

Analyzing The Elements Of Foreign Policy: Australia's Foreign Policy Towards Indo – Pacific Region, A Study Case

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Abstract – National Interest is the core of a country's foreign policy. Policymakers use the concept of national interest to formulate foreign policy and refer as a starting point to consider any step they take for the sake of their country; these include defending, maintaining, or developing anything perceived as national interest. In the past few years, Australia has shown that it has a grand agenda in the Indo – Pacific region and positioned itself as the regional epicenter by utilizing its national power through the instrument of DIME, including and not limited to Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic power. This paper tries to connect the main concept of international relations and Australian openness in articulating its foreign policy through a descriptive qualitative method. The author analyzes it through the elements of foreign policy that consist of Ends (National Interest), Means (Foreign Policy Instrument), and Ways (Foreign Policy Options). This paper briefly reflects on how the elements structured Australian foreign policy to strive for regional security, stability, and prosperity. The paper concludes that the regional strategic engagement is conducted through various courses of action as the Australian commitment to maintaining a rules-based order.

Keywords – National Interest, Foreign Policy, Australian Foreign Policy, Indo – Pacific Region

I. INTRODUCTION

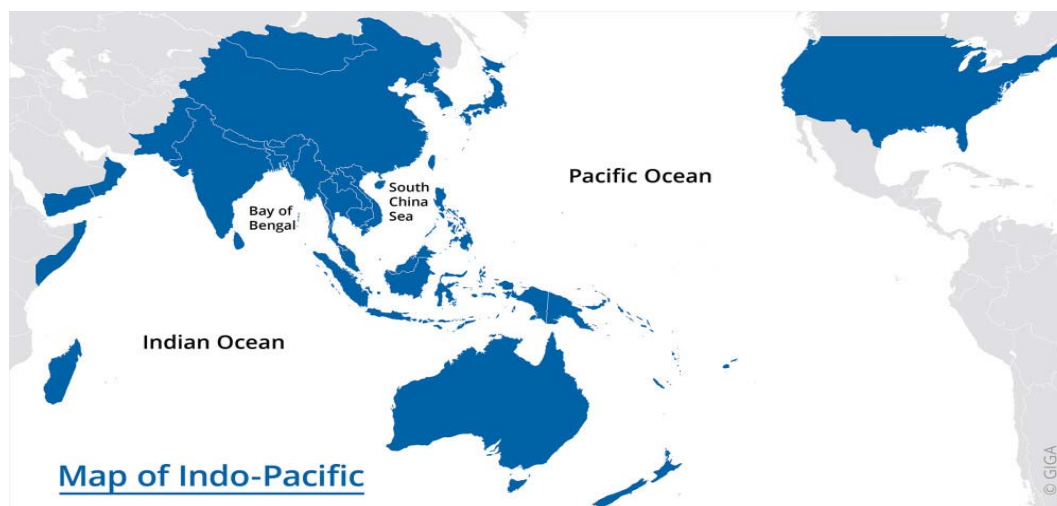


Figure 1: The map of Indo – Pacific Region

Source: Center for International Studies, n.d.

Since President Gilliard's administration in 2013, the Indo – Pacific region has been a feature of Australian foreign policy;

the period started using the Indo - Pacific term, written in Australian Defense White Paper. Almost every year, the Australian government publishes its Foreign Policy White Paper which covers many areas of interest. However, its national interest in the Indo–Pacific region seems essential not to be mentioned as it is frequently mentioned in the paper. In 2017, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and both Julie Bishop as its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Steven Ciobo as its Minister for Trade, Tourism, and Investment, issued the most recent Foreign Policy White Paper, and specifically discussed "A stable and prosperous Indo – Pacific" alone in one chapter. The "Indo-Pacific," as defined by the Australian government, is the area bounded by Southeast Asia, which also includes India, North Asia, and the United States, and extending from the eastern Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean (Australian Government, 2017). Australian style of transparency and openness in articulated terms and policies in a written official document becomes a good starting point to have everything on the table and analyze it through available international relations theory and concepts.

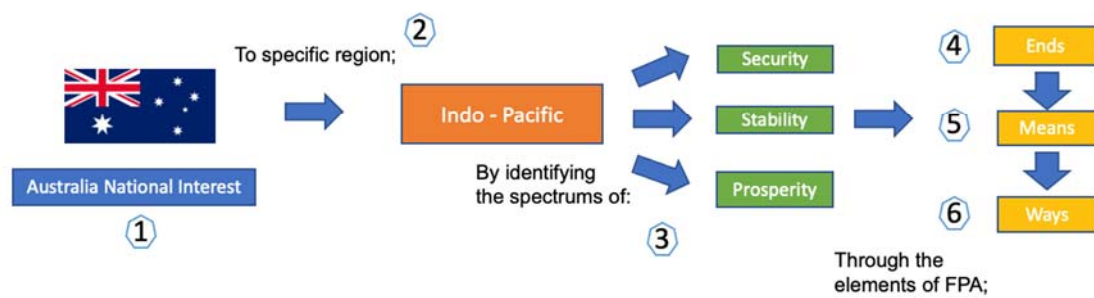


Figure 2: The elaboration of the Australia Foreign Policy toward Indo – Pacific Region on Security, Stability and Prosperity

Foreign policy always starts from the inside, which means what becomes Australia's National Interest will lead to the foreign policymaking process. Australia has a long-standing interest in the Indo–Pacific region due to its location and prominent influence on balancing regional power through solid foreign policy implementation. As mentioned in its official document, the Foreign Policy White Paper focuses on security and prosperity in the contested and competitive world. As a central point of this discussion, the writer will analyze Australian Foreign Policy through the element of Ends (National Interest), Means (Foreign Policy Instrument), and Ways (Foreign Policy Options). Noting that Australia will also act based on its element of national power, as described by Hans Morgenthau, that consists of geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, quality of diplomacy, and quality of government (Morgenthau, 1978), though the author will only focus on some of these elements in detail. Linking to these elements, Terry Diebel also stated that the real expressions of national power that connect the ends, ways, and means for any steps a state will undergo are described as an instrument (Diebel, 2007) on (Johnson, 2019)). This instrument model also appears in several structures, but the author will use the DIME model developed by the US military, which consists of Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic power ((Worley, 2015) on (Johnson, 2019)). Despite many arguments, the DIME model ought not to be left as it is, where another aspect should be considered to complement the better analysis of the instrument model. Nevertheless, the author limits the discussion to these four major aspects, considering that these represent general definitions of terminology that can be detailed based on the case study.

Pertinent to Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, collaborated with the Defense White Paper issued in 2016, can show the public clarity on how it seizes its strategic environment. The most recent text focuses on how they develop robust domestic, diplomatic, defense, and national capabilities to be stable and prosperous with the international community's assistance.

Australia views this as a chance to advance an open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region in which everyone's rights are upheld (Hardy, 2019).

II. THE CASE STUDY

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST TOWARDS A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS INDO – PACIFIC

By promoting Australia's prosperity, its independence in decision-making, and the security, safety, and freedom of its citizens, the policies outlined in the Australia Foreign Policy White Paper advance the country's interests. Australia presents a framework to direct the use of its resources and abilities to pursue its top foreign policy priorities. The published document states that Australia identifies five primary objectives fundamental to Australia's security and prosperity.

- Respect the rights of all states by promoting an open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo – Pacific region;
- Deliver more opportunities for Australian businesses globally and stand against protectionism;
- Ensure the safety of the citizen, security and free from the threats posed by terrorist acts;
- Promote and protect the international rules that support stability and prosperity and tackle global challenges through cooperation; and
- Intensify support for a more resilient surrounding, including the Pacific and Timor–Leste.

The above are the main focus of Australia in Indo – Pacific. However, these also reflect their national interest and foreign policy in the global scope. Australian Ambassador Jane M. Hardy emphasizes the challenge it currently faces is that due to the rapid change and movement in the geoeconomics weight and influence, Australia discovered that its region is far from benign or straightforward. He highlighted examples of these where China has conquered the Japanese economy, and when it comes to production, it produces more than the US has. In the West, India is currently the fastest-growing major economy. Then, its neighborhood, Indonesia, has the vision to become the top five global economic power in 2030. Japan, China, and India developed their sophisticated and powerful military forces in the middle. They are taking care of the rising of their economy and establishing a robust military posture to safeguard all they have for prosperity and stability. In addition, the US influence has also colored the region; as a US ally, Australia is also committed to supporting the hegemonic purposes in Indo – the Pacific. The US means it with their US Indo–Pacific Command as their commitment to the Indo–Pacific that is considered steadfast and enduring (Hardy, 2019). The discourse where the US is also utilizing Australia as its military alliance for the US balance of power strategy in countering China's influence in the region also influences Australian foreign and defense policy objectives. The actual example of this can be seen in the involvement of the US and Australia in ANZUS, The Quad, and AUKUS (Montolalu, 2022). Australia wants to create an Indo-Pacific area free of coercion, rich in possibilities for everyone, and governed by open and equitable laws. Based on these principles, Australia is stepping up long-term, practical activities with its regional partners, such as participation in the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) forum, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting-Plus, and other regional strategic engagements (Hardy, 2019).

Conceptually, as introduced earlier, three aspects can be explored in promoting a nation-state's interests: security, stability, and prosperity. Security can be related to national security, border issues, terrorism, defense, and military alliance. The stability aspect refers to political and ideological issues. Then, the prosperity aspect relates to trade, economic and environmental issues, human right issue, etc. Australian national interest in the Indo – Pacific region had touched on all these aspects, especially when they officially mentioned a stable and prosperous Indo–Pacific in its Foreign Policy White Paper exclusively. Noting that security, stability, and prosperity are intercorrelated with each other, for example, that the rising prosperity of Indo – the Pacific region is also influenced by regional stability and increased security.

III. THE ANALYSIS

3.1. The Australian National Interest in the Indo – Pacific Region (Ends)

Australia sees the Indo – Pacific as having a strategic transition; some experts in their academic article say that Australia's strategic positioning has focused on the conflict between China and the US, the power shift in the region, and the rule-based international order where all of it tends to be more focus in the framework of Indo – Pacific (Taylor, 2020). The evolving interpretation on Indo – Pacific can be seen in 2013 when it was seen the region as “emerging” and consider it as a natural

extension of the “wider Asia- Pacific region” (Australian Government, 2017). Noting that Australia cooperates with China and the US in the variant sectors, Australia positioned itself as an economic and trade partner with China, where a comprehensive strategic partnership and free trade agreement was made. On the other side, Australia cooperates with the US on the security and defense spectrum, where the military alliance built and enhanced in the last decade, making Australia a challenging strategic environment in between US-China competition.

To all of this, Australia considers the situation as "critical," departs from this condition, and is committed to advancing and protecting its national interest. Australia's interest lies in instability and seeking peace; it characterizes Indo–Pacific's security and prosperity based on respect for international law and other norms and capitalization opportunities. This will help ensure Australia can preserve its national interests unconstrained by exercising coercive power.

The Australian Government's approach to better protecting and advancing interests in a changing Indo–Pacific begins with substantial investments in the foundations of Australia's national strength. In particular, the Government is building a more capable, agile, and potent Australian Defence Force. It will also pursue active diplomacy and use our development cooperation to promote economic reform and social stability. The Government will strengthen Australian law and justice, border protection, and intelligence capabilities (Australian Government, 2017).

3.2. The Australian Foreign Policy Instrument in the Indo – Pacific Region (Means)

Australia's national interest is clear where it lies in stability and seeking peace; it characterizes the security and prosperity in Indo – Pacific based on international law and other norms and the opportunity of the open market. This will help ensure Australia can prosecute its national interests unconstrained by exercising coercive power. The Foreign Policy Instrument contains DIME – *Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic* instruments that are overlapped and interconnected. Australian foreign policy, which is focused on the spectrum of Security, Stability, and Prosperity, has covered all the foreign policy instruments by considering:

- In the diplomatic spectrum, Australia has undergone efforts for negotiation, political recognition, and ideas to Indo – Pacific countries by engaging with regional cooperation and being active in several strategic forums where Australia is included as an active member or not.
- This might also intercorrelate to the Informational spectrum where Australia utilizes its educational institution to accommodate students from overseas; it also uses the role of the Australian diaspora spread in Indo – the Pacific to influence the perception of its adversaries.
- Through Military instruments, Australia is mainly engaged with the United States through United States Indo – Pacific Command (USPACOM) to commit to the alliance, build and share the same vision of the secure and stable Indo – Pacific in the middle of many phenomena they consider critical situations.
- The economic instrument is also playing a significant role, as Australia projected an economic influence on the Indo – Pacific countries with infrastructure investment, it gives facilities for these countries to have access to the investment for the sake of the regional development, which in the end, Australia sees can also bolster the prosperity of the region.

3.3. The Australian Foreign Policy Options in the Indo – Pacific Region (Ways)

Australia has specified several Foreign Policy Options due to its national interest in promoting a stable and prosperous Indo – Pacific. To advance Australia's interest in Indo – the Pacific, several activities counted from 2018 to 2019 advanced Australia's prosperity and security, which helped influence a more competitive Indo – Pacific. The below ways of course of action in promoting a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific are the points they highlight in its DFAT 2018-19 annual reports; these engagement and cooperation include to:

1) The United States

The US – Australia bilateral and defense relations have been built for more than 100 years, and even though it continuously evolves due to the changes in international politics, it remains strong. It was marked by the first military-to-military contact by US President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 when the Great White Fleet arrived in Australia as the impact of the fear of

Japanese expansion. However, many argue that the long-standing alliance between the two strengthened during President Obama's administration. (Congressional Research Service, 2020). Many events become proof of this statement; One of them, in October 2014, Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott sent eight aircraft, doubled hundred special forces, and 400 support troops to the UAE against the Islamic State in Iraq along with the US (Griffiths, 2014).

On the Australian side, the alliance with the US is considered the fundamental basis of its security policy and perceived it could strengthen its imperative role in leading the regional security environment along with China's assertiveness that significantly impacted Australian politics, domestic and international. Another concern is that Australia sees China's rising power and influence undercuts Australia's influence in the Indo–Pacific region. The US and Australia are concerned about projecting their influence over the Pacific Islands by countering the Chinese presence. It has a mission to become the option for those countries in the region as their partner of choice (Chase & Moroney, 2020). Not to mention, Heiduk and Wacker emphasize that the continued presence of the US and Australia's commitment to the regional states with a ruled-based order is considered crucial (Heiduk & Wacker, 2020).

Office of the Spokesperson, US Department of State releases a fact sheet triggering US – Australia engagement in the Indo – Pacific region where they define themselves as a vital partnership. Defending freedom and democracy, promoting opportunity, preserving human rights, upholding the rule of law, and combating state-sponsored disinformation are shared values between the United States and Australia. As a vital partnership for the world, both countries currently cooperate on vaccine manufacture to increase the health security of Australia and Indo – Pacific, cooperation in sciences and energy, supply chains, and investment. As a discourse of safeguarding and securing the prosperous region, both countries are also involved in ANZUS, The Quad, and AUKUS programs and provide assistance to Pacific countries on natural disaster relief (U.S. Department of States, 2022).

2) China

Australia's relationship with China is underpinned by its comprehensive strategic partnership and free trade agreement. China is Australia's largest trading partner, with two-way trade increasing by 17 per cent to \$214.6 billion in 2018. A new record in 2018 that Australia has hosted in the amount of 205,000 Chinese student (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). Though many discourses highlight the Australian "anxiety" in the face of China as the heart of Indo – the Pacific, Australia stands steadfast that the strategic competition between the US and China in the region needs to be managed "responsibly." Considering that, Penny Wong, Australian Foreign Minister, stated that no single power should dominate the region. The bilateral relations between both countries have been noted to improve since 2022(Westcott, 2023). The Australian ways of implementing foreign policy can be considered a steady commitment to maintaining the security, stability, and prosperity Indo – the Pacific. Even though historically and valuably, the US is emotionally closer to Australia than China, full partiality to the US agenda will only harm their national interest in the region.

3) Major Indo – Pacific democracies

Japan, India, Indonesia, and Korea are four countries where Australia is considered as major Indo – Pacific democracy. Australia seeks new economic, strategic, and security cooperation with these countries, which can be seen through a bilateral and multilateral strategic partnership.

- **Japan**

Australia and Japan engage in sharing strategic interest, they work to advance negotiations on bilateral agreement regarding the defense exercise and operations facilitation.

- **Indonesia**

Australia engaged with Indonesian agencies in developing infrastructure, skills, and intuition. This engagement is intended to promote economic growth and stability, including strengthening Indonesia's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing standards. Through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian government also funded several projects in Indonesia in the economy, health, social and justice sectors.

- **India**

Australia engaged with India, which has supported Australia's economy, especially on trade issues. The Australia-

India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) also allows both states to implement tariff-free goods exports and imports. This cooperation put effects Australian and Indian businesses and consumers (DFAT, n.d).

- **Republic of Korea**

Both engaged in regional cooperation and regional security environment. It is sighted that both countries also conduct people-to-people interaction under Australia – ROK Indo-Pacific Dialogue to support a peaceful, prosperous, and secure region and respect international rules and sovereignty. (DFAT, 2022).

4) The Pacific and Timor-Leste

Australia perceived that the Pacific is at the forefront of its foreign policy; they focused on the economic and human development partnership, the government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has established the office of the Pacific with more human resources to create a significant shift in how they engage with the Pacific countries. It also remembered to mention New Zealand as their most comprehensive and closest country. DFAT set up the new Pacific Labor Scheme for the nine Pacific Island countries to enhance regional prosperity and economic opportunities, including Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Island, Samoa, Tonga Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and also Timor – Leste (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). Timor Leste, as one of its closest neighborhoods, is engaged in development assistance as well as work on maritime arrangements through the Maritime Boundary Treaty (DFAT, n.d).

5) Southeast Asia

Australia mentioned Southeast Asia as its longstanding partner. Australia has increased efforts to remain the region's leading economic, development, and strategic partner (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). In the approach to Southeast Asia, Australia sees the region has framed Australia's northern approach and put it at the nexus of Australia's strategic competition in Indo – Pacific. As a solid organization that leads Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) brings together the ten Southeast Asian states; Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Australia presents a robust, resilient, and cohesive organization due to its crucial role in shaping and reinforcing rules and norms in the region (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, nd).

6) South and West Asia

Australia highlights several initiatives in South and West Asia countries to promote stability, economic growth, and regional cooperation. In Afghanistan, it advises and assists Afghan security forces in the effort to counter-terrorist. Sri Lanka also has the same focus: to assist the Australian citizens in Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Government after the terror attacks in April 2019. Several countries are also being discussed related to the support of socio-cultural and religious support.

7) Regional Cooperation

The regional architecture is taking on greater significance for Australia as the rules and norms underpinning stability in the Indo-Pacific come under more significant pressure. Australia highlights several regional cooperation, such as ASEAN, and East Asia Summit (EAS), that they consider the Indo-Pacific's premier political and security forum. The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) focuses on maritime safety and security. Other regional cooperation in multilateral and minilateral approaches is also conducted for the regional vision of a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

8) Maritime Security

The maritime domain becomes significant for Australia because three oceans surround it. It also derives from the vision of open, stable, and rule-based security and prosperity. Australia engages diplomatically to promote and adhere the international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), freedom of navigation, and overflight are included.

9) Infrastructure Investment

To drive economic growth and stability across Indo – the Pacific region, the Australian government has endured foreign policy options to ensure the countries inside the area have access to the financing infrastructure. Australia contributed to this approach, including; The Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, Southeast Asia Economic Governance and

Infrastructure Initiative, The South Asia Regional Infrastructure Connectivity, Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership (Australia-Japan-US), and PNG Electrification Partnership.

10) Responding to the threat posed by North Korea

Due to the threat posed by North Korea, Australia committed to maintaining pressure until it reaches complete denuclearization, as concluded by the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Through Australia's Department of Defense, they collaborate with Japan to deploy maritime patrol aircraft and naval vessels to monitor the North Korean activity in the region.

IV. CONCLUSION

The author concludes that the Australian foreign policies in Indo – Pacific region comes up from its national interest that has focus on promoting Security, Stability, and Prosperity. These are aligned with its stable and prosperous Indo – Pacific foreign policy as well as their commitment on advancing Australia's security and prosperity in a contested and competitive world, which is intercorrelated each other overall. Utilizing its Foreign Policy Instrument supplements its national interest, consisting of the diplomatic instrument that engages with regional cooperation. An informational instrument is the ability to use its diaspora to influence the perception of its adversaries. The military instruments through military alliance utilization mostly conduct with the US. The economic instrument engages countries in the Indo – Pacific with development assistance and trade cooperation. These are proven by various activities carried out by Australia with the region through several courses of action in support of its national interest in promoting a stable and prosperous Indo – Pacific.

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