End of an Era? Anti-Americanism in the Australian Labor Party

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Students of anti-Americanism as a political sentiment have noted the importance of political parties as the means by which anti-Americanism tends to be oxygenated in national contexts. While anti-Americanism in Australia has its own particular characteristics, as recent studies by Brendon O'Connor and Ann Capling have suggested, it is clear that the Australian Labor Party (ALP) has been the primary “oxygenator” of anti-American sentiment in Australia. For example, in his 1994 memoirs, Bob Hawke, ALP prime minister from 1983 to 1991, openly wondered whether anti-American sentiments in his party “had been one of the elements that kept the party from government” in the 1950s and 1960s during the long dominance of the Coalition under Sir Robert Menzies. Likewise, we can see clear evidence of anti-Americanism in the ALP during the Gough Whitlam era, fostered in large part by Australian participation in the Vietnam War. When Labor regained government in 1983, Hawke had to carefully manage anti-American sentiment among members of his parliamentary caucus during the first few years of his government. Although foreign policy and Australian-American relations were not the focus of the 2004 election campaign, some

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This paper seeks to explore anti-American sentiment in the ALP as a long-term historical phenomenon. We examine the emergence of anti-American sentiment in the aftermath of the Second World War, and trace the growth and persistence of anti-American views in the ranks of Labor over the course of the Cold War and its resurgence in the era after the attacks of 11 September 2001. We should state clearly at the outset that our focus is on anti-Americanism in the context of the Australia-US security alliance and debates about Australia’s security more generally. We thus do not explore anti-American sentiment in other important spheres of public discourse, including trade and culture.\footnote{For a brief discussion of Australian fears of “cultural contamination,” see Ziauddin Sadar and Merryl Wyn Davies, Why Do People Hate America? (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2002), 118, 119. For an excellent treatment of trade-related frictions see Capling, “‘Allies but not friends.’”} Although the security aspect of the relationship has not always been as “immunized” from the other spheres (particularly trade relations) as both states would have liked, we suggest that the most important debates and controversies in recent years have concerned the security aspect of the bilateral relationship and will likely to continue to be the case.

We conclude that Hawke’s assessment of the 1950s and 1960s noted above could also be applied to later periods: anti-Americanism has indeed been a persistent feature of ALP politics in the post-Second World War era generally and at times it has had the potential to cause serious problems in the security relationship between the two countries. However, we also conclude its latest manifestation in the post-9/11 era has had important implications for the ALP as a “carrier” of anti-American sentiment in Australia. The rise and fall of Mark Latham, it can be argued, will have longer-term impacts. Because the kind of anti-Americanism Latham expressed was delegitimized by its association with his time at the helm of the party, Kevin Rudd, ALP leader after December 2006, did not have to deal with this kind of sentiment among his backbenchers. Indeed we conclude that the impressive victory of Rudd and Labor over the Coalition in the 24 November 2007 elections marks the end of anti-Americanism in the ALP for the foreseeable future, and thus also marks the end of an era.

**Anti-Americanism: Contested Definitions**

Most students of the phenomenon note that anti-Americanism was at a global all-time high in the early twenty-first century. A 2007 Pew poll of over 45,000 people in 47 countries found that there was “a broad and deepening dislike of American values and a global backlash against the spread of American ideas.”\footnote{Tom Baldwin, “World crisis of confidence in Bush”, The Australian, 28 June 2007.} Australia was no exception. The first report of the US Studies Centre at the University of Sydney showed that Australian confidence in the ability of the US to manage international affairs fell from 66 per cent in 2001 to 37 per cent by October 2007. But the impact of these figures is confused by the parallel findings that 92 per cent of Australians believed that the US would continue to be a close ally and that 79 per cent considered the Australia-US alliance as...
important for Australia’s security.\textsuperscript{8} How are we to explain these seemingly contradictory responses? One way is to note that while the Australian public appears to have grave concerns over the direction of US foreign policy under the Bush administration, it also recognizes that substantial longer-term benefits flow from having an alliance with the most powerful nation in the world. But this just begs the question what we mean by the label in the first place.

Anti-Americanism is a phenomenon that defies simple definition. This is probably in part due to the fact that the concept is a relatively new one; before the appearance of Paul Hollander’s \textit{Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad} in 1992 there was little academic interest in the subject.\textsuperscript{9} Another more compelling reason is the inherently controversial and contested subject matter itself. Indeed, it is not surprising that definitions of anti-Americanism tend to be sharply polarized between those who see it as a fundamentally \textit{unreasonable} critique of all things American and those who see it as a \textit{reasonable} reaction to the role of the US in world politics.

On the view that anti-Americanism is fundamentally \textit{unreasonable}, consider Hollander’s definition: “the term has been employed to denote a particular mind-set, an attitude of distaste, aversion, or intense hostility…similar to [other] hostile dispositions such as racism, sexism or anti-semitism”\textsuperscript{10} By the time \textit{Understanding Anti-Americanism} was published in 2004 he had developed a simple division of anti-Americanism into “rational” and “irrational” variants: \textit{rational} anti-Americanism was reasonable criticism while \textit{irrational} anti-Americanism was unreasonable, unfounded or unjustified.\textsuperscript{11} By characterizing the more strident critiques of America as “irrational” Hollander thereby implicitly dismissed many varieties of criticism directed against the US.

On the other hand some scholars have been less than willing buy into Hollander’s classifications. Stanley Hoffmann, for example, sees anti-Americanism as a natural response to America’s behaviour: “It is, more often than not, a resentment of double standards and double talk, of crass ignorance and arrogance, of wrong assumptions and dubious policies.”\textsuperscript{12} In other words, for critics like Hoffmann anti-Americanism is a largely \textit{rational} phenomenon or a fundamentally \textit{reasonable} response to American behaviour. Likewise, the editors of \textit{Anti-Americanism} take particular offence to Hollander’s rational/irrational distinction, labelling his work “a diatribe” that “sadly reflects[s] the arrogance and overreaching qualities that many critics have come to associate with US conduct.”\textsuperscript{13} Borrowing from Kenneth Minogue, they accuse him of using the term as “an incapacitating device,


\textsuperscript{9} O’Connor points to other earlier works, like Henry Pelling’s \textit{America and the British Left}, published in 1956. However, other than this and some less-than-rigorous “travelogues” written by journalists in the 1960s, the first serious treatments of the subject only emerged in the 1990s: Brendon O’Connor, ed., \textit{Anti-Americanism: History, Causes and Themes}, vol.2: \textit{Historical Perspectives} (Oxford/Westport Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 3-5.

\textsuperscript{10} Paul Hollander, \textit{Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad} (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), viii-xi.


\textsuperscript{13} Andrew Ross and Kristen Ross, eds., \textit{Anti-Americanism} (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 12.
just like such charges as ‘sexism’ or ‘racism’” that automatically delegitimizes any and all criticism of the US.14

Which formulation is to be preferred when the debate is so polarized? Brendon O’Connor’s four-volume series on anti-Americanism provides us with five “understandings” of how the term is used. It can be variously described as: 1) one side of a dichotomized worldview; 2) a tendency; 3) a pathology; 4) a prejudice; or 5) an ideology. All these formulations imply, we feel, that anti-Americanism tends to be roughly analogous to Hollander’s “irrational” variety of anti-Americanism. In other words, these types of anti-Americanism all imply an unjustified stance towards the US in the sense that they all imply an overly simplistic “polarized” view of the world (“dichotomized” or “tendency”); or a flawed personality that tends towards cynicism (“pathology”); or that they refuse to weigh up all the available evidence properly and stubbornly cling to pre-existing beliefs (“prejudice”), or that they have a political agenda to promote (“ideology”). Later in the same chapter O’Connor confirms that he is “inclined to see anti-Americanism principally as a prejudice.”15 And when discussing Hollander, O’Connor says it would be simpler to conceive of the “rational” variant of anti-Americanism as simply “criticism.”

However, elsewhere O’Connor says that anti-Americanism is better understood as “a prejudicial position often borne out of grievances that are both justifiably and unjustifiably held.”16 This implies that a prejudice can be justified, which seems to be a somewhat inconsistent use of the word “prejudice” given the negative connotations ordinarily attached to it. Is he suggesting that a particular prejudice towards America was at one point justifiable, but that it has “survived” despite that the circumstances that gave rise to it no longer hold true? Even if this is what he means it still does not really capture the sense in which some negative attitudes towards the US that have hardened to the point where they may be said to be a “prejudice” are nevertheless justified by continuing US policies.

To resolve this dilemma we turn to Ann Capling’s work on anti-Americanism in Australia. Capling uses Adam Garfinkle’s category of “contingent” anti-Americanism—anti-Americanism that is “stimulated by the dislike of particular policies or personalities in any given U.S. administration”17—to characterize the phenomenon in Australia. describes reasonable, justifiable and well-founded criticism as “contingent” anti-Americanism. Drawing primarily on trade policy, she argued that “anti-Americanism in Australia has tended to be contingent on particular US political administrations and policies” and can be seen as reasonable, justifiable and well-founded.18 Anti-Americanism can thereby be defined in a way that enables us to capture “both sides” of the debate: criticism of America that is unreasonable, unjustified and unfounded is prejudicial anti-Americanism, while criticism which is reasonable, justified and well-founded is contingent anti-Americanism. We suggest that defining anti-Americanism in this way allows for greater nuance within each category.

14 “Anti-Americanism: A View from London,” The National Interest (Spring 1986), 43,


18 Capling, “‘Allies but Not Friends.’”
For example, the contingent variety of anti-Americanism may be caused by outright hostility on the part of the US towards a nation or its people, like that directed towards Cuba since 1959 or towards Iran since 1979, or it may be inadvertently caused by US policies aimed at another actor, like the way that US farm subsidies in the 1980s were aimed against Europe but also damaged Australian farmers. On the other side, the prejudicial variety of anti-Americanism may well be underpinned by ideological convictions, personal quirks like a predisposition towards feeling envy (or fear) towards powerful others, or even aesthetic sense (i.e. dislike of American culture). As we shall see, anti-Americanism in the ALP has exhibited all of these prejudicial qualities at one time or another, but at other times it has been contingent upon US behaviour that damages ALP interests, and so is quite reasonably held.

Indeed, we argue that anti-American sentiment in the ALP has often contained elements of both prejudicial and contingent anti-Americanism. In other words particular US policies may well have created a contingent—in other words, “reasonable”—anti-Americanism at a particular point in time, but over time this sentiment hardens or lingers, becoming a form of prejudicial anti-Americanism that has become unreasonable given the changed circumstances. Alternatively, perhaps the prejudice that arose in respect of one issue area shifts across to another in which it is not as warranted. To complicate matters further, it may well be that a particular individual’s anti-Americanism was in part well founded, or contingent upon particular events, however their ultimate reaction and condemnation can be said to have been excessive or disproportionate. Disentangling the contingent from the prejudicial will not necessarily be easy and will depend heavily upon careful consideration of the context and circumstances within which it was made.

We admit that distinguishing between contingent and prejudicial anti-Americanism is inherently problematic—for at least two reasons. First, one’s worldview fundamentally affects the type of “facts” about the world that one will deem relevant. Second, the situation only becomes more complicated when one undertakes investigation of the specific concept of anti-Americanism, given its inherently politically charged nature. With this caveat noted, we now consider anti-Americanism in the Australian Labor Party, beginning with the immediate post-Second World War years.

Evatt: Anti-Americanism, 1950s-Style

It should not be surprising that historically the ALP should be an oxogenator or carrier of anti-Americanism. It is, after all, a social democratic party, one that has, in Henry Albinski’s words, “evolved a streak that [is] not only reformist but idealistic.” To illustrate the complex manner in which anti-Americanism can arise within a political party we first consider Herbert “Doc” Evatt, the minister for external affairs from 1941 to 1949. Evatt’s anti-Americanism arose, we argue, as a result of three intertwined factors: his strong patriotism, his ideological worldview (both examples of

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19 Ibid, 13.

20 This takes us into murky epistemological waters. Clifford Geertz, tells us that “ideas and the realities they inform are naturally an indissolubly bound up together” while Karl Popper tells us that adherents of Marxist theory “saw confirming instances everywhere: the world was full of verifications of the theory” because their belief in the theory blinded them to contradictory evidence. Together these two very different thinkers claim that at least some degree of subjective “perceptual bias” may be impossible to eliminate: Geertz, “Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology” (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 58: Karl Popper, Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (New York, Basic Books, 1965), 35.

factors contributing to prejudicial anti-Americanism), and further, a direct clash of interests (an example of contingent anti-Americanism).

There is no doubt that Evatt was a committed nationalist in an era when the identity of many Australians was somewhat bifurcated between an emerging loyalty to Australia itself and residual sympathy for Britain and the Empire. Evatt had successfully urged John Curtin to defy Imperial wishes during the war by demanding that the majority of Australian troops be withdrawn from the Middle East in early 1942, putting Australia’s interests unequivocally before Britain’s. Similarly, during the latter stages of the war, Evatt, growing ever more suspicious of Washington’s post-war ambitions in the Pacific, began taking positions designed explicitly to limit US power. The 1944 ANZAC Agreement, a pact with New Zealand which in essence warned the Americans to leave the South West Pacific territories they took in the course of the war (which would have left Australia as the dominant actor in the region) prompted the first clash. The US had paid a heavy price for the islands seized from Japan, and Washington was not impressed: Evatt was brusquely rebuffed and the Antipodean states were chastised for their ungrateful temerity.22

Evatt was not really anti-American in an ideological sense. Indeed, as O’Connor explains, even contemporary anti-Americanism is usually not really a coherent enough concept to qualify as an ideology.23 Rather, Evatt was a “liberal internationalist,” who was concerned that should too much power be concentrated in the hands of one state the likely result would be global instability and injustice. The overweening power of the post-war United States was, then, problematic by definition for Evatt, who firmly believed that

secret diplomacy, alliance diplomacy and the deployment of strategic power leads to war… [Evatt’s] approach was based on the use of multilateral organisation, the concept of collective security, and the use of the provisions of the United Nations Charter to resolve international conflict.24

At the San Francisco Conference, Evatt essentially became the chief spokesperson for smaller states, directing a number of scathing attacks against the demands by the US and Britain (and the Soviet Union, which for some reason he largely ignored) that the five Permanent Members of the Security Council should have the veto power. While his efforts failed, he was successful in significantly expanding the powers of the General Assembly, again much to the chagrin of the US government, which had favoured creating a more symbolic body with little real power.25 Taken together, Evatt’s nationalism and ideological preferences must, we argue, have contributed to the development of a distinct prejudicial anti-American streak; seen through Evatt’s eyes, the US, as the most powerful country in the world, threatened not only Australia’s role as a leader in its immediate region but, potentially, global stability itself. However, as we argue below, this attitude of hostility was not entirely prejudicial given events in the early 1950s.

22 Coral Bell, Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), 34-35.


By 1951 Evatt was regarded, at minimum, as a nuisance in Washington; not surprisingly the ALP came to be seen as the party in Australia least conducive to American interests. Evatt’s efforts to secure a “Pacific Pact,” a sort of regional collective security body under the aegis of the United Nations, stalled after the US dismissively rejected the proposal. As a result, a satisfactory post-war settlement remained elusive when the ALP lost the 1949 elections to the Liberal/Country Coalition under Robert Menzies. The conundrum the Menzies government faced in the lead-up to the 1951 election was simple: Australian public opinion was strongly in favour of a harsh, Versailles-style peace treaty imposed on Japan to prevent it from re-emerging as a threat; by contrast, the US wanted to rebuild Japan and draft it into the emerging anti-Communist alliance system. Menzies knew that if the US signed a “weak” treaty with Japan without offering a security pact to Australia his electoral prospects would be seriously damaged.

John Foster Dulles, appointed by President Harry S. Truman as ambassador at large responsible for negotiating the peace agreement with Japan, was apprised of the situation when he visited Australia in early 1951. He wrote to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee that

The Australian government as now constituted [i.e. the conservative coalition] is extremely friendly to the United States. However, the government is in a weak position politically… Our old friend Evatt is carrying on a very strong political campaign which is very anti-American in its tinge and which is accusing the United States of wanting to make Japan again a great military threat to Australia… He really is following the Russian line there, and he has affiliated himself very closely with the communists.

Fortuitously, for Menzies at least, Dulles’ opinion prevailed and on 18 April 1951—merely ten days before the Australian federal election—Congress rushed through a resolution supporting the negotiation of a security alliance. This defused a potentially serious electoral liability for the Coalition and contributed to the ALP’s defeat. Not surprisingly, this incident incensed many within Labor and the level of invective directed against the US rose sharply in the early 1950s. This in turn precipitated the split in 1955 between the ALP proper and the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). In essence, the DLP felt the ALP had become “soft on communism” and it became largely a foreign policy-focused party (the DLP’s domestic platform differed little from the ALP’s). In short, Labor’s inability to win office before 1972 owed much to the DLP’s stubborn determination to keep it out of power by directing the second preferences of those who voted for it to the Coalition.

We argue, then, that the sort of anti-Americanism prevalent in the ALP during the 1950s was a mixture of the prejudicial and contingent varieties. Before the 1951 election it had existed within the party, although not in any sort of virulent form, and was most evident in the persona of Evatt, whose nationalism and ideological bent produced a degree of prejudicial anti-Americanism. This was reinforced, we argue, by the events surrounding the 1951 election: the kind of meddling in Australian domestic politics by a foreign power—or even the perception of meddling—would arouse nationalist passions. In this sense, then, while some aspects of anti-Americanism in the ALP during the 1950s were prejudicial, or unreasonable, other aspects were contingent and, indeed, eminently reasonable.


27 Albinski, Australian External Policy Under Labor, 38.
Calwell and Whitlam: Labor and the Vietnam War

During the 1950s and early 1960s Australia embraced what has come to be known as a “forward defence” strategy. Troops were sent to Korea to fight a communist invasion, to Malaysia to suppress a communist insurgency, and to Borneo to repel Indonesian infiltrators. The premise, as Menzies told parliament in 1955, was that “an insular view of Australian defence would be the very definition of disaster.” By the early 1960s, however, the growing conflict in Vietnam began to dominate Australia’s security horizons. In 1962 advisors were dispatched to assist the South Vietnamese government; by mid-1963, more instructors and some RAAF transport elements had arrived. Anticipating increasing pressure on Australian forces, the Menzies government reintroduced limited conscription in 1963. An infantry battalion was deployed in June 1965. By 1968 the contingent had expanded to 8,300 men.

It is often forgotten that the Australian government—and many Australians—had willingly become involved in the war in Vietnam. As David McLean put it,

Washington did not drag Australia into an unwanted Vietnam involvement. Rather, the Australian government, aiming to commit the US to the defence of the mainland of South East Asia and Australia, energetically encouraged US intervention, displaying fewer doubts about the wisdom of an unlimited military involvement than did American officials.

Despite this, the ALP under Arthur Calwell had an ambiguous attitude towards the conflict in Vietnam. On the one hand Calwell campaigned during the 1966 election campaign again conscription. However, because of support for the war among many ALP MPs, Calwell’s call for the return of conscripts and the end of conscription left Labor’s position muddled: it did not clarify the party’s position on regular forces or the timing of troop withdrawals. When Jim Cairns, a member of the Left faction, downplayed the party’s stance on withdrawal, many in the Left faction “went berserk. Some of them thought Jim was a traitor.” However, although Labor looked vacillating and divided, its rhetoric was not, at this point, really anti-American.

However, the US soon gave the ALP something to be upset about. Prime Minister Harold Holt invited President Lyndon B. Johnson to tour Australia in October 1966, a month before the general elections. A number of prominent ALP figures immediately cried foul. For example, Labor MP Fred Daly claimed that Johnson’s visit had been “perfectly timed” and that he had “campaigned blatantly

30 Indonesia’s Konfrontasi campaign intensified after President Sukarno vowed in July 1963 to “crush” Malaysia; engagements rose sharply in number and intensity during the latter half of 1963.
31 Ibid., 233 – 235.
for the Holt government.” Increasingly many in Labor began to see the party as the victim of American manipulation, reviving bitter memories of the lead-up to the 1951 election. Moreover, Calwell had badly misread the sentiment of the electorate. The confused message about the withdrawal from Vietnam did not sit well with the public, which still harboured deep-seated fears of an encroaching Communist threat. Only 40 ALP MPs were returned, the worst showing in the party’s history, and polls suggested that Vietnam played an important role in the decisions of swinging voters.

In the aftermath of the 1996 election the ALP began reordering itself. Gough Whitlam was selected as leader and sought to “de-escalate” the debate about Vietnam, publicly reaffirming his view that “the United States alliance is essential. Co-operation with the United States must be maintained.” However, the political climate in Australia was beginning to change significantly—with a discernable shift towards the left of the political spectrum. The most proximate cause of the shift in public opinion was increasing unease with the course of the Vietnam War, particularly after the Têt offensive of February 1968, although other currents in international and domestic sentiment also played a part. Before Têt, the Coalition had successfully painted the ALP as an idealistic, even unpatriotic party riddled with dangerous radicals. But after February 1968 the government was no longer able to use national security issues to criticize Labor. The anti-Vietnam war movement, dispirited after 1966, found renewed energy; its rallies became larger and more militant; and it attracted significant support from the union movement. Most importantly, a number of members of the ALP Left faction became active: Jim Cairns, Gordon Bryant and Moss Cass, for example, publicly burnt their National Service cards at a rally in 1969. Whitlam began to bend, particularly after Labor did well in the 1969 elections, reducing the Coalition majority to just seven seats. In 1970, Whitlam publicly advised men in his own electorate to refuse to serve in Vietnam if conscripted, although Laurie Oakes, a political columnist, argued that he was only “masquerad[ing] as a left winger.”

How anti-American was the sentiment within the ALP during this era? As John Murphy has argued, the anti-war movement was in part a crusade against the entrenched Australian elites that dominated politics. For example, Cairns whipped up a rally in 1970 by claiming “We have won our democracy by breaking laws, by campaigning in the streets. We have won our democracy by cutting off the heads of kings.” Yet much of the invective was also, unsurprisingly, directed against the US and it soon became overtly ideological in nature as it evolved from moderate dissent to

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36 Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 118.


radical and militant protest. Cairns called in 1970 for “an end to the principle that the US alliance is crucial” after painting America as just another imperialistic power bent on world domination. Even more controversially, Labor’s federal president, Senator Jim Keefe (from the Left-dominated Victorian branch), in a not-so-subtle allusion to the US, argued that if foreign reactionaries helped “the forces of darkness overcome us [with the result that] a dictatorship is established, then it is our party that will supply the revolution.” Other groups with close links to the ALP, like the Australian Union of Students became stridently anti-American, encouraging the burning of the US flag on campuses and releasing a statement that claimed “the best way to help the Vietnamese revolution [is] to make revolution in your own country.” As the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament, a group with strong ALP links, put it

In this view, the US could not do anything right; even peace overtures were painted as sinister plots by its ideological opponents. In short, anti-Americanism in the ALP was on the rise and this time, unlike in 1966, public sentiment seemed to be on its side.

**Whitlam: Holding the Wolf by the Ears**

This, then, was the political climate in which Labor came to power in 1972 for the first time in twenty-three years. Seized with the idea that the ALP had been given a mandate for a change, Whitlam immediately began reorienting Australia’s foreign policy. Labor immediately set about espousing a “new nationalism” to reinvigorate Australia’s foreign policy to reflect traditional values like egalitarianism, fair play, independence, and a distaste for conducting international relations according to the logic of Realpolitik. One consequence of these moves was a deterioration in Australia-US relations.

The first crisis arose in December 1972 when the US administration of Richard Nixon bombed Hanoi and Haiphong after peace negotiations between the US and North Vietnam broke down. First, Whitlam sent Nixon what Garry Woodard has called “an unexceptional letter of reproach,” but which angered the White House because it had implied that Australia would encourage both Japan and Indonesia to lodge similar complaints. Second, several Labor cabinet ministers made very

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41 Ibid., 6.

42 Quoted in Albinski, *Australian External Policy Under Labor*, 76.

43 Ibid., 74.


unflattering and very public comments about the Nixon administration. Cairns called it “corrupt”; Clyde Cameron, minister for labour, suggested that “maniacs” were in charge of US foreign policy; and Tom Uren, minister for urban and regional development, denounced Nixon and Kissinger as “mass murderers.” Finally, radicalized waterside unions imposed a boycott upon American shipping which sparked retaliatory boycotts in the US.

Whitlam tried to disassociate himself and his government from these various criticisms but he was unable to completely quiet all the dissenting voices. Cairns, for example, announced that he was expressing his personal opinion and not the position of the government, blithely disregarding the convention of collective cabinet responsibility. The dockside boycott soon petered out under pressure from Whitlam and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), but it left the ALP looking divided and inept.

Labor looked even more fractious when it divided over whether to recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Vietnam, and later over whether to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. Further controversy erupted when Bill Brown, a member of the Victorian Left, launched an attack on the new US Ambassador to Australia, Marshall Green, dismissing Green as a “hatchetman” whose purpose in Australia was to undermine the Labor government as he had allegedly done to governments in the Philippines and South Vietnam. This was too much for Whitlam, who roundly denounced Brown.

Labor was resoundingly defeated by the Coalition under Malcolm Fraser in the elections that were called after Whitlam was dismissed by the Governor-General on 11 November 1975. Labor’s fall was not primarily caused by controversy over foreign policy issues – the parlous state of the economy was the main reason – yet the continual sniping from the Left had undoubtedly undermined Whitlam’s leadership.

Should Whitlam be blamed for failing to maintain party discipline? It is one of the peculiarities of leftist politics that achieving unity is often an elusive goal. This is probably because of the very nature of “the left,” particularly its more radical proponents: it tends to be opposed to authority and committed to consultation with, or inclusion of, the widest possible spectrum of “voices” into the policy-making process. This tradition, reflected in the ALP’s own constitution, certainly stands in direct opposition to the conservative tendency to stress the importance of strong leadership. The predilection towards promoting discussion and the acceptance (even encouragement of) dissent necessarily also complicates the construction and maintenance of the sort of “mass party” that is capable of winning government by capturing a majority of support in a pluralistic democratic system. Albinski, referring to this phenomenon specifically in the Australian context, notes that members of

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47 Albinski, Australian External Policy Under Labor, 124.

48 Ibid.

49 This was very much in keeping with Cairns’s views on establishment politics: see Rick Kuhn, “The Pattern of the Australian Labor Party’s Foreign Policy since 1900,” Left History 3:2/4:1 (1996), 120-24.

50 Albinski, Australian External Policy Under Labor, 125.

51 Ibid., 171.
the “radical left” had “developed cynical dispositions towards government, authority and orthodox political party life generally.” He argued that “ironically, the Labor government’s own reformism became a target of radical criticism… Labor was seen as unfaithful to its own standards or as simply being the captive of forces within ‘the system.’”

**Hawke: Pulling the Left into Line**

With Labor’s return to opposition, the constraints on anti-American sentiment within ALP ranks diminished. The abrupt dismissal in 1975 quickly fuelled conspiracy theories about the role of the US in bringing Whitlam down, notably the allegation that the CIA had threatened to sever links with Australian intelligence if the ALP remained in power, and that US communications facilities in Australia were used to monitor Labor telephone conversations. While most sober commentators reject these allegations, it can be argued that they did nothing to diminish anti-Americanism in Labor circles.

After the ALP won the 1982 Victorian election, the new premier, John Cain, informed Fraser that nuclear-armed US warships would not be permitted to dock in Melbourne without “an assurance that no nuclear weapons are carried.” While the prime minister rejected the request, replying that such a policy would jeopardize the Australia-US alliance, the new federal Labor leader, Bill Hayden, initially supported Cain but soon qualified his position in a confusing and overly technical manner. The US reaction was severe and sharp, and Hayden eventually completely reversed his position, damaging his credibility in a manner that Gary Brown claims “directly contributed to the loss of support which cost him his leadership shortly before the 1983 elections.”

Bob Hawke was elected leader of the ALP in 1983, and then quickly afterwards prime minister. He was always mindful of the challenges that the Left posed to the stability of Labor governments. He had been an ALP president and a long-standing president of the ACTU and had acquired what Coral Bell has termed a “long and embittering acquaintance with the Far Left’s manoeuvrings.”

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54 As Brown puts it: “Even a cursory glance at [Whitlam’s] last year of office… suggests the difficulties were, in too many cases, self-inflicted. It seems superfluous, then, and a violation of Occam’s Razor, to seek external explanations when there is more than a sufficiency of domestic factors… In any event there is little by way of real evidence [to support the allegation].” Brown, “Breaking the American Alliance,” 41.

55 When US Deputy Secretary of State Walter Stoessel was asked what Australia-US relations would be like under a Labor government he replied “I’ve already said that we are confident of our ability to work effectively with the government that wishes to work effectively with us.” When pressed on whether the US could work with Hayden he said “I wouldn’t comment on that”: ibid., 47.

56 Ibid.

57 Bell, *Dependent Ally*, 168; Bell notes that as a student Hawke had organized a Labor Party Club at the University of Western Australia because the existing Labor Club had been taken over by Marxists, and that “As his political career proceeded, so did his reasons for consciousness that his own party’s Socialist Left were no more his friends than the communists.”
regularly derided the more radical Left faction MPs as “champagne socialists,” claiming that they had become detached from the realities of the real working class, the so-called “Aussie battlers,” and were preoccupied with producing trendy social commentary that was unrealistic to the point of incoherence.

Events conspired to Hawke’s advantage. By the mid-1980s, most of the Left from the Whitlam era had left the party. Cairns, for example, had been sacked over a loans scandal, and resigned from parliament after an affair with his aide Junie Morosi became public. Hawke was also able to crack down on the sort of ill-discipline that had so bedevilled Whitlam. By allying his Right faction closely with his former rival Hayden’s Centre Left faction, Hawke was effectively able to isolate the Left and deter dissent by, for example, having the Left faction’s Stewart West temporarily stood down from cabinet until he publicly recanted his criticism of Labor’s uranium mining policy.58

Hawke’s approach to foreign policy was characterized by an unapologetic conviction that maintaining a strong alliance with the US was vital. His approach to foreign policy had been clear since the mid-1970s when he took a strong pro-Israeli position during the debate about whether to recognize the PLO.59 After taking office in 1983 he immediately visited the US, declaring in Washington that “Australia is not and cannot be a non-aligned nation. We are neutral neither in thought nor in action.”60 In this, he gravely disappointed the Left, which still harboured ambitions of scrapping ANZUS and making Australia officially non-aligned.

Importantly, Hawke’s subsequent actions matched his rhetoric. When New Zealand destabilized the ANZUS alliance by refusing docking rights to nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered ships in 1984, the Labor government in Canberra quickly backed the US and stated that Australia “disagrees completely with New Zealand policy… and understands the action which the United States has taken to suspend its security obligations under ANZUS.”61 Hawke also rejected any change to uranium policy or the presence of US bases in Australia. This led directly to the departure several radical ALP members who formed the Nuclear Disarmament Party (which won a Senate seat in 1984 but then faded into political obscurity). Finally, in 1990 Hawke pledged a significant contingent of Australian forces to the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation soon after a similar pledge by the US president and, significantly, before the UN authorized the mission or called for contributions.

Anti-Americanism within the ALP during this period was powerfully muted by Hawke’s effective leadership and, most importantly, his electoral success.62 When he was replaced as prime minister by Paul Keating in December 1991 the situation did not change markedly. To be sure Keating and his minister for foreign affairs, Gareth Evans, certainly did work hard to position Australia more closely with Asia by a “rethinking of identity” which involved “a subtle downplaying

58 Ibid., 171.

59 Hawke threatened to resign from the party, and to use his position as ACTU president to undermine Left faction candidates if Whitlam did not soften the ALP’s policy towards Israel: Albinski, Australian External Policy Under Labor, 140.

60 Bell, Dependent Ally, 173.

61 Ibid., 166.

62 No ALP leader has ever won more than two elections; Hawke’s victory in four elections remains unprecedented.
of links with the imperial past [in favour of] the embrace of Asia.”63 In Evans’ own words, “Our future lies, inevitably, in the Asia Pacific region. This is where we must live, must survive strategically and economically, and find a place and a role if we are to develop our full potential as a nation.”64 But there was little trace of anti-Americanism during the Keating years. On the contrary: the Keating-Evans line on the Australia-US alliance remained uncontroversial; indeed Evans, writing a year after Labor’s defeat in 1996, admitted that the ALP had never lost sight of “the special relevance of the Australia–United States relationship.”65

In short, much of the anti-Americanism that had been evident in the ALP seemed to have been banished by the mid-1990s. It can be argued that there were two reasons for this, both stemming from the end of the Cold War. First, many of the tensions that had been inherent in the bipolar structure of international relations eased and then disappeared, a point Evans stresses when he described the Cold War as “the great inhibitor of international cooperative problem solving.”66 Second, the more radical elements of the Left in the ALP which had long harboured communist sympathies had been significantly undermined (at least in popular perceptions) by the nature of the popular revolution that toppled the Soviet regime. Together these circumstances may largely explain the demise of ideological anti-Americanism within the ALP because on the one hand the need to “choose” between superpowers (or neutrality) was widely seen as having simply evaporated, and on the other the ideological rug had been pulled from beneath the feet of the radicals.

Latham: A “Tribal Hater”

But other forms of anti-Americanism had not been expunged from the ALP. On the contrary, anti-American sentiment reached new heights during the short period during which Mark Latham led the party (December 2003-January 2005). Latham’s anti-Americanism cannot really be described as ideological because his broader political philosophy was more consistent with Tony Blair’s “New Labour” or “Third Way” model which in turn owed much to Hawke’s and Keating’s approach to governing.67 For instance, Latham claimed that the state should “get out of the habit of telling people what to do, of always trying to plan or control society’s direction.” He lauded globalization, claiming that free trade had achieved “the greatest poverty reduction programme in the history of mankind.” And he antagonized the Left by labelling unions as “anachronistic industrial dinosaurs,” arguing that the traditional differences between capital and labour had collapsed.68 Even on social issues Latham

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66 Ibid., 17.


68 Although he maintained that there are political divisions between the “insiders” (media, bureaucracy, corporations and politicians) and the “outsiders” (the majority of Australians): Ashley Lavelle, “Labor under Mark Latham: ‘New Politics,’ Old Dilemmas,” paper at the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, University of Adelaide, 29 September-1 October 2004, 7.
was quite conservative. He supported the Coalition government’s tough stance against “illegal” asylum seekers and criticized the ABC’s children’s program Play School when one episode showed a lesbian couple playing with their child.\textsuperscript{60} So there is little evidence of Latham being anti-American in an ideological sense.

But Latham did personify prejudicial anti-Americanism – a style of anti-Americanism that tends to be “clearly one-sided,” “offers an undifferentiated view of America” and is characterized by “resentment.” Latham had already established a reputation for volatility. He was known for being physically aggressive\textsuperscript{70}; he was unapologetic about his regular use of “common” language when attacking his opponents; and he bluntly admitted to being a “tribal hater” who had grown up in a family that “loathed and despised” Menzies-era Australian political elites.\textsuperscript{71} Such a volatile temperament might have predisposed him to hold extreme and even prejudicial views towards those whose views or interests diverged from his own. Certainly, as we shall see, he became increasingly fixated upon the US.

As noted above, there is a relationship between contingent and prejudicial anti-Americanism. We noted earlier that US foreign policy under Bush inflamed public opinion world-wide, most obviously as a result of the Administration’s policy towards Iraq. While Latham’s volatility pre-dated 9/11, there is little doubt that the climate after 9/11 was conducive for the development (or intensification) of anti-Americanism. This begs another question: was Latham anti-American before 9/11? Or had he been more ambivalent towards America, and had his anti-American prejudices sharpened by US foreign policy after 9/11? While we suspect the former, we do not canvass this question here (although it is clearly an important one). What we can conclude is that Latham had always promoted himself as a domestic reformer rather than a “foreign policy wonk” so perhaps even if he had nurtured anti-American prejudices these may not have been inflamed had US foreign policy behaviour been less radical. Thus, it is possible that his personality predisposed him to react in a more inflammatory and visceral manner, making his anti-Americanism more prejudicial than contingent.

Latham’s style was, by his own admission, blunt and undiplomatic. Before he became leader of the opposition, Latham had openly called George W. Bush “the most incompetent and dangerous president in living memory”\textsuperscript{72} and later called him “flaky and dangerous.”\textsuperscript{72} He also criticized the Howard government’s close relationship with the US, calling Howard an “arse licker” and Coalition cabinet “a conga line of suckholes.”\textsuperscript{73} In March 2004, he promised to bring Australian troops home “before Christmas,” dismissing the war in Iraq as “an act of folly.”\textsuperscript{74} Coming as it did after the

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{70} In 2001 Latham broke the arm of a Sydney taxi driver in an argument over a fare and during the 2001 election, lost his temper on camera with a member of The Chaser satirical comedy team, swatting him with a foam bat and calling him a “fucking idiot.” See Andrew Denton’s Enough Rope interview with Latham, 28 July 2003: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s912731.htm.


\textsuperscript{72} CPD, Representatives, 5 February 2003, 10926 and 10928.


Madrid bombing this prompted a terse reply from the US. Latham responded by characterizing the Iraq war as one “conducted for a purpose that was not true, a war conducted under the banner of the dangerous new doctrine of pre-emption.”

But Latham also came under pressure from what he would later call the “Big Mac” (or pro-US) faction within the ALP, and in response he reinstated Kim Beazley as shadow minister for defence in July 2004 to shore up Labor’s credentials on national security and released a clarification of the ALP position on the alliance:

> Labor believes in the value of the American alliance not only to Australia and the US, but to the international community as a whole… We see ourselves as an equal partner…We believe in Australia’s strength and sovereignty, building up our self-reliance within the terms of the alliance.

But the damage had already been done and Labor consistently trailed the Coalition in polling regarding competence on national security issues. However, Labor’s poor showing in the November 2004 elections was widely attributed to Latham’s often incoherent campaigning and voter unease about his character. On 18 January 2005, Latham retired from politics but he haunted Labor for the remainder of the year.

The “ghost” took the form of *The Latham Diaries*, published in September 2005. In a startlingly abrasive and vitriolic attack, Latham revealed the degree to which he had deceived the entire party about the true depth of his sentiments about the United States. For example he characterized ANZUS as “just another form of neo-colonialism” and “the last vestige of the White Australia Policy,” and claimed that because Australia is “an American colony under Howard, that’s not a nation worth leading.” He also urged Australia to

> Look at New Zealand. They have their foreign policy right…Labor should be the anti-war party of Australian politics. Other than World War II, every war [Australia] has fought was disconnected from our national interests. All those young Australian lives lost in faraway lands, the folly of imperialism and jingoism… The US alliance is a funnel that draws us into unnecessary wars

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75 The US Ambassador to Australia, Tom Schieffer, replied “I hope that Mr Latham on consideration will review what he has said”; the Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, claimed that the ALP front bench was “rent down the middle”: Carl Ungerer, “Issues in Australian Foreign Policy: January to June 2004,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50:4 (2004), 577-80.

76 Ibid.

77 Beazley had been a former defence minister and opposition leader who had strong ties to senior US policy-makers like Richard Armitage: Peter Hartcher, “Big Kim a sturdy bridge to the US,” *The Age*, 16 July 2004.


What was perhaps more noteworthy about Latham’s criticisms was that he made no effort to conceal his palpable sense of glee at the political effect of his diaries. Claiming that the ALP was “dysfunctional, irreparably broken, poisonous and opportunistic,” he promised that his book “would turn the [Labor] party upside down.” Ironically he reserved his most vitriolic comments for Kevin Rudd, whom he described as “a terrible piece of work.” He claimed that Rudd was “owned lock stock and barrel by the Yanks.” If it were up to him, Latham said, Rudd would be “a junior minister at best, perhaps Minister for the Pacific Islands.”

The response in the media was scathing: Latham’s thinking was described as “scatological,” he was called “completely insincere” and he was parodied as “Osama bin Latham, Aussie political terrorist.” However, perhaps the most penetrating observation was Michael Gordon’s argument that “the substance of the Latham attack has been diminished, overwhelmed even, by the extent of the smear.” The Coalition Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile claimed that

We know now that Mark Latham … was prepared to trash the US alliance … and to completely disconnect Australia from our most important … strategic partner. Labor can’t say Mark Latham was a flash in the pan … because they groomed and educated him… [H]e is a Labor person through and through.

The ALP leadership moved quickly to distance itself from Latham’s views, though in a highly disciplined way. Rudd said little more than that he “expected better of a former leader of the Australian Labor Party.” Beazley refused to read the Diaries, dismissing them as mere “scuttlebutt.” Robert McClelland, whose vote had delivered the leadership to Latham in 2003, suggested that had Latham tried to scrap the US alliance,

He most certainly would have been rolled. I and others would have moved to remove him… [the alliance] was certainly a live issue during the leadership contest. He reassured me personally of his commitment to [it]… Mark Latham would not have been elected leader had he indicated these views.

Nevertheless evidence soon emerged that Latham’s views about the US and the defence relationship enjoyed wider currency in the ALP. The Australian Candidate Study – a survey of MPs’ opinions on key policy issues – found that 31 per cent of ALP candidates said they had little or no trust in the US coming to Australia’s defence if attacked; 21.9 per cent believed the US was either “very likely” or “fairly likely” to pose a threat to Australia (higher than China); and 91.5 per cent

82 “Rudd dismisses Latham diaries as fiction,” ABC Online, interview with Kevin Rudd, 15 September 2005.
85 “Rudd dismisses Latham diaries as fiction,” ABC Online, interview with Kevin Rudd, 15 September 2005.
86 Gordon, “Beazley rides the storm.”
87 Hudson, “Latham a ‘threat to security.’”
disliked Bush (with 60.9 per cent saying they “strongly disliked” him). While every Coalition MP said the US alliance was either “very” or “fairly important” to Australia’s security, fully 18.8 per cent of ALP MPs believed it was “not very important.” As Dennis Shanahan, the political editor of *The Australian*, put it:

Latham has made it clear that his public outbursts against Bush and the US were genuine and no one [in the ALP] could have been under any misapprehension… Despite a sophisticated public attitude towards the US, there is an entrenched anti-Americanism within the ranks of the ALP. Latham’s declarations will only add to the public perception that Labor has a strong element of visceral anti-US feeling.

**What Future for Anti-Americanism in the ALP?**

In its ideological variant anti-Americanism is inspired by a left-wing philosophy that considers the US to be the most obvious embodiment of sinister, dehumanizing global capitalism while in its prejudicial variety, personified in the figure of Mark Latham, it resembles a resentful, envious and spiteful grudge or hostile predisposition. The latter variety of anti-American is less coherent than the former and is more likely to be the product of a particular individual’s personality rather than the outcome of a consistent, rational process of intellectual development. Both, however, differ fundamentally from contingent anti-Americanism in the sense that they are inherently persistent; they are not therefore “directly responsive” to the US’s specific policy behaviour or its leader. In other words they betray a degree of bias that colours perception of the US itself and every action it takes.

We have also demonstrated that anti-Americanism has a long history within the ALP. Evatt was not anti-American *per se*, but his liberal-international ideological worldview arguably led him to the almost inevitable conclusion that the US, as the most powerful state in the aftermath of the Second World War, had to be resisted and constrained. As the Cold War developed, distrust of the US began to rise within Labor ranks. At first it manifested itself as a sense of indignation at what was seen to be improper US interference in Australia’s domestic affairs in the 1951 and 1966 elections. But as the Vietnam war intensified, anti-American sentiment hardened and began to take a more ideological form as the Left’s influence rose within the ALP and also in various affiliated bodies like universities, unions and the anti-war movement. A nadir was reached under Whitlam, who was bedevilled by a lack of discipline on the part of the Left faction generally and Cairns in particular. However, the lessons of the Whitlam years were not lost on Hawke, who ruthlessly suppressed ideological anti-Americanism within the party. By the time Keating became prime minister, the ending of the Cold War took the wind out of the anti-American ideologues who, we argue, have never really resurrected their fortunes inside the party.

So, will anti-Americanism re-emerge in the ALP? Clearly the contingent variety will arise from time to time simply because a particular US president policy or a particular American policy may be distasteful to members of the ALP. But, concerned as we are with the more persistent and bias-like varieties of anti-Americanism, we would argue that the ideological variant is unlikely to do so. While there are still radicals in Australia, particularly in the universities and counter-culture movement, we see little prospect of them making headway with the inner circles of the ALP – for two reasons. First

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there is no real coherent ideological alternative to capitalism around which such a group could coalesce; and, second, the US appears to be heading away from the unilateral tendencies that characterized the Bush administration, thereby making America a “smaller target” for radical attacks.

What about the prejudicial variety of anti-Americanism? It is an inescapable fact that a person who harbours anti-American prejudices comparable to those of Mark Latham might assume an influential position in the party at some point in the future, though the likelihood of this occurring is difficult to predict. While it is possible for leadership aspirants to deliberately deceive their colleagues regarding their true opinions, as Latham did; and if such a leader were a talented politician capable of galvanizing doubts about the US that clearly exist in the ALP caucus, it is possible that such a leader could have a real impact on ALP policy. However, the emergence of such a figure is little more than a “possibility” at present and, for reasons we will speak to directly below, a remote one at that.

**Conclusion: The Future According to Kevin Rudd**

The reason that it is unlikely a prejudiced anti-American would rise to a position of influence within ALP ranks, at least for the foreseeable future, is because of Kevin Rudd. After Rudd became leader in December 2006, Labor’s languishing fortunes were largely reversed. Within a month, Labor’s primary vote had surged to a twenty-year high, jumping seven points, enough to win had an election been held then. Within three months Rudd was preferred by 49 per cent, and enjoyed a job satisfaction rating of 66 per cent. The impressive growth in Rudd’s own popularity throughout 2007 was reflected in the results of the 2007 elections, giving the party 83 of the 150 seats in the House of Representatives. In short, almost exactly three years after Labor’s second worst electoral showing since 1945, the party won office after securing an almost six per cent swing in the nation-wide primary vote. In our view, this event alone will carry its own powerful message to members of the parliamentary caucus and to the party as a whole.

It is also true that Rudd and the ALP will be assisted by disarray in the Coalition in the aftermath of the November 2007 elections. Howard’s own defeat in his electorate of Bennelong and the decision of Peter Costello, Howard’s long-time heir-apparent, to retire from politics will solidify Labor’s comfortable majority in parliament.

Importantly, Rudd enjoys a commanding position within his own party, perhaps best illustrated by his demand—unprecedented in ALP history—to be given the right to appoint his entire cabinet. That the parliamentary caucus acceded to his demand (even though Labor’s constitution has not yet been changed—and even though the battle to do so is likely to be a bloody one) is powerful evidence of the degree to which the party recognizes Rudd’s own role as the architect of an almost miraculous electoral turn-around.

One key area in which Rudd improved Labor’s performance was national security. After Howard’s outspoken attack against Barack Obama in early 2007, Rudd turned the tables on the Liberals. As Paul Kelly noted

> Nothing better reveals the differences between Rudd and Mark Latham… Adopting his most patronising tone Rudd depicted himself as a more balanced upholder of the Alliance than Howard… Nothing could

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be more removed for the Liberals than the happy days of Latham… The lesson is that Rudd is more politically fireproofed on the alliance than Howard appreciates… Rudd helped the Americans during the worst days of Latham’s Anti-US rants and they have not forgotten… Howard’s big lead on the national security issue is being eroded.92

Indeed, Rudd had written two weeks earlier that Labor’s foreign policy would be based on “three strong pillars: our alliance with the US, our membership of the UN and a policy of comprehensive engagement with the Asia-Pacific.” The fact that the US alliance was mentioned first spoke volumes, and Rudd later demonstrated his pragmatism, acknowledging that “The US alliance has a deep legitimacy in Australia. Opinion polls consistently show how strongly Australians support it.”93 Both Rudd and Robert McClelland, his shadow minister for defence, gave key foreign policy addresses in August 2007 stressing the importance of the US alliance; indeed McClelland’s speech was entitled “Strengthening the Australia-US Alliance.”94

After the election, Rudd’s approach to foreign policy quickly became apparent. He declared that most of Australia’s troops will be withdrawn from Iraq; he also stressed that more troops would be sent to Afghanistan in a virtual quid pro quo. We can see further hints of this new “balanced” approach when considering the new three-way Australia-US-Japan security relationship. Labor had opposed it while in opposition but in power affirmed it, even if there was little enthusiasm to extend it into a Quadrilateral arrangement by including India. Nevertheless Rudd promised that Australia would support the inclusion of both Japan and India as new Permanent Members of the UN Security Council because, as Stephen Smith, the new minister for defence, said “Australia needs to take a more multilateral approach… the United Nations itself should take much more of a central role in international affairs.”95 Further, at the 2008 AUSMIN talks96 the Rudd government backtracked from several of the more “anti-American” positions the ALP had established while in opposition: in particular it is expected that Australia will indeed buy the 24 Super Hornets that the previous government contracted to acquire97; and, most significantly, the Labor government promised to reconsider its opposition to participating in the US-led effort to establish a ballistic missile defence capability.98

Rudd’s pragmatism, reflected in shifts in security policy, has important implications for the future orientation of the ALP. In particular, we conclude that anti-Americanism is unlikely to surface in the ALP again in the near future. Rudd’s political success has engendered what could be considered a bias against anti-American sentiment in the party. Moreover, this is likely to survive

96 The annual Australian-American ministerial-level talks at which security matters are discussed.
Rudd’s retirement from politics. It is likely that most Labor MPs with even a cursory knowledge of the party’s history will understand that whenever anti-Americanism emerges within the party as a significant force Labor’s electoral prospects are imperilled. It is then, we argue, indeed the end of an era.

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