad, even rash, generalisations.

Geographical remoteness conditions New Zealand’s international mentality. But our situation has been progressively transformed by the revolution in communications technology that dazzled the 20th century, and is accelerating as we move into the new century. In the past New Zealanders cursed the so-called ‘tyranny of distance’, which was reckoned to impede New Zealand progress. We were so far away from cultural roots of an important part of our population, from the centre of ideas and investment, from new thinking and from markets for our goods. That ‘down under’ mindset has been reshaped progressively and conclusively by the communications revolution. Opportunities as well as crises from all corners of the globe now impact this country in real time. Awareness and understanding of rapid and extensive change internationally is indispensable to our success as a country, and for the conduct of our external relations.

Remoteness does mean that New Zealand retains a low sense of actual military threat to its own physical existence, in a world that is, nonetheless, beset with conflicts in many areas. Remoteness inside our maritime environment provides a large protective moat, too, against risks from a globalised world where borders now count for less and transnational crime, drugs, arms, communicable disease, terrorists and other afflictions like pollution and climate change can spread rapidly and dangerously. Such protection supplied by geography does not, however, amount to immunity. I will come back below to the specific issue of New Zealand defence policy, but here it is sufficient to note that remoteness must reinforce New Zealand concern to preserve those vital material connections to the rest of the world — connections by air, by sea, through cyber-space, by undersea cable and the like. And for that New Zealand needs to work internationally with other countries to ensure those interests.

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Geographical endowments

New Zealand’s temperate climate is a product of its geography. Together with acquired expertise in soil sciences and animal husbandry, it explains our pre-eminence in the business of transforming grass into protein. Our maritime geography explains the burgeoning New Zealand fishing industry interests, and our terrain accounts for the New Zealand forestry economy and supplies the potential for alternative energy technologies. Such endowments bestowed by geography must not obviously be endangered by heedless pursuit of ever-greater production volumes whose effect may threaten the reputation, carefully cultivated by successive New Zealand governments, for ‘clean green’ behaviour and output. Present targets for doubling the value of annual New Zealand farm exports from $32 billion to $64 billion and lifting trade performance to 40 per cent of New Zealand’s GDP (it is currently around 27 per cent) are truly immense.

In spite of geography it now seems a paradox that New Zealand’s safety and well-being over the first two-thirds of the 20th century depended on the markets of, and on protection by, distant Atlantic states. That was a legacy of the colonial foundation period of New Zealand’s modern existence reinforced by our experience of two savage world wars caused by miscalculations and ineptitude on the part of those Atlantic states. New Zealand was swept up into distant global conflicts that had direct influence upon this country’s sense of 20th century identity. Over the final third of the 20th century, however, as Europe sought greater political and economic integration and, alongside North America, embraced economic policies of perversic agricultural protectionism, New Zealand trade dependency was rudely and rapidly splintered. Over a comparatively brief period of time and with strenuous effort by both entrepreneurs and government

Geographical, resource endowments, interests and values — all play a part in determining how New Zealand engages with world. It is no longer shielded by the ‘tyranny of distance’, for global challenges now impact upon it in real time as a result of the communications revolution. Nor is its economy narrowly focused on one particular part of the globe any longer. Changing economic realities have presented opportunities nearer home. To promote its interests New Zealand relies first and foremost upon fostering relationships or partnerships with like-minded countries in order to promote or protect national interests. It has a contribution to make in advancing values based on multiculturalism.
negotiators, New Zealand transformed predominant reliance upon a handful of distant markets around the Atlantic into a genuine global spread of economic dependency.

Shifting centre
It was by most standards a swift transformation, greatly assisted by the shift in the centre of gravity beneath the world economy brought about by the rise of large newly industrialising countries most notably in Asia — led first by Japan and then by China. The business of capitalising on this transformation had the effect of rapidly broadening New Zealand foreign policy horizons because, as experience demonstrates, new political relationships, even in a globalising world, were and remain indispensable to developing and sustaining predictable long-term commercial opportunity, especially for a trader in food commodities. After all, in most countries food security and food production remain profoundly political preoccupations for governments, so that for food export economies like New Zealand diplomatic/political relationships with others are central to our bargaining and sustaining external trade opportunities.

The rise of a new middle class within East Asia (some 400 million in China alone) with an increasing taste for the food from New Zealand grassland production now means our geography becomes a decided asset — the ‘tyranny of distance’ has been emphatically superseded by the ‘potential of proximity’. The greater external economic challenge for this country’s well-being is no longer the old one of breaking down barriers to our exports at the borders of industrialised economies (although this remains important in markets like the United States and Japan), but rather of sustaining levels of food production and food safety to meet rapidly expanding external demand in ways that do not damage or degrade New Zealand and its ecology. Pursuit of external interests rests squarely and crucially upon domestic policy choices.

The opportunities provided to New Zealand by East Asia pose their own set of external relations challenges. It is important, however, to register that the Asian region does not ‘owe’ its success to others. Asian governments have adapted models and ideas from elsewhere to suit their own circumstances. In the process they dismissed military force as a means to success. They demonstrated as well by their own distinctive efforts that there is indeed more than one version of capitalism; and that it is not necessary to be ‘Western’ in order to succeed. Those lessons are relevant to New Zealand particularly at a time when, as our most recent census shows, the make up and complexion of our own population is changing.

Near abroad
Geography influences also the conduct of New Zealand external interests by the way New Zealand prioritises its foreign and aid relations in the South Pacific — our ‘near abroad’. History, tradition and culture provide the foundations for the precedents we attach to the Pacific, where over several decades New Zealand has invested much time, attention and resources aimed at improving the prospects and future for our island neighbours. A friendly, tranquil, well-disposed neighbourhood is, after all, a prime objective of foreign policy for countries everywhere.

The age of globalisation is straining structures and patterns of traditional behaviour inside many Pacific Islands societies. In addition it has increased outside interest in the resource potential of the region (especially maritime resources). An age of innocence in the South Pacific, if it ever existed, is manifestly over. New Zealand’s situation, alongside that of Australia, in the region is not quite as comfortable as it once was when 40 years ago New Zealand led moves to create greater regional consciousness amongst Pacific Islands countries. The old slogan (invented by Air New Zealand) that ‘we know the Pacific best’ no longer applies in the same ways that it once did. Obviously New Zealand needs to work with other countries from beyond the South Pacific to co-ordinate efforts to best effect inside the region. But we must do this because it is in our own national interest to do so, not because we want to impress larger powers or immediate neighbours whose approval we seek.

Interests pursuit
New Zealand’s total lack of military power together with its small size eliminates all ability to assert external interests by force or compulsion. That fact of our existence brings us directly to considering how New Zealand actually pursues external relations interests. We rely first and foremost upon fostering relationships or partnerships with like-minded countries either one-on-one (bilaterally) or collectively (multilaterally) in order to promote or protect national interests. Above all, given the realities of our situation, New Zealand seeks a predictable international system. We attach highest importance, therefore, to predictability through rules-based international behaviour, whether to support peace, or a level playing field in trade and economic relations, or collective burden sharing in areas like climate change, pollution prevention or resource protection. Negotiation and supervision of such rules represents the hard grind for New Zealand foreign policy at the international level — either inside the UN system at the global level, or collectively with others at the regional level.

The larger idea behind New Zealand support of rules-based collective behaviour through negotiation is to reinforce our preference for a system based upon a principled balance of interests irrespective of a country’s size and strength, rather than a world based simply on balance of sheer power, which is the foundation preferred, of course, by the powerful. As we begin the new century serious challenges exist to an international rules-based system. First, the sheer number of independent states in the world — 193 — suggests too many cooks in the broth and,
makes it exceedingly difficult to secure universal agreement or consensus about rules and whether to abide by them. Second, the arrival on the world stage of a group of large successful newly industrialised countries such as China, Brazil, India, Indonesia and South Africa means it is, nonetheless, crucial they accept to play by the rules. Third, for that to happen, it is essential these newly empowered countries are given a greater management role in the rules-based system and the business of making new rules. Fourth, the traditional managers of the system — major Western powers — must, therefore, make the necessary space and share their monopolies with newly emergent governments.

There is scant evidence yet of serious intention effectively to do this. Moreover the actual record suggests that failure to secure agreement through international negotiation is as often the result of major powers declining to sign up to outcomes that do not privilege their interests as it is from too many cooks in the negotiating broth.

Over the formative years of New Zealand’s international involvements in the 20th century, we cultivated close relationships with major Western powers, and strong arguments remain for sustaining such relationships in a changing world. But clearly, given the transformation in the balance in our external interests — driven by our changing trade dependencies — it is important those same Western powers accept to make the necessary adjustments to permit greater involvement by governments of successful newly industrialising countries. New Zealand must itself be ready ‘to speak truth to power’ on this subject in the capitals of major Western nations.

Asian regionalism

The globalising world is, paradoxically, producing now ‘a world of regions’. This provides evidence in itself of how hard it is at the global level to improve or sustain rules-based international behaviour. The most significant modern example of regionalism is, of course, East Asia, where New Zealand interests are now paramount and six of our top eight export markets are located. As suggested above, the Asian version of regionalism is largely unique unto itself. The regional governments welcome engagement with other non-regional countries, including New Zealand, but in particular the United States. They do not necessarily, however, concede leadership to outsiders. This distinction is important to underline in these present times because as East Asian governments themselves are collectively grappling with the supreme task of integrating China into peaceable regionalism the United States is favouring policies like the so-called Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that would subtract from China’s place as the engine force for Asian economic accomplishment.

The United States is, at the same time, strengthening its military presence and commitments to those regional governments that harbour increasing fears about growing Chinese assertiveness over competing sovereignty claims in the China Sea. Japan shares those concerns and is extending its own military capabilities, which are already powerful. So is Australia. As a good friend but not a formal military ally of the United States, New Zealand too has welcomed improvement in its own military relationship with Washington.

China does not threaten America’s existence, nor indeed New Zealand’s. It does not strive to displace the United States as global leader. China does, however, seek primacy within its own region, which its size and accomplishments merit. It is strengthening its military. Chinese defence spending amounts to something over $100 billion annually; by comparison the United States spends some $700 billion. Economic ties between them are close and China owns a large chunk of the US public debt — some $1 trillion. Both governments recognise their economic inter-dependence but they do not seem able yet to decide whether they are destined to be partners or rivals; and whether Chinese regional primacy can be consolidated upon terms agreeable to both, and how that is reconciled with American global leadership, which President Obama is determined to revitalise.

Difficult navigation

This is not the place to dwell upon all the complexities of the Asian security outlook, nor upon the merits or otherwise of the TPP. The point, however, is to register that future New Zealand foreign policy clearly will need to navigate, deftly and judiciously, through some tricky and competing currents of interest as it pursues its course particularly in the Asia–Pacific region but also beyond. This will in fact be an enduring test for professional diplomacy unlike any we have ever encountered previously in our external relations. After all, small countries do not relish taking sides whenever larger friends or partners disagree with one another and look for support for their side of the dispute.

To a large extent New Zealand operates internationally ‘beneath the radar screens’ of the powerful, given our inconsequential size and importance in the big scheme of things. That comparative invisibility can be an advantage since it allows a certain measure of deft improvisation in foreign policy; but the nature of the changes we currently foresee are fundamentally game-changing for how and where this country positions itself in international relations. Improvisation will not be sufficient.

In 2010 New Zealand last reviewed its defence policy. The white paper issued then, which is the last public explanation of New Zealand thinking on the big scheme of things available to us, suggested that New Zealand external interests change only slowly and that the international system is resilient. The paper concluded, therefore, that it was a case of ‘dependency as usual’ for New Zealand — of using defence policy and equipping New Zealand’s defence forces to add to Australia’s strategic weight; and for New Zealand being an active, engaged stalwart partner of the United States. New and strengthening connections with NATO were described as valuable to New Zealand.

Revealing contrast

There was by contrast no substantive attention devoted to thickening or extending New Zealand defence relationships in Asia; nor recognition of the ways in which Asian economic success is transforming the foundations for New Zealand security and well-being. This was a notable omission that will require to be repaired in the next Defence white paper, due in 2015. In point of fact, some effort to improve New Zealand defence connections in Asia has occurred, including with China, since 2010. These are noteworthy but need now to be set and further extended in a clear considered government policy. Difficult and sensitive choices will arise for Wellington from circumstances where robust public criticism by the United States, Australia and Japan of China’s maritime sovereignty claims eventuate.

Strict neutrality over such matters whilst urging diplomatic reconciliation upon all the parties involved is surely the best course for smaller countries especially those with large political/
economic interests at stake. New Zealand remains the only
developed export economy in a treaty relationship with China.
But traditional friends may expect New Zealand to add its voice
to their disapproval of Chinese behaviour and anticipate our
involvement in joint military exercises whose clear purpose is
to send messages to China that are calculated to provoke Beijing.
China does need to temper its assertiveness about sovereignty
claims, as do others, like Japan. In all of this New Zealand must
tread judiciously and independently.

Big challenge
The big challenge to New Zealand external relations arises from
the basic fact that we are moving into closer relations with a re-

gion, Asia, whose history, traditions, culture and values are very
different from our own. This brings us to the last part of this
contribution. The role of values in international relations grew to
prominence over the course of the 20th century. For the first time
in human history governments collectively agreed through the
United Nations to promote basic political, economic, social and
cultural rights that elevated the dignity of the human individual
in secular terms, which had never been done before.

There were, however, key constraints. First, governments
undertook to ‘promote’ human rights, not actually to ‘guarantee’
them. Large powers resisted the idea of ‘a bill of rights’ that
would impose a legal duty upon signatories to ensure conformity.
Second, there was no enforcement machinery to sanction errant
governments. The UN Charter stipulates the absolute principle of
non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states, so
that public ‘naming and shaming’ remains the only ultimate
sanction such as on transgressors. Third, some major powers
have proved quite selective in their pursuit of values-driven
international relations, hounding certain perceived wrongdoers
(like Iran) whilst absolving others (like Saudi Arabia) because of
broader foreign or security policy reasons.

The United States, which from the 1970s onwards seized
human rights as a central issue for American foreign policy, set
an ambiguous example by declining itself to sign or ratify several
key human rights conventions such as on economic and social
rights, on discrimination against women and on the rights of the
child. Moreover, the cause of human rights became intrinsically
combined with the promotion of democracy, which together
with the spread of the free market, furnished the international
relations trumpet call of Western governments, led by the United
States, over the latter half of the 20th century that blurred values

with interests. One abiding lesson here, however, was that to be
effective democracy must be a home grown product. It cannot
be imposed from outside, most certainly not at the point of a
gun. Furthermore, as suggested earlier in terms of New Zealand
interests, East Asian countries were demonstrating that there
was more than one way to accomplish economic and social
progress, rather than relying on the single model of democratic
capitalism urged by the West. Diversity remains a reality even in
a globalising world, and has to be recognised.

Shared traditions
In 2010 the ‘dependency as usual’ conclusions reached in the De-

fence white paper for New Zealand’s international security poli-
cy emphasised the values, traditions and interests we share with
the small but powerful bevy of English-speaking (Anglosphere)
nations led by the United States, in which New Zealand is the
junior partner. Those shared values also justify intelligence col-
collection and sharing with the same countries under the so-called
Five Eyes arrangement developed originally during the Cold War,
which ended 35 years ago. New Zealand interests have, of course,
widened considerably since that time, and while the need by all
countries for intelligence is undeniable there is a genuine question
about how far the exclusivity of Five Eyes continues now to serve
New Zealand’s modern foreign policy; but the country does not
seem quite ready for that debate.

In the last analysis, values can, moreover, only be spread by
the power of example, not by coercion. In the post-9/11 world the
United States chose not to view terrorism as a hideously criminal
act to be confronted, in close combination with other countries,
through law enforcement agencies, enhanced intelligence
methods and the civil judiciary; but saw it rather as an act of
war to be responded to by war. Military invasion, targeted
assassination of suspects, torture, rendition and imprisonment
without trial applied extensively and inexorably in the Islamic
world created genuine doubts, including inside America itself,
about the virtue and wisdom of the cause. Those countries
that elected to support the United States, like New Zealand in
Afghanistan, were inevitably swept up by this ambiguity about
common values between like-minded countries. Inside the
United States itself deluded domestic gun laws, militarisation of
the police, the death penalty, engrained racism, intrusive spying
and resolutely dysfunctional politics further complicated claims
about shared values.

New Zealand shares, nonetheless, important values and ideals
with the United States as a good friend but not a military ally.
But New Zealand external relations must embody the standard
of its own values — what New Zealand is and seeks to be. We
have, through the Waitangi Treaty process, placed reconciliation
at the heart of our democracy in ways that the other traditional
English-speaking countries have not. That process presents a
veritable national challenge and is often controversial; but it must
influence the conduct of New Zealand external relations. At the
same time both signatories to the treaty now confront the need to
adapt this bicultural dimension of our society to a multicultural
future driven by the globalising world. At the bottom line
multiculturalism is an explicit recognition of diversity that will
shape the future not just for this country but also for the entire
planet. Making the world safer for diversity represents a supreme
21st century international relations challenge. New Zealand has
a contribution to offer.

A Chinese family buying Fonterra milk powder in Beijing

New Zealand International Review
New Zealand’s first conquest

Ian McGibbon recalls New Zealand’s occupation of German Samoa just over a century ago.

A hundred years ago, on 29 August 1914, New Zealand took possession of Germany’s Samoan colony — the territory that is today the independent state of Samoa. It was New Zealand’s first overseas military operation of the war that had begun 25 days earlier, and the first time that it occupied enemy territory.

On 5 August news arrived in Wellington that the British Empire had entered the conflict already underway between the French and German empires. Although this momentous step was prompted by action in western Europe, especially the German invasion of neutral Belgium, no time was lost in acting against German interests worldwide, among them colonies in the South Pacific. On the 6th the British authorities asked New Zealand ‘as a great and urgent Imperial service’ to capture the wireless station in Samoa.

Coming as it did while New Zealanders were volunteering for the force to be sent to Europe, and promising fulfilment of a long-held aspiration to control western Samoa, this request was well received by William Massey’s government. A 1374-strong composite force of mainly Territorials was quickly put together. Its commander, Colonel Robert Logan, would have three companies of infantry, a field artillery battery and sundry support units to carry out his task.

Abundant myths
Myths abound about the expedition. One holds that New Zealand, on enquiring what German military forces might be encountered, was told by London to look up Whitaker’s Almanac. This is undoubtedly apocryphal. The documentary record indicates that information was obtained from intelligence authorities in Australia. This indicated the presence of a German-officered constabulary of about 80 men, which might be reinforced by a few reservists, and a gunboat.

A second myth relates to the safety of the passage of the force to Samoa. The whereabouts of the main German force in the Pacific, the German Asiatic Squadron, was unknown. This squadron’s main elements, the two armoured cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, outclassed the two old cruisers HMS Philomel and HMS Psyche available in New Zealand to escort the force. The force finally set off for Suva on 15 August, but en route it was diverted to Noumea to allow for an earlier junction with the battlecruiser HMAS Australia and the French cruiser Montcalm. Because of this unexpected change, a myth soon developed that the German squadron had narrowly failed to intercept the New Zealand ships. In reality they were never in danger, for the German ships were far to the north in the vicinity of the Marshall Islands.

No opposition was evident when the Samoa Expeditionary Force, as it later became known, finally reached Apia on 29 August. The troops landed, and the wireless station was soon in New Zealand hands. A ceremony at the courthouse next day formally transferred the territory to New Zealand’s control. Many in New Zealand at the time — and later — believed proudly that their country had made the British Empire’s first conquest of the war. The British force that took the German African colony of Togoland on 26 August had already claimed that distinction.

After 30 August the troops set themselves up in camps and prepared defences. The arrival off Apia of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau on 14 September brought them face to face with the enemy, but no shots were fired before the ships made off to the east towards their eventual destruction at the Battle of the Falkland Islands (though not before they had bombarded Papeete and destroyed a British force at Coronel).

Reduced garrison
The New Zealand garrison remained in Samoa for the rest of the war, though it was reduced to 250 men in April 1915. Older men arrived to replace the original landing troops, who returned to New Zealand and, in many cases, joined the expeditionary force that was now in the Mediterranean.

International law prescribed that the territory should be governed through the existing German administration pending the peace settlement, but this proved impractical. Logan eventually created a military administration, replaced German currency with British, closed or liquidated German assets and deported Germans without family ties to the islands.

Logan acted on the principle of minimum interference in Samoan life. This brought a positive response from Samoans, but all his efforts were nullified by the tidal wave of resentment that followed the arrival of the influenza pandemic in the islands later in 1918. One in five Samoans succumbed to the disease.

This tragedy provided a negative undercurrent to the arrangements for Samoa’s future that emerged from the Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919. New Zealand retained control of its ‘conquest’, but it did so only as mandatory power responsible to the newly formed League of Nations. By the time the mandate was officially proclaimed, on 17 December 1920, the garrison had been withdrawn and a civil administration had been installed.
A unique event

Peseta Sam Lotu-Iiga speaks at the ceremony in Auckland to mark New Zealand’s occupation of German Samoa.

This special commemoration marks a unique event in the history of New Zealand and Samoa. At the outset of the First World War, New Zealand largely considered itself an outpost of Britain in the South Seas. Over the many decades New Zealand has come to recognise the value of our neighbours: Australia, Asia and nations of the South Pacific.

The common history that New Zealand and Samoa share has its origins in the occupation of German Samoa by New Zealand military forces one hundred years ago. This occupation was undertaken at the request of Britain and marks New Zealand’s first military action in the Pacific.

The occupation started a relationship that has developed through the decades to one that we all enjoy today. It is a relationship that has had its peaks and troughs. It is a relationship that is based on friendship, shared values and a common vision for the future.

It is this common vision and strong friendship that our ancestors from New Zealand and Samoa expected and hoped for when they signed the Treaty of Friendship between New Zealand and Samoa in 1962. This relationship with Samoa has in turn helped New Zealand move from being a remote outpost of the British Empire to being an established Pacific nation.

New Zealand is now home to nearly 145,000 Samoans and Samoan is now the third most spoken language in New Zealand after English and Maori. The impact of Samoans in New Zealand has left an indelible mark on the identity and culture of New Zealand and will continue to do so. There are now Samoan members of Parliament, councillors and representatives in local government and others prominent in all walks of New Zealand life.

The contribution of Samoans to all aspects of New Zealand society can be found in things like the literary arts, culture, sports, music, business and community service. Samoans’ significant contribution to New Zealand society is epitomised in the award last year of New Zealand’s highest honour to Professor Maualaivao Albert Wendt. He is now a member of the Order of New Zealand, which is restricted to twenty living New Zealanders at any one time. It is awarded for outstanding service to the Crown and people of New Zealand.

Special period

Samoan’s independence in 1962 also marked a special period in Samoa’s history and the maturing of Samoa as a nation and as a people. We were proud to support its independence and since then we have worked closely together as colleagues, friends and aiga.

There are many examples of how we work together. For example, New Zealand has been quick to respond following natural disasters in Samoa, with $22 million in aid in response to the tsunami in 2009 and Cyclone Evan in 2012. New Zealand also worked in partnership with the Samoa National Disaster Management Office to strengthen its disaster preparedness measures.

In 2012 New Zealand and Samoa celebrated 50 years of the Friendship Treaty. Prime Minister John Key led a strong delegation of members of Parliament to highlight this special anniversary of friendship. I was a part of this delegation — it was indeed a special time for both of our peoples.

Last year, our government also initiated the first Pacific Parliamentary and Political Leaders Forum in our New Zealand Parliament Buildings. Samoans were among more than 70 Pacific parliamentarians and political leaders who gathered for this event — the first of its kind. A core objective of the gathering was to promote stronger co-operation, collaboration and political cohesion amongst new and emerging political leaders from the South Pacific and to strengthen their relations with New Zealand parliamentarians.

Key part

The New Zealand aid programme in Samoa is a key part of our bilateral relationship. It includes a diverse portfolio of activities in the priority sectors of: sustainable economic development; human development; scholarships and training; and New Zealand partnerships. The aid programme focuses on long-term sustainable development in Samoa. However, recent investments in renewable energy and tourism have been made in consultation with the government of Samoa to achieve short-term outcomes that will assist the Cyclone Evan recovery programme and to support the hosting of the SIDS conference.

Finally, may I recognise and acknowledge the presence of representatives of many of the descendants of the German/Samoan families that were in Samoa at the time of the New Zealand occupation. In addition, may I also acknowledge the descendants of the New Zealand soldiers that went to Samoa on behalf of the New Zealand government. It is a special privilege to see representatives of all those families that witnessed and participated in this event so many years ago.

Our government looks forward to continuing to embrace and deepen our already strong relationship with Samoa for the benefit of our people, families and communities. Today we celebrate our rich past and tomorrow we look forward to another hundred years of close relationship in our beautiful corner of the South Pacific.
Adjusting to the Indian political tsunami

Tim Groser discusses the possible implications of Narendra Modi's accession to power for trade negotiations, including the prospective India–New Zealand free trade agreement.

Around the world, friends of India, strategists, business groups and others are all starting to ask a rather important question. With the landslide victory of the BJP over Congress, we have seen a shift in the political tectonic plates. What implications will this have, if any, for India's approach to international economic negotiations? No doubt, even that is too confining; as minister of climate change issues I am also wondering about that matter in terms of the international climate change negotiations. But here I wear my trade hat.

No-one inside India should doubt this. In the last few months since the Indian election, I have had very private and informal discussions on exactly this topic with ministers and senior officials of some of the most important countries in the world. We are all in full listening mode. Depending on what answers we receive from New Delhi — and no-one is expecting clarity soon — New Zealand and countries far more important than us in international affairs will maintain or re-calibrate their own agendas and negotiating positions.

It is hardly surprising that this strategic question is central to many people's thinking. India is the second largest country in the world by population. What happens in India affects everyone — not just the around 1.2 billion people who live there. And across the vast Indian diaspora, including here in New Zealand where there is a vibrant community of New Zealanders of Indian ethnic heritage, this will be more important still.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed extremely close professional links with many Indian senior officials over many years — people like K.M. Chandrasekhar, former Cabinet secretary, past Indian World Trade Organisation ambassadors, a variety of other senior Indian negotiators — not to mention a warm relationship with former Commerce Minister Kamal Nath and his successor, Anand Sharma. I am obviously hoping to develop an equally good relationship with the new BJP ministers.

The central question, of course, is how is Prime Minister Modi's government going to interpret India's real long-term interests? Second, what implications might this have for historical Indian negotiating positions? I will come back to this.

Hon Tim Groser is the minister of trade. This article is the edited text of an address he gave to the India New Zealand Business Council on 8 July 2014.

Political tsunami

The election was a political tsunami. The tech-savvy young Indian professionals of the BJP who used the full power of the social media — including the famous hologram — to power Narendra Modi into office perhaps sensed what was possible in terms of the magnitude of the victory and the corresponding loss of the Congress Party. But no-one else did. For the first time in 30 years, the prime minister's party has a majority in Parliament's lower house.

It is not my purpose to explain why — this has been done by numerous political commentators far better informed than me about Indian politics. Nor will I comment on the obvious problems the new prime minister faces. Most of them are finally rooted in the vast diversity of the country and the massive gaps between millions in rural villages without electricity and the brilliant young Indian professionals who used the digital universe to power Modi to office.

But one thing is clear: Prime Minister Modi has a clear-cut mandate for change. That is rare. The prime minister and his inner circle will be asking themselves the most important question: where and how can we use that political capital?

He and his strategists will be pondering some obvious and large matters that would frame any answer to that question. It is not just economic questions they need to address. There are vital foreign policy questions such as bringing greater stability to the sub-continent, which will turn primarily on their relations with Pakistan.

But we are assuming that the primary message both from Modi's campaign and his great earlier success as the chief minister of Gujarat for thirteen years lies in the economic sphere. We know that the surge of growth in the late 1990s and early years of the 2000s has helped bring about a shift in the political tectonic plates. What implications will this have, if any, for India's approach to international economic negotiations? No doubt, even that is too confining; as minister of climate change issues I am also wondering about that matter in terms of the international climate change negotiations. But here I wear my trade hat.

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the 21st century — the period that gave rise to the controversial slogan ‘India Shining’ — has dissipated in recent years. There are massive infrastructural needs. Some 30–40 per cent of domestically produced food is wasted. Inward foreign direct investment is weak compared with the potential of the country. I could go on but there is no point: Indian analysts know all this.

**Developmental problems**

These are developmental problems affecting numerous emerging economies. They are not specific to India. It is just that they matter more globally because of India’s size and India’s potential. But common to all this, at least in my view, is the need to introduce more competition into the Indian economy. Without that, I cannot see an acceleration of sustained growth and the creation of an even stronger climate of innovation.

Just recall this famous ‘factoid’: entrepreneurs of Indian ethnic origin create about one-third of Silicon Valley start-ups. Of course, there are already numerous signs of an explosion of similar intellectual and entrepreneurial talent inside India proper — I have seen it myself in Bangalore, in Mumbai, Pune and elsewhere. There is also a very interesting debate going on about how to marry India’s new-found success in IT with the right manufacturing model.

But I sense there is much more waiting to be unleashed and I do not think India is going to achieve its full potential outside of a more competitive environment with an appropriate rules-based system around it. That, I suggest, frames correctly the controversial matter of the most appropriate trade policy for India.

There are two ways to look at trade negotiations. ‘Pain or pleasure?’, ‘problem or opportunity?’ would be two crude ways of putting it. I am describing in more colourful terms what trade theorists more formally called ‘mercantilism versus comparative advantage’.

Large numbers of people in our communities used to think barriers to imports were good because they saved jobs, trade ‘concessions’ were bad because they lost jobs and the ‘best’ negotiators were those who were ‘tough’ negotiators (meaning they never agreed to anything). This was exactly the consensus amongst New Zealand trade negotiators and their political masters in the 1960s and 1970s as they defended a hopeless system of import licensing, subsidies and the highest average tariffs in the developed world. The first political economy book I read as a young adult in New Zealand was *The Search for Security* by the former secretary of the Department of Commerce and Industry Dr Bill Sutch. It was a classic expression of that view. It had huge influence but it led us into an economic cul-de-sac with low growth rates, high unemployment and uncompetitive industry.

**Needed reform**

New Zealand in the 1980s needed reform. We needed to do something to improve our productivity, competitiveness and export performance in our highly protected sectors. Finally, we came to the conclusion that this would never be done unilaterally. We needed the impetus of external competition. We then began a long, slow process of opening up the protected sectors of our economy first with our then largest trading partner, Australia, later the world.

Today, the evidence that competition through trade liberalisation helps your country is literally overwhelming. If you seek to protect your country or sector with heavy insulation from import competition, you have to accept the corollary — the country or sector in question is not going to cut it internationally.

If you are looking for practice to confirm the linkage between trade policy and competitiveness, just think that today, in spite of the largest global financial crisis in 70 years, governments around the world are engaged in an explosive number of trade negotiations designed to link their economies into the global value chain to promote desperately needed growth. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are just three of many such initiatives.

Traditionally, however, India has adopted a highly conservative approach to trade negotiations. I recall that in 1985 India and New Zealand both had approximately the same share of world trade — 0.3 per cent. That historical figure is better left unadorned without any commentary.

**Isolationist mind-set**

I understand the origins of the Indian position. New Zealand had a similar isolationist mind-set in the 1970s. I am not, therefore, criticising the generations of brilliant Indian intellectuals and negotiators such as Ambassador Shukla, who campaigned tirelessly in Geneva in the mid-1980s to try to stop the launch of international negotiations in trade in services as we were putting the negotiating mandate for the GATT Uruguay Round together. Fortunately for India, however, he failed — under the GATS framework, India has moved from around 22nd in the world in trade in services ten years ago to number seven today. History has proved that India’s fears of opening up to services competition were misguided.

Trade negotiators finally reflect the choices made by their political masters. It is for this reason that we will look so closely at Prime Minister Modi and his key advisers’ choice concerning India’s economic development: will India open up, incrementally and intelligently, to trade and with that become economically competitive or will it remain closed?

Outsiders like me, of course, have no standing in answering that question. Despite this, I maintain an illogical desire to give advice to leading Indians. I tried to do so at the end of last summer, when I had the pleasure of a chance encounter with M.S. Dhoni and his fantastic cricket team at Auckland International airport. I have a photograph proving that I inappropriately took advantage of a moment with the great cricketer to give some pointers on his cover drive. Even though he politely declined my offer of coaching, I want to try again, in the trade policy sphere, to provide some advice to the leading Indian experts on trade policy.

On trade policy at least, New Zealand can offer a
friendly but unambiguous view from the outside: increasing India’s connectivity to the global economy cannot be done by maintaining existing trade policy settings and its historical negotiating approach.

**Three fora**

We are involved with India in three trade negotiating fora — the WTO, the mega-regional trade deal known as RCEP, and the bilateral free trade agreement negotiations between New Zealand and India. I should add that as early as 2009 I have quite deliberately gone out on a limb diplomatically by advocating informally and rather controversially in APEC circles that the next expansion of APEC would have to include India, while recognising that India has not formally requested membership. Anyone that knows anything about the cultural, economic, religious and demographic history of Asia knows that it is impossible finally to exclude India — a central actor in any Asian story.

I will not here dwell on the WTO and the role of India. Suffice it to say that I am deeply familiar with all the Indian negotiating positions in the key aspects of WTO affairs. I am also proud of the fact that I chaired the first ever legal case India took to the WTO — an anti-dumping case involving certain steel products against the United States. I was told that there were many cynics in New Delhi who believed the WTO was the creature of the developed countries and would never find in their favour. India won the case on the merits of its legal arguments.

The RCEP is a bit like the TPP — but without the United States involved and with the involvement of India and China. It involves sixteen countries — the ten ASEAN countries and the six others which have negotiated free trade agreements with ASEAN. That includes India. ASEAN negotiators have told me frequently that the free trade agreement with India was extraordinarily difficult. However, India is in that mix, and sixteen heads of government have given it their blessing. It is far less mature as a negotiation than the TPP and there are complex political linkages between the RCEP and TPP, despite the fact that the United States is not directly involved.

The RCEP may evolve in ways we cannot really envisage at this stage. Nor have I excluded in my mind the possibility of a ‘two-speed’ negotiation — that is a sub-set of countries ready and willing to deepen their trade and investment integration with the ASEAN economies and others who might lack the political base at home to do this in the near term. That is all for the future.

**Useful partner**

Focusing on the India–New Zealand free trade agreement, New Zealand would be a more than useful partner if India decides to pursue a trade liberalising agenda as a means to economic competitiveness. Our size means we are an ideal test-case for a progressive approach to liberalisation and explains our strategic role when China was looking for its first outward-looking free trade agreement partner.

Prime Minister John Key and then Prime Minister Singh launched the India–New Zealand free trade agreement in 2009. We have made progress but are not yet where I would like us to be.

The free trade agreement, if we could conclude it, would play a critical part in New Zealand’s relationship with India. The first of all the New Zealand Inc country strategies that were launched by the prime minister was that on India. I think many New Zealanders, irrespective of their ethnic heritage, all have a sense that this small country, which we like to call ‘New Zealand Inc’, has done an astonishing job developing ties with the other developing country super-power, China. Unquestionably, the free trade agreement with China has played a crucial role in that. The potential with respect to India is of the same order of magnitude. I know some New Zealand thinkers who assert that it is greater.

New Zealand is committed to rapidly progressing the free trade agreement negotiation to its conclusion if the Indian government desires. However, if we receive the green light from New Delhi, we will come hard up again on the central problem New Zealand has not only with India but also with every country we negotiate with: agriculture liberalisation, without which New Zealand cannot enter into any free trade agreement.

Somehow, we have yet to convince some of our negotiating partners that there are not secret convoys of New Zealand milk tankers hidden behind the Bombay Hills near Auckland, and just waiting to flood their country with milk given half a chance through trade liberalisation.

**Small proportion**

Many abroad do not realise that New Zealand only accounts for

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**Leaders of TPP member states**
3 per cent of total milk production. We simply do not have the land to produce the projected global increase in dairy demand over the coming decades. Increased demand for dairy is a global phenomenon, but applies equally to the rapidly growing Indian middle class. Indian dairy farmers have a central role to play in satisfying that demand. Many do not realise that India is a larger producer than New Zealand, accounts for 14 per cent of world dairy production and with efficiency gains could increase that production considerably.

New Zealand companies could play a role in the process of modernisation of Indian agriculture. We have already seen New Zealand companies play this role in China. The stark reality is that New Zealand’s local production cannot keep up with Chinese demand for safe, high quality milk. That is why a commercial decision has been made by Fonterra to invest in Chinese farms on the back of the strong commercial interest they have in the Chinese market through the free trade agreement.

Undoubtedly, rural modernisation and building rural incomes are critical for India. The agriculture sector is India’s largest employer, a critical support structure for the poor and a key component to food security. Negotiating a balanced and liberalising free trade agreement with New Zealand offers opportunities for both countries in this regard. In fact, with the right policy settings, there is no reason why India cannot become a competitive agricultural producer of global significance in some crops. Applied seed science, investment, infrastructure, and local advantages have already come together in India to deliver globally significant production in basmati rice, spices, flowers and chickpeas. There will undoubtedly be others if farmers are given the right incentives.

I am, therefore, convinced that we can chart a pathway through the agricultural political minefield to conclude a free trade agreement with India that includes agriculture. In those areas where New Zealand is absolutely cutting edge, I am sure New Zealand agricultural technology and, longer term, New Zealand investment can be part of India’s agriculture answer, not part of the problem.

**Early signals**

We have already had some preliminary and friendly conversations with the new Indian government on these matters. I would not be expressing these quite blunt views about competition and the need for new thinking on trade policy if I thought such views were completely out of tune with emerging thinking in New Delhi. I am not that reckless.

Having said that, we fully understand that the new policy of the government is not yet settled. Important industry still needs to better understand the benefits of free trade agreements and their link to economic growth. There is also an internal review of trade policy taking place in New Delhi that needs to be completed.

What is clear is that the prospects for the New Zealand free trade agreement will not be determined in a policy vacuum. Any reconfigured Indian position will reflect a broader strategic appraisal of free trade agreements and the role they might play in achieving the broader policy goals of the new government. And that takes us all the way back to the core question of competitiveness.

For that reason, we are optimistic that India’s political leadership will ultimately give the green light for its negotiators to conclude the free trade agreement with New Zealand. Our chief negotiator went to New Delhi in July and I am already looking forward with enthusiasm to my own first opportunity to have informal discussions with the new commerce minister on this important negotiation for New Zealand and the Indian economy.
Geo-politics is essentially politicised geography. In this context, geographical location implies either advantages or clear disadvantages for particular states in their struggle to find their niche in the concert of the powers. Another interpretation holds that geographical location defines the nature of the social, economic and political systems and ultimately the notion of foe and friend. While emerging in the late 19th/early 20th century, at the beginning of the conflict among Western powers for supremacy, the concept was developed in the aftermath of the First World War, during the Second World War and in the early stages of the Cold War. It received a new boost more recently when the early prophecy about ‘the end of history’, the harmonious networks of democratic nations led by the benign hegemony of the United States, proved to be false. Still, geo-politics is not a globally accepted explanatory model. While popular in Russia, it is less acceptable in the West, where the geo-political framework is just a way of explaining events in a different context. Two recent books highlight the two diverse views.

One of these volumes is a collection of articles dealing with Halford Mackinder, the British geo-politician of the first half of the 20th century, and his influence in Central Asia and its applicability to the geo-politics of Central Asia today. The contributors to this volume come from a variety of backgrounds, some quite exotic, such as Levent Hekimoglu, for example. After spending some time in academia in Canada, he dropped out of academia and, now, if one can trust the biographical blurb, resides in the Arabian Desert.

The articles are divided into several clear groups. The first deals with Mackinder as the first political geographer, who, with scores of other similar thinkers, was the founder of geopolitics, the science that implies that a state’s political culture, foreign policy and pecking order in the world order depend on geography. The interest in Mackinder is directly related to his notion that the country that controls the Eurasian heartland is a global leader.

The second segment — and, from this reviewer’s perspective, the most interesting — deals with the history of the influence of Mackinder’s ideas on Russia and Central Asia. Sevara Sharapova’s chapter, ‘The Intellectual Life of the Heartland: How Mackinder Travelled to Uzbekistan’, shows how geo-politics and, therefore, Mackinder, were expunged from Soviet intellectual discourse by the late 1920s, at the end of the new economic policy (NEP) period. Geo-politics did not re-emerge in the Soviet Union until the time of Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms in the 1980s and almost immediately afterwards became quite popular in Russia. From here the concept transmuted to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where geo-politics has been incorporated into the broad intellectual context. Kirill Nourzhanov’s chapter ‘Mackinder on the Roof of the World: Geopolitical Discourse in Tajikistan’ deals with the intellectual history of post-Soviet Tajikistan in a broad Central Asian context, which is pretty much unknown in the West and, as one might assume, in Russia as well.

Awesome power
The West, especially the United States, which academia regards as the global cultural intellectual leader, had been quite interested in Soviet cultural and intellectual development in the past, despite the rather grayish uniformity of the Soviet intellectual space. Still, the awesome power of the Soviet Union made anything related to that state of interest, including its cultural and intellectual aspects. The demise of the Soviet Union had the most devastating implications for the field, and the study of Russian intellectual discourse was marginalised. The few exceptions are related to American prevailing stereotypes. First, some studies deal with such talented and erudite mavericks as Alexander Dugin, who is presented not just as an interesting post-Soviet intellectual but also as the guid-

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ing light for Vladimir Putin, the dangerous autocrat who wishes to restore the Soviet empire. The fact that Dugin has had rather limited influence on the Kremlin through most of Putin’s tenure and has often played the role of the intellectual and more sophisticated variation of the flamboyant Vladimir Zhirinovsky, enfant terrible of Russian politics, is ignored. Also overlooked is Dugin’s loss of his job at Moscow State University, a clear indication of the Kremlin’s displeasure with him.

The other individuals who are mentioned are usually those who were affiliated with Western think tanks like the Carnegie Center and Western universities. Central Asia is even less appealing as a place of new ideas. One might add that Russian observers have the same condescending views of Central Asians as Westerners have of Russians. There is no work, at least to my knowledge, which deals with the intellectual history of Central Asia in both late Soviet and post-Soviet periods. For this very reason, the quoted chapter will be quite interesting not just for Western but even Russian readers. It shows how geo-political ideas have been integrated into the broad intellectual discourse, forging Tadjikistan’s national identity both in the context of Tadjikistan’s relationship with the great powers and the Turkic republics of Central Asia.

The last segment of *Central Asia in International Relations* deals with the applicability of Mackinder’s theory for contemporary Central Asia. Some contributors to this segment believe that Mackinder’s theory is an essential paradigm for understanding Central Asia and its relationship with the rest of the world, and it was overlooking Mackinder that led to America’s problems in its relationships with the peoples in the area. For others, however, Mackinder’s theory is practically irrelevant. The truth is most likely somewhere in between. Geography, including the geography of Central Asia, indeed matters. Central Asia’s proximity to China makes this region an important source of gas and oil for Beijing, regardless of the fact that some other areas of the world have much more of these commodities.

**General interest**

Still, interest in Mackinder’s geo-politics in general, in the post-Soviet time, cannot be explained simply by the removal of Soviet censorship and an appreciation of the role of geography in global arrangements. The interest in geo-politics actually stems from a different reason. In the past, the conflict between the Soviet Union and the West was explained as a struggle between two political/social and ideological systems. The conflict, however, did not disappear with the end of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the tension has reached almost Cold War levels during the current Ukrainian crisis. And here geo-politics has emerged as a useful explanatory model, albeit among many other models of course.

In the context of modern geo-political construction, the conflict between Russia and the West is due to the clash between continental and maritime civilisations, which cannot live in peace. But there is another reason: the region of the former Soviet Union has suffered economic and military decline in comparison to the situation that existed in the time of the Soviet Union. And here geo-politics provides the great consolation: it implies that these countries, by their location in certain regions, are important. While most authors featured in *Central Asia in International Relations* look at geo-politics as a way of explaining the role of post-Soviet states in dealing with the broader world, including the United States, others consider the concept a rather dubious tool. For them, the conflict between Russia and the United States, and their competition over Central Asia and the Caucasus, cannot be explained by geo-politics, but rather is caused by a clash of values. In this context, the United States would have no problem with Russia if it were following democratic principles. This is the case, for example, with Christoph Bluth’s monograph *US Foreign Policy and the Caucasus and Central Asia*, which in a way provides a good summary of the public views of Western officials. One, of course, should remember that public views or justifications of the Western, especially American, elite often have the same meaning as the famous American smiles and handshakes — just covering up for indifference and hostility.

The book deals with the United States’ approach to the former Soviet Union, mostly with the Caspian regions and related areas — Central Asia and the Caucasus. This narrative is placed in the context of a general explanatory model showing how foreign policy is shaped from an ideological and structural/formal point of view. The first part of the book is quite informative and provides the theoretical framework. According to Bluth, the explanatory models are as follows. First is the assumption that the United States’ foreign policy follows *raison d’état* — geo-political pragmatism. This explanatory model itself can be roughly divided into several modifications. One posits that power is sought for its sake alone. Proponents of this approach, such as, for example, John Mearsheimer, hold that this is the natural drive of any state and no moral judgment should be made in regard to particular actions. In a way, foreign policy can be seen in a sort of Social Darwinian fashion. Indeed, condemnation here is as meaningless as condemning a predator for attacking its prey. The second variation of geo-political pragmatism implies that imperial aggrandisement, so to speak, is related not just to the drive for power for the sake of power and related military and strategic benefits but also to economic benefits. The second model implies, according to Bluth, that foreign policy is shaped by a variety of values idiosyncratic to a particular state. Here the state, following abstract ideological postulates, could ignore realpolitik if it contradicts that abstract set of values.

**Several models**

Bluth’s introduction also discusses how decisions are made. Here again, according to the author, several models exist. The first implies that government officials at the top make all decisions; the second that various bureaucratic bodies mostly make decisions; the third that the business community makes the decisions, in short, that governments just follow the bidding of big business. This theory is almost identical to the Marxist explanation that the state is just a servant of the ruling class.

Elaborating on all of these theories, Bluth notes that in the United States top government officials make the final decisions. In fact, the state resists the desire of business to make decisions that would suit its interests. Bluth also discards the notion that Washington’s decisions could be reduced just to pragmatic geo-political interests as the American elite visualises them. In his view, the United States often acts according to abstract values. At least their role should not be discounted. It would be oversimplistic to regard the US elite as cynics for whom moral reasoning was just the cover up for pragmatic considerations and who just follow the iron clad laws of geo-politics.

Moving from these general premises, Bluth provides an explanation of American policy in dealing with the former
Soviet Union from approximately the beginning of the Clinton administration to the end of Bush’s tenure. In his view, Clinton believed that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was indeed rooted in ideological and political differences. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the perception that the regime in Moscow had become similar to those of the West, the US–Russian relationship could be in a way similar to the United States’ relationship with West Europe. In this interpretation, Europe and the United States are bound together because they share values and have similar political institutions. Since Russia had become a benign democratic power, all problems and shortcomings notwithstanding, Moscow’s domination of the post-Soviet states could be accepted.

**Changed view**

Washington’s view of Moscow and its policy in the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia and the Caucasus, had changed by the late Yeltsin era. In Bluth’s view, the change mostly stemmed from disappointment with developments inside Russia. The regime in Moscow, in Washington’s view, had betrayed their early expectations and exhibited authoritarianism tinged with traditional imperialism. This perception pushed Washington to begin seeking to limit Russian influence and consequently to weaken Russia economically and geo-politically. Washington’s desire to limit Russia’s ability to transfer oil and gas to European markets led it to promote the creation of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan gas line. In fact, the business community was advocating an absolutely different and potentially more profitable project; the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan line was purely a geo-political project aimed at preventing Russia and Iran from benefiting from their resources.

At the beginning of his presidency Clinton, under the illusion that Russia could be truly democratic, accepted that it should be allowed to engage in benign policing of the former Soviet Union. His approach changed only when Russia failed to live up to these expectations. The new Bush administration at first had no interest in foreign policy, but 9/11 made Washington’s global engagement imperative. Once again, Washington stretched out a hand to Moscow. It was ready to forget all previous problems with Moscow and to see it as an honest partner. Still, as Bluth implies, Moscow once again behaved in a neo-imperial fashion and plainly did not follow America’s lead. The new tension resulted.

**US Foreign Policy and the Caucasus and Central Asia**, like many other books, can be assessed from different perspectives and has several good points. To start with, the introduction, with its stress on various theories explaining decision-making, is quite helpful, especially for those who are not well versed in the subject. The other good point is Bluth’s discussion of the decision-making process in Washington. He rightfully notes, implicitly criticising vulgar Marxism, that the view of those who see the state as just the agent of the economic elite, following faithfully all the wishes of either Wall Street or big oil companies, is rather simplistic. He maintains that the state has a degree of independence from the ruling elite and follows its own notions of foreign policy rationale not always directly connected with the will of the economic elite and, even more so, the electorate. In his view, that pragmatic geo-politics, such as, for example, the quest for spheres of influence, cannot explain the complexity of global arrangements and the major powers’ postures entirely.

**Important assumption**

One should, therefore, take into account the role of values — for example, the United States’ belief in the importance of the spread of democracy — in the shaping of US policy. The assumption here that the United States’ promotion of democracy as a goal in itself, and not just as an instrument of geo-politics, is prompted by the belief that democratic countries will be more pre-disposed to the United States than non-democratic ones. Still, the role of these matters in American leaders’ decisions should not be over-estimated. Pursuing moral ends, even deeply internalised on the personal level, is, in most cases, the sublimation of a geo-political rationale actually free from unrelated sentiments, for example, whether or not this or that country follows ‘human rights’, or has either decided to accept democracy or reject it.

The most serious problem is Bluth’s attempt to personalise US foreign policy and to deal with the US approach to particular countries outside of the big picture — the general outlines of American policy in the first twenty years of the post-Cold War era. Indeed, it was the time when, taking advantage of the vacuum created after the end of the Soviet Union, the United States asserted its global predominance. Its relationship with Russia and the increasing cooling of the Russo-American relationship led, especially after the Ukrainian crisis began, to the increasing competition of the United States, Russia and, of course, other players for influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

And here, it might be stated, geo-political strength might indeed re-emerge as the major geo-political model, at least as an explanation of US foreign policy. However, the dictums of the doctrine should be reconsidered. Geo-politics might be wrong in one way: geography is not destiny. Still geo-politics might be right in another way. The policy of Western powers is driven not by the wills of particular leaders but by objective and, in a way, impersonal factors. It has much deeper foundations and this premise is indeed applicable to US foreign policy.
ZONE OF CRISIS: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq

Author: Amin Saikal

Professor Amin Saikal, director of ANU’s Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, is a well known commentator on Middle Eastern and South Asian history and politics. This volume, as the title suggests, focuses on four of the Muslim world’s most pivotal countries that form a sort of ‘geopolitical zone’. Saikal’s volume provides an overview on each country with some well considered recommendations for the way forward; no easy task in a region beset by seemingly impossible problems. The audience for this book is likely generalists or decision-makers looking to find accessible material.

Starting with Afghanistan, Saikal notes that country’s vast array of challenges, perhaps best summed up in its recent ranking by Transparency International as the most corrupt country in the world alongside North Korea and Somalia. The author worries that Afghanistan’s future will be as dire as its horrifying past, on account of external competition and internal instability. Saikal, writing during the time of President Karzai, calls for better leadership after some years of nepotism and kleptocracy. He wants a better electoral system (Afghanistan currently uses single non-transferable vote, which, unlike the transferable version, results in a massive wasted vote percentage). He wants a switch to a political system that forces parties to seek to appeal to a nationwide constituency in what is currently a land of minorities; Afghanistan is full of micro-identities. Strengthening local autonomy is another recommendation. And to mitigate against getting trapped in regional rivalries, Afghanistan’s long-term historical curse, Saikal believes that Afghanistan needs a determined affirmation of neutrality towards its more powerful neighbours.

That then leads to Pakistan, which Saikal (diplomatically) describes as having had a ‘Janus-like agenda’ towards the problem of extremism, particularly as it relates to events in Afghanistan. Pakistan’s challenges are staggering, too, with a worsening insurgency in the tribal regions, which is currently tying down 120,000 troops. Saikal sees Pakistan’s military as a ‘state within a state’ and, historically, driven by competition with civilian political opponents. Recommendations here include a cautious shift towards civilian control over government and the country’s business life — cautious so as not to provoke a strong counter-reaction — and an end to that country’s ambivalent attitudes towards insurgency, not least of all because it is in Islamabad’s interests to avoid blowback.

Iran’s political divides are well summed up here, and ought to give greater insight than the popular media’s tendency to focus largely on the views of whoever happens to be president. Iran has forged an interesting hybrid of clerical rule with a degree of pluralism; a combination of theocracy and the ballot box that Saikal sees as offering substantive hope of reintegration into the international community at some future point. A major point made by Saikal is the failure of Iran’s economy in spite of its oil riches, a combination of self-inflicted economic distortions (increasingly industry is passing into the hands of deep state revolutionary elements) and international sanctions. Saikal also notes previous Western failures to notice Iranian overtures.

The chapter on Iraq was written before ISIL’s surprise re-emergence to take over a slice of the country, although some of Saikal’s concerns would appear partially to anticipate this sort of sectarian upheaval. Then Prime Minister Maliki’s 2011 removal of senior Sunni politicians, including the charge of terrorism against Vice President Hashimi, was a major blow to Iraqi unity, according to Saikal. While ISIL’s emergence has put the group into public view, Saikal was already warning prior to these events that the situation was ripe for al-Qaeda in Iraq to exploit, and notes that in 2013 10,000 Iraqis died in insurgent-related violence — really an incredible statistic, particularly as it foreshadows more recent events. This leads to consideration of how Iraq can form a proper consociational democracy that allocates resources across oil rich and oil poor regions.

One feature of this book cannot be overlooked. Although the book is billed as describing trouble across a ‘continuous geopolitical zone’, the greatest humanitarian problem of them all, Syria, does not particularly feature and is instead relegated to a single paragraph in the conclusion. Given Syria’s civil war, and its pressure on Iraq in particular, this seems like a surprising omission, even though one understands the need to limit the scope of such a book. (And on a smaller issue, contrary to Saikal’s claim, Syria was not listed by President Bush as one of the three countries in the ‘Axis of Evil’, although it was subsequently mentioned in this context by a senior official.)
Nonetheless, on consideration of the four countries that Saikal chooses to highlight, this volume is an accessible contribution that remains positive enough to offer some thoughtful ways to break through current impasses.

ANTHONY SMITH

NORTH KOREA UNDERCOVER: Inside the World’s Most Secret State

Author: John Sweeney

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (the DPRK or North Korea) is frequently the focus of the world’s attention. Tensions on the Korean peninsula, nuclear tests, appalling human rights together with Kim Jong Un’s succession and his moves to consolidate power have all helped shape this coverage. Moreover, a peaceful and stable peninsula should be a priority for the international community given the region’s importance. It is against this backdrop that two relevant books of contrasting styles have been published.

North Korea Undercover is authored by award-winning BBC journalist John Sweeney. Posing as a history professor, Sweeney visited North Korea with the goal of making ‘the world’s most secretive state a little less unknown’. His working hypothesis is that ‘Kim Jong Un’s talk of nuclear war is a confidence trick, and that the Pyongyang bluff is blinding us to a human rights tragedy on an immense scale’. He also believes that the regime is ‘not as strong as it looks’.

Sweeney’s book revolves around his eight-day closely supervised tour of the North, so the back cover’s reference to the author’s ‘unprecedented access’ is somewhat of an exaggeration. He does though provide a vivid and colourful account of his group tour, and has sensibly supplemented this with a diverse range of insightful interviews. These range from talking to seven North Korean defectors, an IRA man trained in North Korea, two translators imprisoned by the regime, a former American soldier who lived there for 40 years, through to an Italian chef who worked for the regime’s elite.

The book is certainly not an academic study. It is informally written, lacks a clear structure and includes some swearing and derogatory language, particularly with reference to the North Korean leadership. There are also some debatable and generalised statements, such as references to North Korean people being ‘happy, joking, witty, full of fun’ and the regime’s popularity with the masses. The book contains photographs, mostly in colour, along with footnotes, including numerous references to more analytical work on the North. However, there is no bibliography, and a map of Sweeney’s travel would have been useful.

Paul French, an analyst and commentator on Asia, provides a more scholarly study of North Korea with an economic focus. His North Korea: State of Paranoia is a history of North Korea that seeks to explain the ‘twists and turns’ of the North’s ideology, the reasons behind its economic and agricultural decline, along with its ‘seeming intransigence and belligerence on the world stage’. Its central thesis is that the country is a failed state, and thus liable to become unstable unless ‘engaged enthusiastically and strategically’. The country’s failure is primarily because Pyongyang subscribes to the failed concept of a Soviet-inspired socialist command economy. The book has four parts with North Korean society first examined, followed by coverage of the economy, diplomacy and the military, and finally future scenarios for the regime. French concludes that ‘time is running out for North Korea’.

French has undertaken significant research, and his book’s strengths include its detailed analysis of the North’s economy, and its failure (though this can be somewhat difficult to read). The chapter on life in Pyongyang is particularly insightful, while footnotes provide additional information and sources. However, although this book was published in 2014, very little information is provided on developments since about 2004–05. Kim Jong Un’s accession is noted, but other references appear dated. For instance, the restart of Six Party Talks is noted (these have not occurred in recent years), major developments such as the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan receive little if any coverage, and sometimes Kim Jong II is referred to in the present sense (he died in December 2011). Indeed, although the book briefly refers to the North Korean leader’s death the date is incorrectly mentioned. More generally, there are structural weaknesses with some repetition and lack of clarity.

Despite their different approaches, both of these books are timely additions to the literature on North Korea, a challenging country to study. They have both strengths and weaknesses, but ultimately help to increase the level of knowledge regarding a regime that faces an uncertain future.

PAUL BELLAMY
National Office and branch activities.

On 23 June a panel discussion was held at Victoria University of Wellington on ‘To Hell and Back — The Tragedy of the Rwandan Genocide and the Journey of Renewal’. Broadcaster Kim Hill chaired three panellists: Dr Charles Murigande (Rwanda’s high commissioner to New Zealand), Colin Keating (in 1994 New Zealand’s permanent representative at the United Nations) and Judge Jonathan Moses (prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and a genocide survivor).

Prime Minister John Key addressed a meeting at VUW on ‘New Zealand in the World’ on 2 July.

On 9 July, to mark the 25th anniversary of the death of the first supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a panel discussion on ‘The Legacy of Imam Khomeini, How does His Influence Impact upon Iran’s Modern Foreign Policy?’ was held at VUW. The panellists were HE Seyed Majid Tafreshi Khameneh (Iran’s ambassador to New Zealand and Fiji) and Seyed Taghi Derhami (former lecturer in Iran and New Zealand).

On 14 October HE Ravdan Bold, Mongolia’s ambassador to New Zealand, gave a presentation at Victoria University on ‘Foreign Policy of Mongolia: Opportunities and Challenges’.

Auckland
The following meetings were held:
12 Jun Rep Kil Jeong-woo (member of the South Korea National Assembly), ‘Inter-Korea Relations and Great Power Dynamics in Northeast Asia’.

On 5 September the branch held its traditional pre-election debate on foreign policy and trade.

Christchurch
The following meetings were held:
24 Jul HE Park Yongkyu (Republic of Korea’s ambassador in New Zealand), ‘The Korean Peninsula and Korea–New Zealand Relations’.
20 Aug Yves Lafoy (official representative of New Caledonia in New Zealand), ‘New Caledonia’s Road to Emancipation’.
1 Oct Dr Evgeny Pavlov (associate professor in German, Russian and history, University of Canterbury), ‘Putin’s Russia and the Crisis in Ukraine’.

Hawke’s Bay
The following meetings were held:
5 Aug HE Yosef Livne (Israeli ambassador in New Zealand), ‘Israel’s Foreign Policy in the 21st Century’.
4 Sep Dr David Capie (director of research, Centre for Strategic Studies, VUW), ‘South-east Asia and the Changing Region: Towards Community or Towards Conflict?’

Timaru
On 21 July Prof Bill Harris (University of Otago) spoke to the branch about ‘Challenges Facing Turkey: Domestic Uncertainty and Foreign Policy Failure’.

Waikato
The following meetings were held:
24 Jul John McKinnon (executive director of the Asia New Zealand Foundation), ‘The Asia New Zealand Foundation at Twenty’.
20 Aug Prof Dov Bing (University of Waikato), ‘The Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Qatar, and Turkey Versus Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait’.

Wairarapa
The following meetings were held:
23 Jul Hon Max Bradford (former National Party MP and minister of defence), ‘Perils and Wastage in Foreign Aid Programmes’.
25 Aug Prof Kevin Clements (foundation chair of peace and conflict studies and director of the New Zealand Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago and secretary of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy), ‘Who Guards the Guardians’.

Wellington
The following meetings were held:
25 Jun Prof Robert Ayson (Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington), ‘The South China Sea and Asia’s Regional Security: the Outlook from Shangri-La’.
23 Jul Dr Negar Partow (senior lecturer, Centre for Defence and Security Studies, Massey University), ‘The Dream of a Caliphate: ISIS in Iraq’.
13 Aug Professor Natalia Chaban (associate professor and deputy director, National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury), ‘Ukraine — Where Next?’

CORRIGENDA
In the Institute Notes in the July/August issue (vol 39, no 4, p.33), we noted that the Wellington branch staged a seminar on Japan on 6 June. In fact this event was postponed at the last moment.

On page 9 of the May/June issue (vol 39, no 4), we unfortunately incorrectly stated both Maire Leadbeater’s name and her book, Peace, Power and Politics: How New Zealand Became Nuclear Free.
Frank Corner had the brightest mind of anyone I was privileged to know — bright in its energy and bright in its flashing speed. The outfall of ideas that streamed out when Frank was in full flow caused some to mutter nervously that he was too clever by half. I saw the maths differently, that he was one and a half times cleverer than the rest of us.

He had also the good fortune to be at the heart of New Zealand’s foreign policy when it was being formed, when the shape was malleable and important things could be done, but then in many cases things could be done because Frank was there to do them. In the Department of External Affairs that Alister McIntosh was forming, it was Frank who inspired the young with the feeling that questions were there to be asked, ideas to be tried out. ‘Do you want to get your hands dirty’, he said to me when I had just joined and we started work on the future of Samoa.

Perhaps his third and greatest good fortune was his marriage to Lynette Robinson, a long and happy union which gave them their two lively daughters, Katy and Victoria, and two much-loved grandchildren, Michael and Anna Moore-Jones. Seventy years is an exceptionally long time for a marriage, especially in an age when as lives grow longer marriages seem to get shorter. The most impressive feature of their marriage, however, was not its longevity but its closeness. In an age when we like to stress our individual selves, Frank and Lyn were a team, and they were doubly formidable as a result.

His work in the foreign service was perhaps a lucky accident. The war prevented him from taking up a scholarship to study overseas and instead he joined the Air Department. The thought of Frank running the Air Department inspires awe, but this was merely Fate clearing her throat. Some months later in 1943 the sharp-eyed McIntosh brought him into the new Department of External Affairs. The role and the man were fused forever.

It was wartime, but even in the middle of the struggle both he and Mac understood that the familiar world of colonial empires would not survive the end of the war. He started work on the future of colonies and produced papers of great originality, arguing the then astonishing thought that countries with colonies should be accountable to the international community and should report regularly on their administration. When the United Nations Charter was drafted in 1945 New Zealand had done its homework on colonialism. Under the guidance of our prime minister, Peter Fraser, the charter was enlarged to include three chapters on the accountability of colonial powers.

In subsequent postings to Washington and London Frank continued to think more deeply about the future of New Zealand in the post-war world. He set out his thoughts in a remarkable series of letters to McIntosh — they were best filtered through Mac because though commonplace now they were both novel and more than a little irritating to the staid Anglophiles in the Cabinet. He argued that defence policy should abandon the notion of relying on the British and should focus more on the Pacific. While the American navy dominated the Pacific New Zealand had nothing to fear from a revival of Japanese or any other militarism. Instead it should pay more attention to the countries in South-east Asia then emerging in some confusion from colonial rule, and he urged Mac to open posts there so that New Zealand could form its own assessments of what was happening.

Above all, he argued that the American relationship had become the key to our security. All his life, through times when it was both fashionable and unfashionable, he held firmly to the view that New Zealand’s foreign policy required a comfortable relationship with the United States. Like the able ambassadors before him, he did much to cement this when he was ambassador in Washington. Our strange loss of confidence that we were able to think for ourselves, the belief that as David Lange said we could only clean the Americans’ boots with our tongue, would not have survived watching Frank moving confidently around the Washington establishment listened to with care even when, as with Vietnam, his advice was not always welcome to the Nixon administration.

When in Wellington as deputy secretary of external affairs in 1959 he turned his mind to the South Pacific, then a placid colonial lake. Samoa, a trust territory administered by New Zealand, was advancing toward self-government and it was necessary to decide what the end result should be. The established view was that it should be a New Zealand protectorate, as Tonga was a protectorate of Great Britain. Frank asked me to draft a memorandum on the future. In it I used the terms ‘self-government’, ‘autonomy’
and ‘independence’ interchangeably and at a grand inter-departmental meeting asked which of these should be decided upon. Frank leant back in his chair, gingerly because he had hurt his back gardening, looked up at the ceiling and said ‘Why not independence?’ There was, as the Russians used to say, animation in the hall, very little of it favourable, but Frank persuaded the prime minister, Walter Nash, and the then unusual idea that small island territories could be independent became fact.

He then went to New York as our permanent representative to the United Nations, partly to steer our colonial dependencies through the remaining hoops to self-determination (though he also sat on the Security Council during New Zealand’s 1966 tenure). What I remember most is his energy in learning to navigate the complexities of the United Nations at a time when the newly-independent membership’s suspicion of the colonial West dominated proceedings. Logical argument was not necessarily persuasive in this atmosphere but Frank proved to have that most useful of diplomatic skills, and almost the rarest — the ability to listen and to put New Zealand’s point of view in ways most likely to be receptive to the minds of his listeners.

After Samoa we had next to seek a new status — free association — for the Cook Islands. No-one else had tried it and it attracted the suspicion of the anti-colonial majority. Prime Minister Holyoake said we would try to avoid making difficulties for our friends, but if the United Nations insisted on a bigger say in the Cooks we would have to accept it. But Frank did better. Using his carefully-built contacts with the Afro-Asian group, he persuaded the secretary-general simply to send an observer to check that the elections were fair, and free association became a quiet reality with New Zealand even being congratulated on its innovation.

That empathy, that ability to rephrase an argument in terms that other listeners found persuasive, was shown again long after Frank had retired when David Lange appointed him to head a Defence Committee of Enquiry to consider the alternatives as the government found itself backing out of the ANZUS alliance. The committee brought together a disparate group which included a general and a peace activist and the prime minister himself said that it would have to be a report of stupefying blandness if all could agree on it. To widespread surprise, though, the committee produced a unanimous report saying that New Zealand preferred to be anti-nuclear but by a narrow majority if it had to choose would prefer to stay in the American alliance. The prime minister was discomforted; he had under-estimated Frank’s abilities.

It was always assumed that Frank was destined to become secretary of foreign affairs, but when the time came in 1972 a surprising move was made, not for the last time, to appoint someone with no experience of the foreign service. This time the new prime minister, Norman Kirk, intervened to ensure Frank’s appointment and a bond was forged between them that was a powerful influence on Kirk’s short term. Kirk became widely respected in Asia and years later Lee Kuan Yew was still talking of their conversations, but he is most remembered at home for sending a frigate to protest France’s testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. This, as you can readily conclude, was at Frank’s suggestion.

But it would be wrong, seriously wrong, to talk only of Frank’s public service because that service was underpinned and shaped by a wider humanity. He was a deeply civilised man who believed that a New Zealand more confident in its identity should also aspire to civilisation’s best values.

His interests outside the office came partly from the stimulus of attending university here in Wellington but more from the other big event of 1943, his marriage to Lyn. By another of Fate’s jokes, they met the day he was performing a haka in a piupiu as a member of the Victoria University concert party. Lyn agreed to dance with him and that settled it: anyone who could see Frank’s potentialities in a concert party had clearly a rare perceptiveness.

It was natural to refer always to ‘Frank and Lyn’ because they did everything together. Together they mastered the arts of diplomatic life, cooking and serving meals to which people loved to be asked, the conversation always buzzing, the excitement still with you when you walked out into the night. Together they read, listened to music, went to the theatre and created two beautiful gardens in Waikanae and Thorndon.

They sought always to educate and refine their taste, whether it was in new music, pictures, books, good cooking and, of course, wine. Characteristically Frank developed an impressive knowledge of wine, demonstrated dramatically on one occasion in New York. He took me to a dinner given by the UN deputy secretary-general and attended by the Spanish, French and other ambassadors. His host produced a wrapped bottle of wine and asked Frank if he could guess what it was. Frank rolled a few mouthfuls and suggested ‘Haut Brion’. His host asked impassively if he would care to try the date. After a few more mouthfuls Frank said 1955, and the bottle was uncovered to disclose that it was indeed Haut Brion 1955. When going home in the car I expressed my amazement Frank said simply that he had drunk it at home and recognised it at once.

He and Lyn created an exceptional collection of New Zealand art, with Frank showing me a superb McCahon he had brought back from New Zealand in 1962, the first I had ever seen. As Frank’s eyesight declined into
blindness, Lyn more and more became his eyes, reading to him, describing pictures, finding the marvellous machine which read magazine and newspaper articles to him in a flat metallic voice. Lyn became a distinguished art consultant, with her fine eye and judgment advising on collections for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Electricity Corporation, Government House and others.

In China at a funeral it is thought proper to wear something of an auspicious red, because for someone who has lived a long and full life it is an occasion not only of sadness but also of celebration. We can celebrate a happy marriage, a couple who had the fortune to share a high sense of the enjoyments that life can offer, and a distinguished career. Frank was a founder member of the foreign service who was not only present at the creation but who also took a large hand in the creation himself. It cannot be said of many people that they have left an enduring mark for good on New Zealand life, but we can say that with pleasure and with gratitude of Frank Henry Corner.

Gerald Hensley

[This obituary is based on the eulogy delivered by Gerald Hensley at the service for Frank Corner at Old St Paul’s Cathedral, Wellington, on 2 September.]
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