Book Section:

Australian Identity, Interventionism and the 'War on Terror'
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This chapter examines Australia's participation in military intervention in the 'war on terror' and the role of the politics of identity. Like the Bush administration in the US, the Australian Government under conservative Prime Minister John Howard was consistently willing to suggest that the age of 'war' post-2001 necessitated new domestic ministries and agencies; new legislation (from police powers to periods of detention and ease of movement in and out of the country); and new forms of public participation in security governance. All of these were crucial components of Australia's 'war on terror'. In this chapter, however, we focus specifically on Australian interventionism in the 'war on terror': the policy and practice of involvement in military incursions beyond the borders of the Australian state as a means of redressing the threat posed by fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. We examine the reasons given for Australian participation in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of this 'war on terror', while also analysing Australia's military interventionism in the immediate region, most prominently its mission in the Solomon Islands in 2003. We argue that understanding Australian military intervention in the 'war on terror' requires taking account of the important role of identity in underpinning the Government's conception of security and providing a resource for the Government to justify intervention to the Australian people.

Australian Foreign and Security Policy under Howard

In many ways, Australia's active participation in military interventions in the 'war on terror' was eminently predictable. Indeed the principles and commitments expressed by Prime Minister Howard in announcing his solidarity with and support for the United States after September 11, 2001, were an extension of principles and commitments elaborated consistently throughout Howard's tenure as Prime Minister. A complete survey of Australian foreign policy imperatives and/or action prior to 2001 is not possible here, but two core dimensions of foreign policy are worth noting in this context: the centrality of a particular conception of the 'national interest'; and the primacy attached to the US alliance in Australian thinking about security and its place in the region and the world. Both, we suggest, are intimately related to a particular conception of Australian national identity.

On coming to power in 1996, the Howard Government was eager to distinguish its foreign policy style and approach from that of the previous Labor (ALP) Government (1983-1996) and its Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans. Evans had embraced the idea of 'middle power diplomacy' and championed the notion of Australia as a 'good

international citizen'.[2] For Evans, this meant a commitment not simply to participate in multilateral fora but to attempt to develop the normative basis of international society and provide some form of intellectual leadership in doing so. This style of diplomacy as a means of advancing Australian interests was particularly evident in Australia's role in the Uruguay Round of talks on the General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade (1986-94); post-conflict intervention in Cambodia (1992-5); and Australia's active role in the development of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. In security terms, the Labor Government had again emphasised the importance of strengthening the international institutional framework (through international leadership on nuclear disarmament, for example) as a means for advancing Australian security. Moreover the Government pointed to the need for constructive engagement with those regional neighbours (in particular Indonesia) who had traditionally been viewed as a source of threat.[3]

The commitment to the 'national interest' under the subsequent Howard Government was beyond an attempt to demarcate foreign policy styles from that of the previous Government. For the Howard Government, the ALP had allowed its commitment to 'good international citizenship' to move suspiciously close to a cosmopolitanism that rejected the ultimate primacy that governments should give the rights and needs of their own citizens. Both Howard and Foreign Minister Downer were of the view that under the ALP, the US alliance had been allowed to drift dangerously relative to a naïve emphasis on defence self-reliance, a dubious attempt to identify Australia as part of the Asian region, and a commitment to work through multilateral fora that had provided tangibly little for Australia. By contrast, in launching the Government's second Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade White Paper- significantly titled *Advancing the National Interest*- Downer argued that:

> A foreign minister is chosen and paid to look after the interests of his country, and not to delegate for the human race. We are not about trumpeting our own international good citizenry simply for the sake of it. That is a trap for the ideologues and the naïve.[4]

The Government's willingness to work outside the rules, norms and institutions of international society in defence of more narrowly defined Australian interests was all too evident in its approach to cooperation on global climate change; its approach to asylum-seekers and refugees; and ultimately in involvement in the 'war on terror'.[5]

The other key commitment in foreign policy terms under the Howard Government- one of course central to the content given to the 'national interest'- was the commitment to the US alliance, particularly in security terms. On coming to power in 1996 the Howard Government immediately moved to reinvigorate the US alliance, hosting ministerial talks in Sydney that concluded with the so-called 'Sydney Statement'. While accompanied by much fanfare, the statement amounted to little more than a reaffirmation of the central principles of the 1951 ANZUS (Australia-New Zealand-United States) Treaty combined

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[2] See Evans, G. and B. Grant, Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1995); and Linklater, A., 'What is a Good International Citizen?', in P. Keal (ed.), Ethics and Foreign Policy (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992).

[3] See Philpott, S., 'Fear of the Dark: Indonesia and the Australian National Imagination', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 55:3 (2001), pp.371-88; and Burke, A., *Fear of Security: Australia's Invasion Anxiety* (Melbourne: Cambridge UP, 2008), pp.150-68.

[4] Downer, A., 'Advancing the National Interest', Speech to the National Press Club, 7 May (2002).

[5] McDonald, M., 'Constructing Insecurity: Australian Security Discourse and Policy Post-2001', *International Relations*, 19:3 (2005), pp.297-320.

with new agreements on training exercises and an upgrade of US intelligence bases.[6] Even before September 11, Foreign Minister Downer argued that the US alliance was crucial in providing for Australian security; cementing the US into the Asia-Pacific region; and giving Australia more weight in both world affairs broadly and American foreign policy calculations specifically.[7] For the Government, then, Australia could become a more powerful international player by tying itself closely to American foreign policy interests. Controversially, after leading a successful peacekeeping mission in East Timor, Prime Minister Howard enunciated the so-called 'Howard Doctrine', suggesting that Australia could become the US' 'deputy sheriff' in the region.[8] Although Howard subsequently backtracked from these comments- which were roundly criticised within the region- Australian interventionism in the Pacific after 2001 and representations of its regional 'responsibilities' suggested that the Government continued to view its role in this way.[9]

The commitment to the US alliance was of course most evident in security and foreign policy, underpinned by the conception that Australia's links to the US were 'fundamental for our security'.[10] Aside from the obvious cases under discussion here- cooperation in military intervention in Afghanistan and especially Iraq- it is worth noting that the 1999 intervention in East Timor proceeded only after receiving backing from Washington; while in 2003 Australia committed itself to active participation in the US' plans for regional missile defence. Both of these developments are significant to note given the negative effect they had on relations with some of the largest countries in the Asian region, most notably Indonesia and China. Moreover, some argue that the commitment to the maintenance of the alliance for Australian security even encouraged the Government to grant concessions to the United States in other areas of policy. This was a common suggestion regarding the 2004 Australia-US Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA), which critics argued overwhelmingly favoured American economic interests.[11]

It was the extent of Australia's commitment to the US alliance- one founded upon a fundamental sense of anxiety about Australian security and a narrowly defined conception of Australian values and the national interest- that saw Australian troops lining up alongside other members of the 'coalition of the willing' in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Howard Government would deny that its conception of 'maintaining' the alliance equated to blind support for all elements of US foreign policy, but the notion of an umbilical conception of the alliance under the Howard Government was certainly a prominent criticism from a range of analysts of Australian foreign policy, especially after 2001.[12] The Foreign Minister's admission in 2004 that Australia could not afford to risk

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[6] AUSMIN, 'Sydney Statement. Australia-US: A Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century', Joint Security Declaration (1996). Available at: http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/sydney_statement.html.

[7] Downer, A., 'Australia's Alliance with the United States: Maintaining the "Fabric of Peace"', speech to the *Australia-United States Alliance and East Asian Security* Conference, Sydney, 29 June (2001)

[8] See Leaver, R., 'The meanings, origins and implications of the Howard Doctrine', *The Pacific Review*, 14:1 (2001), pp.15-34.

[9] See Fry, G. and T. Kabutaulaka (eds.), *Intervention and State-building in the Pacific* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2008).

[10] DFAT, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003), pp.xvi.

[11] Weiss, L., E. Thurbon and J. Matthews, *How to Kill A Country: Australia's Devastating Trade Deal with the United States* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2004); Capling, A., *All the way with the USA: Australia, United States and Free Trade* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005).

[12] For example, Beeson, M., 'Australia's relationship with the United States: The case for greater independence', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 38:3 (2003), pp.387-405; Burke, *Fear of Security*; George, J.,

the alliance (and Australian security) by not participating in intervention in Iraq did little to undermine these accounts of Australian obsequiousness.[13] While based on a narrow, realist conception of the national interest (in which Australia needed military protection in an anarchic world and dangerous regional environment), this support was also based on a narrow conception of Australian national identity.

September 11, 2001 and Afghanistan

By coincidence, John Howard was in Washington D.C. on a state visit on September 11, 2001. From his hotel, he could see the smoke rising from the Pentagon, which he had visited the previous day. Although contested, a range of analysts suggest that Howard's presence in the US capital profoundly impacted upon his view of 9-11,[14] a point later acknowledged by Howard himself.[15] In the days that followed, the meaning the Howard Government ascribed to the events and their relationship to Australia centred on three themes: the extraordinary nature of the attacks, which ushered in a 'new world'; the need to recognise the events as an attack on the values shared by Australia and the United States; and the need for Australia to show solidarity with the United States.

The suggestion that the September 11 attacks were extraordinary or exceptional was certainly not limited to the Australian Prime Minister, but his suggestion that the attacks ushered in a new era is significant to note. For Howard, 9-11 marked the end of a post-Cold War innocence and the dawn of a new world: one that was 'new and very dangerous'.[16] This claim of exceptionality permeated subsequent Government justifications for a range of policy and practices in the context of the 'war on terror', and was certainly employed in justifying military intervention. The same also applies to the suggestion that 9/11 constituted an attack on the shared values of Australians and Americans. While a range of voices in democratic states expressed similar sentiments and offered their solidarity with the people of the US,[17] Howard and the Australian Government suggested that these shared values underpinned cooperation in military intervention and indeed Australia's broader foreign and security policy considerations. Howard argued that 9/11 was 'an attack on a way of life that we in Australia share in common with the Americans'.[18] He tied this to the idea that 9/11 suggested Australian vulnerability, arguing pointedly the following day that 'Australia is not immune' from terrorist attacks.[19] This expression of concern- whether genuine or invoked for political reasons- about the potential terror threat to Australia was a central feature of the Howard Government's approach to the 'war on terror' and security.

'Will the Chickenhawks come home to roost?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 57:2 (2003), pp.235-42; Lee Koo, K. '*Terror Australis*: Security, Australia and the 'War on Terror' Discourse', Borderlands E-journal, 4:1 (2005). Available at: http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol4no1_2005/leekoo_terror.htm.

[13] Allard, T., 'Going to war secured US alliance, says Downer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 March (2004).

[14] For example, Debats, D., T. McDonald and M. Williams, 'Mr Howard Goes to Washington: September 11, the Australian-American Relationship and Attributes of Leadership', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 42:2 (2007), pp.231-51; Garran, R., *True Believer: John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2004); Gleeson, K. 'Australia and the Construction of the War on Terror'. Paper presented at *International Studies Association Conference*, San Francisco, March 26-29 (2008).

[15] Howard, J., Address to the National Press Club, 11 September (2002).

[16] Howard, J., Television Interview with Ray Martin, 60 Minutes, Channel 9, 16 September (2001).

[17] See Guittet, E., 'European Political Identity and Democratic Solidarity after 9/11', *Alternatives*, 29:4 (2004) pp.441-64.

[18] Howard, J., Interview with Mike Munro, A Current Affair, Network Nine, 12 September (2001).

[19] Howard, J., Press Conference, Ambassadors' Residence, Washington DC, 12 September (2001).

Arguably the most striking theme of Howard's initial response to 9-11 was the emotion and sadness he conveyed. While again not unusual among a range of leaders, what was striking here was the linkage established from sorrow to emotional and then practical solidarity.[20] Again the day after September 11, Howard noted that

> I think it is important that countries like Australia play a role in identifying ourselves with the Americans. I mean, just because you are big and strong doesn't mean that you can't feel lonely and you can't feel that your heart has been ripped out. And I think that is [*sic*] very important, therefore, that Americans know that they have got some really good, reliable friends.[21]

He subsequently made the remarkable promise of Australian assistance to aid America 'in anything they might properly do to respond'.[22]

The promise of support from Howard was confirmed two days later. On September 14, the Australian Government unilaterally invoked the central treaty of the Australia-US alliance: the ANZUS treaty. This was a surprising move, not least as it was the first time since its inception in 1951 that ANZUS had been invoked, and that the original terms of the treaty quite clearly applied to defence issues in the Pacific Ocean. For Howard, this invocation was necessary to demonstrate the extent of Australian solidarity- a 'determination on our part to identify with the Americans' - and to reaffirm the belief that the 9/11 attacks constituted acts of war, which (under ANZUS) were manifestations of a common threat.[23]

The determination to assist the United States in this 'war' did not waver as attention turned to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. While the Bush Administration made the case that a military operation to remove the Taliban was legal and legitimate as an act of self-defence, the Australian Government prepared its military for action. In late November and early December 2001, the Government deployed 122 troops to Afghanistan, sending 1550 military personnel by the end of major combat operations. In terms of its commitment to the overall invasion (Operation Enduring Freedom) and occupation (International Security Assistance Force) effort, such a military presence was relatively limited. This suggests that Australia's central contribution was ultimately towards perceptions of the intervention's credibility or legitimacy, an argument even more applicable to the later intervention in and occupation of Iraq.[24]

For the Australian Government, the 'intellectual case'[25] for Australian participation in Afghanistan was the necessity of a strong international response to the threat posed by a state leadership (the Taliban) willing to sponsor the parties responsible for 9/11: Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden. Howard was eager to establish that military means were necessary tools for redressing this threat. Citing the lessons of historical appeasement learnt from the failure at Munich (which he would do again in justifying military action

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[20] Gleeson, 'Australia and the Construction of the War on Terror'.

[21] Howard, J., Press Conference, Ambassadors' Residence, Washington DC, 12 September (2001).

[22] Howard, J., Interview with John Laws, Radio 2UE, 12 September (2001).

[23] Howard, J., Joint Press Conference with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Parliament House, Canberra, 14 September (2001).

[24] See Verrier, J., 'Australia's self-image as a regional and international security actor: some implications of the Iraq war', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 57:3 (2003), p.461; Bell, R., 'Extreme Allies: Australia and the USA', in J. Cotton and J. Ravenhill (eds.), *Trading on Alliance Security: Australia in World Affairs*, 2001-5 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), p.28.

[25] Howard argued that there was an 'intellectual case for a commitment as well as the strong conceptual and emotional case for involvement' Howard, J., Press Conference Prior to the Deployment of SAS Troops, Sheridan Hotel, Perth, 22 October (2001).

against Iraq), Howard asserted that 'passive indifference in the face of evil achieves absolutely nothing'.[26] More significantly, however, Howard defined the need for Australian participation in Afghanistan as 'an expression of Australia's strong commitment and strong desire to share with the American people a common defence of things we treasure together'.[27] In defining the 9/11 attacks as an attack on the values Australians shared with Americans, Howard suggested that Australia were compelled to participate in Afghanistan because Australians are 'a people prepared to fight our own fights'.[28] By participating in US-led intervention in Afghanistan, Australia would 'be seen to have played its part' in responding to 9-11 and defending the shared core values that were attacked that day.[29] Over the coming years, Howard consistently suggested that these values were under threat in a new age of terror, even on Australia's 'doorstep'.

Regional 'Deputy Sheriff'

Intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq were certainly the core 'war on terror' interventions in which the Australian Government participated; but it is also important to note a series of smaller-scale regional interventions after 2001, particularly in the Solomon Islands in 2003. These interventions were underpinned by the language (if not the concerns) of failed states providing a fertile ground for terrorist activity. And this new 'interventionism' was enabled by the elaboration and enactment of similar principles by the United States and the broader international climate of the 'war on terror'. Although Howard had certainly indicated earlier a willingness to intervene in the immediate region-evident in the suggestion that Australia could act as the US' 'regional deputy'- the context of the 'war on terror' provided particular opportunities for acting in this way.

Successive Australian Governments have broadly accepted the position of regional leader in the South Pacific, although have long experienced difficulty reconciling a sense of obligation to island states in the region with accusations of acting as a hegemon in dealings with its smaller neighbours. Foreign Minister Downer consistently acknowledged this tension, noting that:

> Australia has a strong commitment and devotes substantial resources to the South Pacific region. It is not, however, the region's policeman.[30]

While this view continued to be elaborated until mid-2003, a precedent for a shift in policy was established with the 1999 intervention in East Timor. This intervention was in response to Indonesian Government-supported militias' attacks on the people and towns of East Timor after their 1999 referendum on self-determination. The success of the peacekeeping intervention under Australian leadership was viewed as something of a vindication for the Howard Government's willingness to take on a more prominent and forceful regional role. The intervention- backed by a UNSC resolution, the United States and ultimately (if under coercion) invited by Indonesia- was widely hailed as a success despite its damage to regional relations.[31] As noted, intervention was followed by the

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[26] Howard, J., Speech to the Australian Defence Association, Melbourne, 25 October (2001).

[27] Howard, J., Press Conference, Melbourne, 17 October (2001).

[28] Howard, J., Speech to the Australian Defence Association, Melbourne, 25 October (2001).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Cited in Regan, A. and R. May, 'Reassessing Australia's Role in Papua New Guinea and the Island Pacific', in J. Cotton and J. Ravenhill (eds.), *The National Interest in a Global Era* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), pp.150-1.

[31] Space precludes a discussion of the context and development of intervention in East Timor. On Australian foreign policy regarding East Timor and Indonesia, and on the crisis itself, see Fernandes, C., *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the Independence of East Timor* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2004); and Burke, *Fear of Security*, chapters 4 and 5.

Howard Government's attempt to define its regional role as that of the US' 'deputy sheriff'.

After 2001, the Howard Government built on growing concerns about the need to ensure stability and strong governance in the Pacific by linking the threat of terrorism to that of 'failed states'.[32] The idea of failed states- characterised by a lack of control by central government over its people and territory- as a haven for terrorist activities became a prominent theme in the 'war on terror' discourse generally. The 2003 DFAT White Paper noted that

> South Pacific nations, particularly those weakened by internal division and poor governance, are vulnerable to the activities of terrorists and so are an important target of the Government's assistance programs.[33]

This language was especially prominent in 2003 and particularly applied to the Solomon Islands, which had been suffering from internal conflict and elements of lawlessness since 1998 that had escalated significantly in the first half of 2003. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)- a policy-oriented think tank- was commissioned by the Government to complete a report on the Solomon Islands in the same year, which concluded that states such as the Solomons risked becoming 'a petrie dish in which transnational and non-state security threats can develop and breed'.[34] Although the Government initially ruled out intervention (involved as they were in preparation for intervention in Iraq), Howard became convinced of the merits of leading an intervening force and hastily put one together in June-July.

The intervention in the Solomon Islands- Operation *Helpem Fren*, or the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI)- was invited by Solomons Prime Minister Allan Kamekaza and its goal was to protect the Government, establish law and order and disarm militia groups. Commencing in July 2003, the multinational force led by Australia was again relatively small: initially involving 300 police supported by 1700 military personnel. After this initial, ultimately successful phase the emphasis shifted to broader reconstruction and nation-building. But the significance of Australia's Solomons intervention for our purposes is that it can be understood less as an attempt to address instability, violence and its relationship to deprivation for its own sake than as a tool for advancing Australian security and stability in the context of the 'war on terror'. Greg Fry notes that the Government consistently invoked concerns about Australian security- tied to the danger of failed states and terrorism- in justifying the need for military intervention.[35]

The commitment to action to preserve security on 'our patch' was evident in smaller post-2001 interventions in Papua New Guinea and Nauru, and in the Government's relatively belligerent position on regional security through the Pacific Islands Forum.[36] It was also evident in Howard's post-Bali declaration that Australia would be willing to

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[32] On the former, see Regan and May, 'Reassessing Australia's Role in Papua New Guinea and the Island Pacific'; on the latter, see Greener-Barcham, B. and M. Barcham, 'Terrorism in the South Pacific? Thinking critically about approaches to security in the region', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60:1 (2006), pp.67-82; and O'Keefe, M., 'Australia and fragile states in the Pacific', in J. Cotton and J. Ravenhill (eds.), *Trading on Alliance Security: Australia in World Affairs*, 2001-5 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

[33] DFAT, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003), p.38.

[34] Cited in Fry, Greg, "Our Patch': The War on Terror and the New Interventionism', in Fry and T. Kabutaulaka (eds.), *Intervention and State-building in the Pacific* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2008).

[35] Ibid., see also O'Keefe, 'Australia and fragile states in the Pacific', pp.146-7.

[36] Fry, 'Our Patch'; O'Keefe, 'Australia and fragile states in the Pacific'.

launch a pre-emptive strike against terrorists in nearby states if there was evidence they were preparing an attack on. This suggestion (interpreted by neighbours in Southeast Asia as a veiled threat) would have been all but unthinkable before the elaboration of the parallel 'Bush Doctrine' in 2002.

The 'war on terror' created a context in which Australia was able to pursue a more robust, militaristic approach to regional relations, conducted largely according to the Government's own concerns about national security. Even the multinational nature of intervention in the Solomons belies what Michael O'Keefe has described as a form of 'hegemonic multilateralism' in Australia's own 'coalition of the willing'.[37] And as O'Keefe goes on to suggest, Australia's approach to regional intervention was underpinned by a conception of identity that encouraged a view of the region- and ultimately of cultural and ethnic difference- as a potential source of threat. For Howard, such threats vindicated a commitment to military action where necessary and in particular a commitment to support for US foreign policy initiatives in a new and dangerous world. Of course, nowhere was the extent of this support more evident than with the Australian decision to participate in intervention in Iraq.

Iraq

In his January 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush infamously asserted that Iraq, Iran and North Korea formed an international 'axis of evil'. While some reports suggest an early determination in elements of the administration to link 9/11 directly to the Saddam Hussein regime, ultimately Iraq was excluded from the initial response.[38] Nevertheless, with the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan receiving almost unprecedented international support, the United States saw an opportunity to pursue regime change in Iraq, eventually defining 2003 intervention as a central part of the 'war on terror'.

Throughout 2002 and in early 2003 Prime Minister Howard continued to express solidarity with the United States and noted Australia's willingness to actively support the US in the 'war on terror', a position that did not change as the administration increasingly defined Iraq as part of that 'war'. While not formally committing Australia to participation in the Iraq war until the eve of the conflict, a number of accounts suggest that Howard had come to a private agreement with President Bush some time in mid-2002 that Australian troops would participate in a future intervention.[39] Certainly, from an early stage the Government echoed the core elements of the American case for intervention. The initial emphasis in John Howard's argument for strong action against Iraq was similar to that of other (eventual) participant states: Saddam Hussein's failure to meet disarmament obligations (established under UN Security Council Resolution 687 in 1991 and reiterated through Resolution 1441 of November 2002). This was evident in Foreign Minister Downer's suggestion (on the eve of intervention) that 'the disarmament of Iraq' constituted the 'unfinished business of the 1991 Gulf War'.[40] Prior to March 2003, however, the Australian Government suggested that responsibility for a strong response to the threat to international security posed by Iraq rested with the United

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[37] O'Keefe, 'Australia and fragile states in the Pacific', p.145.
[38] See Woodward, B., *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).
[39] For example, Kevin, T., 'Australia's Secret Pre-emptive War Against Iraq', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 58:3 (2004), pp.318-36.
[40] Cited in O'Connor, B., 'Perspectives on Australian Foreign Policy, 2003', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 58:2 (2004), p.209.

Nations. For Howard, it was clear that Iraq was in 'possession of agents of warfare, both biological and chemical, and also (had) an aspiration to develop a nuclear capacity'.[41] In this context, the UN was compelled to adopt a strong stance regarding Iraq in the interests of preserving international peace and stability. Increasingly, the Australian Government defined this threat in the context of the broader 'war on terror'.

In October 2002, two hundred and two people, including eight-eight Australians, were killed in the bombing of an Indonesian nightclub on the island of Bali. Denouncing the bombing, and ultimately suggesting that Australian tourists were a target, Howard reaffirmed Australian commitment to the 'war on terror' and the values that underpinned it.

> We reaffirm again our commitment to… an Australian community bound together by common values of openness, individual liberty and individual freedom. We fight terrorism because we love freedom; we fight terrorism because we want to preserve the way of life that this country has; we fight terrorism because we share the values of other countries that are in the war against terrorism; and we fight terrorism because it is intrinsically evil.[42]

Through notions of shared values under attack, Howard drew stark distinctions between the 'indescribable savagery' of the bombing and 'the civilised world'. The world leaders he chose to speak of when making this distinction were telling: George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and Her Majesty the Queen. Clearly, for Howard, the new times that 9-11 heralded were thrown into even starker relief after Bali. However, these new times and the new threats they posed were to be faced alongside Australia's traditional allies.

The following month, asserting that the Bali bombing strengthened Australia's commitment to fight and defeat terrorism, Howard addressed the question, 'why Iraq?' In answering, he drew upon two themes that would be used repeatedly in the run up to intervention. Firstly, Howard stressed, 'Iraq has form'.[43] This 'form' comprised of Iraq's history of using WMD and supporting terrorist groups. Secondly, Howard outlined a key tenet of the post 9-11 mindset and the doctrine of pre-emption: the nightmare scenario of WMD developed by rogue states falling into the hands of terrorist groups. Although only a powerful additional reason for intervention in late 2002, this possibility would become increasingly central to folding Iraq into the 'war on terror', and featured prominently in the 2003 DFAT White Paper.[44]

In early 2003, while the Howard Government was still suggesting it had not developed a position on involvement in intervention, the international debate surrounding Iraq intensified. Hans Blix reported on Iraqi weapons inspections to the UN Security Council in late January citing a lack of cooperation but no 'smoking gun'. Howard asserted that the report was damning, with the few concessions that had been made achieved only because of pre-positioned forces, which Australia had contributed to.[45]

From January to March, breach of UNSC resolutions remained central to the Australian Government's position on the need for strong action against Iraq. Representing the

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[41] Howard, J., Address to the National Press Club, 11 September (2002).
[42] Howard, J., Address to the Parliament: Bombings in Bali, 14 October (2002).
[43] Howard, J., Address to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 'Strategic Leadership for Australia Policy Directions in a Complex World', Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney, 20 Nov (2002).
[44] DFAT, *Advancing the National Interest*, pp.xi-xii; 41-4.
[45] Howard, J., Press Conference, Parliament House, Canberra, 28 January (2003).

interchangeable 'world community', the 'community of nations' or 'international community', Howard like Blair pushed strongly to secure an eighteenth resolution from the Security Council specifically enabling intervention. As the chances of achieving the resolution waned, Howard began to suggest that the UN had lost some degree of legitimacy and credibility, and denigrated those within the UNSC (especially France) blocking the way of this resolution. He argued that disarmament of Iraq could not occur:

> if we continue to have spoiling tactics from, say, the French, who appear intent on saying no to everything irrespective of its merit.[46]

Replacing the specific breach of UNSC resolutions, the second and third strands of Howard's argument came to the fore. Increasingly, intervention in Iraq was presented as both part of the 'war on terror' and necessary for humanitarian reasons. The latter, although remaining supplementary in the run-up to intervention, would become increasingly significant in the war's aftermath as it became apparent no WMD would be found. Howard listed numerous examples of human rights atrocities in Iraq to argue that human rights considerations required the pursuit of regime change.[47]

In the lead up to intervention, integrating Iraq into the 'war on terror' was a more central and difficult task than justifying intervention with recourse to humanitarian concerns. At its most explicit and succinct, Howard represented a nightmare scenario that linked Iraq as a rogue state to WMD proliferation and terrorism:

> If a country like Iraq is allowed to keep chemical and biological weapons, inevitably other rogue states will want to do the same thing. And as the number of rogue states possessing those weapons increases, the possibility of them falling into the hands of terrorist organisations multiplies.[48]

The determination to link Iraq with the 'war on terror' was also evident in Howard's controversial attempt to link the 2002 Bali bombings to intervention in Iraq:

> We lost 88 Australians in Bali because of a wilful act of international terrorism…and I will, amongst other things, be asking Australians to bear those circumstances in mind if we become involved in military conflict with Iraq.[49]

In the more dangerous post-9/11 and post-Bali world, the Australian Government suggested that military intervention in Iraq was necessary so as to 'make it less likely that a devastating terrorist attack will be carried out against Australia'.[50] In this sense, Howard argued that Australia was a target for terrorists because it 'is a Western country with Western values'.[51] On the eve of war, intervention in Iraq was justified to secure Australia and protect the (Western) values of Australians as part of the 'war on terror'. In mid-March 2003, Australia committed 2000 Defence Force personnel to 'Operation Iraqi Freedom'. While again a relatively small component of the intervening force, this commitment was important in adding credibility or legitimacy to the conflict itself, and in the face of domestic and international opposition tells us much about the Howard Government's conception of Australian identity and security.

Identity and Intervention: Howard's Australia

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[46] Cited in Shanahan, D., 'Howard joins the attack on Paris', *The Australian*. 15 March (2003), p.1.

[47] Howard, J., Address at the launch of the SA Division's Enterprise Forum, Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide, 14 March (2003).

[48] Ibid.

[49] Cited in Riley, M. et al., 'PM unrepentant on Bali link', *Sydney Morning Herald*. 11 March (2003), p.9.

[50] Howard, J., Address at the launch of the SA Division's Enterprise Forum, Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide, 14 March (2003).

[51] Ibid.

As the preceding analysis suggests, representations of Australia's history, beliefs and 'core values' were central to the processes through which military intervention became thinkable and to the processes through which these interventions were sold.[52] Security itself can be seen as the definition of a group's core values, the threats to those values and the means available to protect or advance them. This section outlines the Howard Government's conception of Australian identity in broad terms before turning to the question of how specific narratives of Australian history, culture and identity were employed in the context of justifying military intervention as part of the 'war on terror'.

Howard's Australia

Much has been written about John Howard's attempt to redefine Australian identity while Prime Minister, much of it beginning with the observation that Howard had come to power suggesting that there was little need for Australia to grapple with its identity at all.[53] What soon became clear was that Howard was rejecting the need for *debate* about Australian identity, suggesting instead that there was an essence of Australianness (defined in terms of mateship and founded upon sacrifice in war) of which all genuine Australians were intuitively aware.[54] In the process, Howard not only advanced his own particular (narrow) conception of Australian identity but also claimed 'the last word' on the composition of that identity, limiting scope for debate about the nature of Australian values and their relationship to practices carried out in the name of 'Australia'.[55]

John Howard's conception of Australian identity can be defined in broad terms as traditional, conservative and individualistic, one founded on cultural and historical ties to the Anglosphere (particularly Britain and the United States) and participation (and sacrifice) in the world wars. The latter were central to justifications for intervention in the 'war on terror', with Howard emphasising the importance of being part of a Western community of nations and invoking the blood spilt by Australian soldiers in the world wars. Howard used the idea of membership of this Western community- with natural cultural ties to the UK and US- both as a lens through which to view the nature of threats in world politics and as a basis for foreign and security policy action. As noted, he asserted that terrorism was 'an enemy of Australia because of who we are, not what we have done',[56] a claim reiterated by Foreign Minister Downer in launching Australia's

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[52] This point builds on work in critical constructivist approaches to international relations, which are concerned primarily with these 'how possible' questions. Here, the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures encourages a focus on the processes through which security policy and practices are intersubjectively negotiated. See, for example, Doty, R., 'Foreign Policy as Social Construction', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37:3 (1993), pp.297-320; Weldes, J., 'Constructing National Interests', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2:3 (1996), pp.275-318. For discussion of the research questions 'how possible', 'how thinkable' and 'how sold' see Holland, J., 'Coalition Foreign Policy in the "War on Terror": A Framework for Analysing Foreign Policy as Culturally Embedded Discourse', Presented at *International Studies Association Annual Conference*, San Francisco, 25-29 March (2008).
[53] Curran, J. *The Power of Speech: Australian Prime Ministers Defining the National Image* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 2004); Hage, G., *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for hope in a shrinking society* (Sydney: Pluto, 2003); Warhurst, J. (ed.), *The Howard Decade in Australian Government and Politics*, Special Issue of *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 42:2 (2007), pp.189-381; Brett, J., 'Relaxed and Comfortable: The Liberal Party's Australia', *Quarterly Essay,* 19 (2005).
[54] Hage, *Against Paranoid Nationalism.*, chapter 5.
[55] Curran, *The Power of Speech,* chapter 6.
[56] Howard, J., Address to the Institute of Public Affairs at The Australian Club, Melbourne, 20 May (2004).

White Paper on the nature of the transnational terrorism threat.[57] In broader terms, the emphasis in security policy on cultural ties to 'great and powerful friends'- and more specifically the security protection required by Australia and provided by the US- was linked to an increasing tendency to view the immediate region as a source of threat.[58] This visceral anxiety about the region was in part founded upon a particular set of (realist) assumptions about world politics, but also suggests a tendency to locate threat in ethnic and cultural difference both within and outside Australia.[59] This stood in contrast to the previous Government's attempts to define Australia as a multi-cultural state that was part of the Asian region.

Defining Australia ultimately as a 'Western nation' enabled Howard to explain the nature of threat to Australia and to justify traditionalist foreign policy as the best means to ensure Australian security.[60] Although elaborated more frequently and forcefully in the period after 2001, the tendency to view foreign and security policy in terms of values shared with 'great and powerful friends' had been a core dimension of Australian foreign policy since 1996.[61] Critics of the centrality of a narrowing 'cultural identity' to foreign policy have noted linkages to Australia's xenophobic past. For Camilleri:

> Howard's international conception in part reflects a deeper sense of White Australia's cultural and racial identity… Howard's conception of the world mirrors his image of Australia. When he speaks of Australia's 'national character', of its 'distinct and enduring values', and of 'an Australian way', he is using code language to refer to key aspects of the white Anglo-Australian heritage.[62]

The narrowing and exclusion at the heart of John Howard's conception of Australian identity was therefore significantly tied to an interpretation of identity that emphasised Australia's white, Anglo-heritage. This was given its key historical expression, for Howard, in the deaths of 8000 Australian soldiers at Galipolli in Turkey in 1915 on what became known and celebrated annually as 'ANZAC Day'. For Howard, ANZAC Day commemorated the birth of Australia as a nation, while the specific battle against overwhelming odds illustrated the principles of 'mateship' that would come to provide the foundation for Howard's view of Australianness.[63] A range of critics have argued that under Howard the overwhelming primacy given to the ANZAC myth (the foundation of the Australian nation through brave sacrifice in blood) has dangerously narrowed

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[57] Downer, A., 'Transnational Terrorism: the Threat to Australia', Speech to the National Press Club, 15 July (2004).

[58] See Burke, *Fear of Security*, pp.207-29.

[59] See Burke, A., 'Australia Paranoid: Security Politics and Identity Policy', in Burke and McDonald (eds.), *Critical Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007); and Burke, *Fear of Security*.

[60] See Wesley, M. and T. Warren, 'Wild Colonial Ploys: Currents of Thought in Australian Foreign Policy Making', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 35:1 (2000), pp.9-26; Harries, O., 'Punching Above Our Weight?' *Boyer Lectures*, ABC Radio National, 21 December (2003). Available at: http://www.abc.net.au/rn/boyerlectures/stories/2003/987633.htm.

[61] Lyon, R. and W. Tow, 'The Future of the Australian- US Security Relationship', Paper presented at *Strategic Studies Institute*, December (2003). Available at: http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/00047.pdf; Fitzpatrick, J., 'European settler colonialism and national security ideologies in Australian history', in R. Leaver and D. Cox (eds), *Middling, Meddling, Muddling: Issues in Australian foreign policy* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1997).

[62] Camilleri, J., 'A Leap into the Past- in the Name of the National Interest', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 57:3 (2003), pp.448-9.

[63] See Seal, G., *Inventing ANZAC: The Digger and National Mythology* (Brisbane: UQ Press, 2004).

Australian national identity and the scope to debate Australian history or identity.[64] Indeed Mark McKenna argues that in this context

> We are witnessing the narrowing of our national mythology to one key legend that encapsulates our values, defines the moment of our nation's birth and gives rise to a military tradition within which those values and ideals are given their most profound expression.[65]

We would argue that Howard particularly emphasised this conception of Australian identity and history in the context of the 'war on terror', employing it to justify military intervention.

Narratives of Identity and Interventionism

Domestic support for- or at least acquiescence to- Australian interventions in the 'war on terror' was enabled through the recurrent narratives of identity and history that the Australian Government drew upon. Howard in particular drew upon a series of narratives of Australian history, culture and identity specifically in the context of justifying intervention. The notion of mateship was deployed to suggest a commitment to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with core allies, especially in battle; the idea of Australia's membership in the West and shared values with the US and UK served a similar purpose while also suggesting the need for intervention as a form of 'self defence' of those values; while the ANZAC myth was particularly deployed to suggest the need for Australians to show courage and make the difficult decision to fight for the cause of good. These mutually reinforcing narratives- derived from a broader traditionalist conception of Australian identity- were central to the process through which intervention was justified.

Mateship

In a mid-2002 address on the 'war on terror' to a joint session of US congress, John Howard emphasised the importance in the Australian character of 'mateship', a concept he unsuccessfully attempted to incorporate into the preamble of the Australian constitution. For Howard, mateship in the context of the 'war on terror' meant standing shoulder-to-shoulder with friends, particularly in times of need. And 9/11 constituted a moment in which 'mates' needed to come forward to offer their support. Having fought 'side by side in every major conflict of the twentieth century' with the US, after 9/11 'Australia was immediately there to help'.[66] Howard suggested that Australia and the US were 'able to count on each other when it has mattered most',[67] while Bush obliged in turn by indicating that he was 'proud to call (Howard) my friend'.[68]

As Gleeson has noted, *emotional* solidarity in the context of 9/11 shifted to (or was conflated with) a notion of *practical* solidarity in the context of the 'war on terror'.[69] The Australian Government built upon genuine sympathy for Americans with the tragedy of 9/11 to make a case for Australian participation in military intervention, using the

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[64] For example, McKenna, M. 'Patriot Act'. *The Australian*, 6 June (2007). Available at:
http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21813244-25132,00.html; Smith, T., 'Conscripting the ANZAC myth to silence dissent', *Australian Review of Public Affairs Digest*, 11 September (2006).
[65] McKenna, 'Patriot Act'.
[66] Howard, J., Address to Joint Meeting of the US Congress, 12 June (2002).
[67] Ibid.
[68] Cited in O'Connor, B., 'Perspectives on Australian Foreign Policy, 2003', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 58:2 (2004), pp.208.
[69] Gleeson, 'Australia and the Construction of the War on Terror'.

language of 'mateship' in justifying this cooperation. In the immediate response to 9/11, Howard argued that this was 'an occasion where we should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Americans'.[70] By the time the Taliban was overthrown and the case was being made for intervention in Iraq, this representation was one unambiguously tied to a need to participate in military intervention to fight terrorism. As Howard argued, 'you can't fight something like this without standing together with the Americans'.[71] And even in the context of intervention in the South Pacific, the much-maligned suggestion that Australia could act as the US' regional deputy in the region implied a level of solidarity with the broader fight the US was leading. This was also, of course, tied to the shared values being protected or advanced.

Shared Values

As noted, Howard and the Australian Government consistently represented the 9/11 attacks as an attack on the 'shared values' of Australians and Americans, and described the 'war on terror' battle itself as one between civilisation and barbarism. Here, Howard invoked a particular Western, Anglo-centric narrative of Australian identity to make a case for participation in military intervention in the 'war on terror'. Addressing US Congress in 2002, Howard argued that:

> Our pioneer past, so similar to your own, has produced a spirit that can overcome adversity and pursue great dreams. We've pursued a society of opportunity, fairness and hope.[72]

As the case for intervention in Iraq was building, Howard also drew the United Kingdom more directly into representations of shared values:

> I'm a great believer that you should have close relations with the countries whose way of life is closest to your own. And there's not much doubt that when you look around the world it is countries like the United States and the United Kingdom... where we identify in terms of our values far more readily.[73]

Even in the case of the Solomons, Howard's suggestion that 'the rest of the world expects Australia to shoulder a lot of the burden' positioned its role as that of taking 'responsibility to manage the security threat on behalf of the West'.[74]

As noted, the definition of security and national interests in terms of values and identity was a feature of the 2003 DFAT White Paper, released in the weeks preceding intervention in Iraq. Such representations certainly reinforce the idea that Australia should cooperate closely with the US (and the UK), including in intervention, but also in the process suggests limits to levels of cooperation with those who do not share these values and even the possibility of viewing those 'outside' as threats. It is certainly possible to suggest that the continued attempt to identify Anglo, Western states as those with whom Australia identified rendered military intervention in culturally and ethnically different societies (such as those of the South Pacific or Middle East) more politically palatable. Importantly, the legitimisation of forms of racism in Australian public life since the arrival of Pauline Hanson in the mid-1990s ensured that this vision of 'self' and 'other' in the 'war on terror' found some resonance in the broader Australian population.

ANZAC

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[70] Howard, J., Press Conference, Ambassadors' Residence, Washington DC, 12 September (2001).
[71] Howard, J., Television Interview with Ray Martin, 60 Minutes, Channel 9, 16 September (2001).
[72] Howard, J., Address to Joint Meeting of the US Congress, 12 June (2002).
[73] Howard, J., Interview with Ray Hadley, Radio 2GB, 2 October (2002).
[74] Fry, 'Our Patch'.

If mateship and shared values with Anglo-Western states were central to the Howard Government's vision of Australia and its place in the world, the ANZAC myth provided the central historical reference point for the foundation of those values. While drawing together core elements of both the other narratives, particularly important here is the notion of Australia standing up to protect core values. Given the power of the ANZAC legend- even its status under Howard as a hegemonic myth of Australian identity- the definition of 'war on terror' intervention as an extension or manifestation of the ANZAC legend was a particularly powerful representational strategy.[75]

The idea of reluctant but brave participation in conflict- central to the representation of the ANZAC myth- was prominent in justifications for intervention in Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and Iraq. On the day after 9/11, Howard suggested that

> This is an occasion where everybody's got to stand up and be counted and everybody who cares about the sort of life we like to take for granted and perhaps never should in our own country.[76]

In the case of the Solomon Islands, Howard noted the need for Australia 'to do our fair share of the heavy lifting' in leading the intervening force.[77] And in the case of Iraq, he suggested that '(no) Australian wants unnecessary military conflict but… we have to take a stand'.[78] As the attempt to justify intervention in Iraq gained pace, Howard reiterated the claim central to the ANZAC myth: that the Australian nation was itself established through sacrifice in war. He suggested that:

> We are fighting now for the same values the ANZACs fought for in 1915: courage, valour, mateship, decency (and) a willingness as a nation to do the right thing, whatever the cost.[79]

While the ANZAC legend was central to justifications for intervention, Howard's commitment to this legend as the core of the Australian nation was evident a year later in addressing troops in Iraq on ANZAC Day in 2004:

> You are seeking to bring to the people of Iraq, who have suffered so much for so long, the hope of liberty and the hope of freedom, and your example, your behaviour, your values, belong to that great and long tradition that was forged on the beaches of Gallipoli in 1915.[80]

These narratives- mateship; shared values with Western states; and the ANZAC myth- were of course mutually reinforcing, based on a broader traditionalist conception of Australian identity. In justifying intervention in Afghanistan, the South Pacific and Iraq, Australia's commitment to mateship meant standing shoulder to shoulder with those who shared Australian values, as Australians had done reluctantly but bravely in the face of evil in the previous century. This particular construction of Australian identity served to justify interventionism in the 'war on terror' and helped achieve the support or at least acquiescence required from the Australian people.[81] However, although certainly dominant and underpinning the most important foreign and security policy action on

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[75] McKenna, 'Patriot Act'.

[76] Howard, J., Interview with John Laws, Radio 2UE, 12 September (2001).

[77] Cited in Fry, 'Our Patch'.

[78] Howard, J., Interview with Neil Cavuto, Fox 9 News channel, 7 March (2003).

[79] Cited in McKenna, 'Patriot Act'.

[80] Howard, J., Address to the Australian Troops, Baghdad, Iraq, 25 April (2004).

[81] See Jackson, R., *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism*, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005) for discussion of the need for popular acquiescence in democratic states within the 'coalition of the willing'.

behalf of 'Australia', such a narrative and its linkage to the present did not go unchallenged.

The War of Position

If foreign and security policy is, as we would argue, a site of competing articulations of a group's core values, threats to those values and the means of preserving or advancing them, then the Government's articulation of Australian identity regarding intervention is only part of the story. What also needs to be understood is how such a narrative came to 'win out' over alternatives. Of course the position and mandate of Prime Minister Howard and his Government is central in this regard, but so too is the capacity to marginalise and silence alternative accounts of Australian identity and of its relationship to contemporary practices (such as military intervention). A range of political parties, NGOs, journalists and academics directly contested different dimensions of the Australian Government's involvement in the 'war on terror', articulating in the process different narratives of Australian history, culture and identity.[82] But these accounts ultimately failed in the short-term to resonate sufficiently with the Australian population to precipitate major policy change or the loss of the Government's legitimacy, notwithstanding majority public opposition to intervention in Iraq at the point of invasion.[83] This failure was related to the Government's successful framing of opponents as unpatriotic or unconcerned about Australian security; to the power of a broader discourse of post-2001 fear and insecurity; and to support for the Government's position by important actors and constituencies both domestically and internationally.

The willingness of the Howard Government to narrow the scope of public debate has already been noted in the context of Howard's own views on public dialogue about the composition of Australian identity.[84] In the 'war on terror' context, the Government was willing and able to position opponents of various interventions as unpatriotic and even 'unAustralian'. In the case of the former, those opposing intervention in Iraq, for example, were at times likened to appeasers of Hitler in World War II: unwilling to 'stand up' for values and key freedoms at stake, and prepared to allow a dictator's brutal regime to remain in power.[85] The emphasis on core and shared values generally in justifying intervention also arguably created a situation in which critics were less able to demur from the Government without questioning those values themselves. This is suggested in Mark McKenna's analysis of the ways in which the ANZAC myth was employed to justify military intervention.[86] And the suggestion of the need to 'support our troops' also invoked memories of Vietnam, when public anger with Australian participation in that

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[82] See McDonald, M., 'Constructing Insecurity'; and McDonald, M. and R. Jackson, 'Selling War: The Coalition of the Willing and the 'War on Terror'' Paper presented at *International Studies Association Conference*, San Francisco, March 26-29 (2008).

[83] See Goot, M., 'Neither entirely comfortable nor wholly relaxed: Public opinion, electoral politics, and foreign policy', in J. Cotton and J. Ravenhill (eds.), *Trading on Alliance Security: Australia in World Affairs*, 2001-5 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), pp.268-75.

[84] On the ways in which the Howard Government attempted to circumscribe public debate and marginalise critics generally, see Hamilton, C. and S. Maddison, *Silencing Dissent: How the Australian Government is Controlling Public Opinion and Stifling Debate* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007).

[85] A range of analyses of debates in the United States have made similar points about the processes through which critics were marginalised or indeed rhetorically coerced into support for the government's position. See, for example, Cramer, J., 'Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed Before the Iraq War', *Security Studies*, 16:3 (2007), pp.489-524; and Krebs, R. and J. Lobasz, 'Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq', *Security Studies*, 16:3 (2007), pp.409-451.

[86] McKenna, 'Patriot Act'.

conflict in 1970s saw protesters target returning personnel. Here, outspoken opposition was positioned as disloyal to those risking their lives in theatres of war. At all of these levels, the Government's representations of the need for intervention also involved narrowing the space for debate about intervention or the values being protected or advanced.

The fear and anxiety that permeated the Government's discourse of security generally - and the 'war on terror' specifically- also mitigated against strong opposition to intervention. The Government's continued reference to imminent terrorist threats to Australia posed by fundamentalist Islamic terrorists (from failed states, rogue states, inattentive regional neighbours, and even insufficient public concern) suggested the need for a 'militarised vigilance' in the face of the dangers of terrorism. This fear was arguably furthered through public information campaigns asking Australians to play their role in monitoring each other and readying themselves for a terrorist apocalypse;[87] in constant references to the new and dangerous time and international context in which Australia found itself; and in the suggestion that Australia's best hope for long-term survival as a nation was to align itself closely to its 'great and powerful friend': the United States. Control of access to official intelligence is important in this regard, especially given arguably disproportionate representations of the threat posed by 'failing states' and the selective use of intelligence regarding Iraq's WMD programme in justifying intervention in Iraq.[88]

Finally, the position of the Government's conception of security and identity was also strengthened by the reiteration and/or support of its central claims by other key actors. Most directly, in the month after 9/11 the leader of the opposition- Kim Beazley- echoed key Governmental representations of the attacks and the nature of Australia's obligations in the 'war on terror':

> September the 11th has changed the way we nations now think about security and what we have to do to defend ourselves. We have to stand shoulder to shoulder with George Bush and Tony Blair to root out and destroy international terrorism.[89]

Here, core features of the Howard Government's justification for military intervention in the 'war on terror' (membership in the West; the need to stand 'shoulder to shoulder' with these allies; the new and threatening post-9/11 world; and the need for a robust response) were reiterated by the key political alternative to the conservative Coalition in Australia. And when the Australian Labor Party later attempted to dissociate its approach with that of the Government- in arguing for the withdrawal of all troops in Iraq in the lead-up to the 2004 Australian election- the American Ambassador to Australia joined President Bush in criticising this policy. The Howard Government seized on these comments to suggest that a change of government would jeopardise the alliance, arguing that the ALP's foreign policy reflected a 'visceral, irrational anti-Americanism'.[90]

Domestically, Howard's broader identity and security project built upon the right-wing, nationalist and xenophobic politics of independent Member of Parliament Pauline

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[87] McDonald, M., "Be Alarmed? Australia's Anti-Terrorism Kit and the Politics of Security', *Global Change, Peace and Security,* 17:2 (2005), pp.171-89.

[88] Greener-Barcham and Barcham, 'Terrorism in the South Pacific?'; Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 'Government Partly 'Selective' on Iraq Intelligence', *The 7.30 Report*, 1 March (2004). Available at: http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2004/s1056607.htm.

[89] Cited in Gleeson, 'Australia and the Construction of the War on Terror'.

[90] Downer, A., 'Question without Notice: Foreign Affairs: United States of America', *House of Representatives Hansard*, 3 August (2004).

Hanson, who had come to prominence in the Australian political scene in the mid-1990s, claiming that Australia risked being 'swamped by Asians'. Indeed the conception of security and identity so central to the Howard Government's hard-line on asylum-seekers and its conception of the region as a source of threat built in important ways on the political agenda articulated by Hanson. These voices provided crucial ballast to the Australian government's conception of security and identity, allowing the Government to strengthen its policy position and (further) marginalise critics.

Conclusion

Australia's participation in intervention in the war on terror cannot be understood without attention to the role of identity. For all of the Howard Government's initial attempts to suggest that Australian foreign policy would thenceforth operate on the basis of a hard-headed pursuit of the national interest, it has been consistently and abundantly clear that a particular conception of Australian identity has provided the lens through which the Howard Government has approached the world, and crucially a reservoir of resources which it has used to justify military intervention in the 'war on terror'.[91] Howard's conception of Australia as a white, Western country (ultimately in an alien regional environment) underpinned the commitment to the US alliance that was to take Australia from Afghanistan to Iraq and give Howard the confidence to pursue an interventionist foreign policy in the South Pacific (one based paradoxically on anxiety about the region as a source of threat). Perhaps the most telling single Government statement in understanding Australia's participation in intervention in Iraq (albeit after one avenue for justification- the presence of a WMD programme- had become unsustainable) was Foreign Minister Downer's indication in 2004 that

> It wasn't a time in our history to have a great and historic breach with the United States. If we were to walk away from the American alliance it would leave us as a country very vulnerable and very open, particularly given the environment we have with terrorism in South-East Asia, (and) the North Korean issue.[92]

The world and in particular Australia's region were dangerous; Australia needed its 'great and powerful friend' to protect it; and participation in the war in Iraq was the 'insurance' premium required for ensuring this protection.[93]

The point we would make here is that there is nothing inevitable about this interpretation of the world, the region, Australian values or the nature of the US alliance. A range of analyses have consistently suggested that the extent of the threat posed by terrorism has been overstated, while others (including key bodies within Government) have concluded that Australia's military interventions in the 'war on terror' actually makes it more likely that Australia will be targeted.[94] Even if the idea that the region constitutes a source of threat is accepted, it does not follow necessarily that the use or threat of military intervention serves to mitigate against this threat. And it is certainly not clear that the US alliance- again even if accepted as necessary for Australian security- can only be maintained through active diplomatic and military support for all US foreign and security policy initiatives.

Finally, Howard's interpretation of Australian values and invocation of them to justify intervention must be recognised as just that: an interpretation. There is no core, timeless

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[91] DFAT, *Advancing the National Interest*.
[92] Cited in Allard, T., 'Going to war secured US alliance, says Downer'.
[93] Camilleri, 'A Leap into the Past- in the Name of the National Interest'.
[94] See McDonald, 'Constructing Insecurity'.

essence of Australian identity, even while some myths (ANZAC, for example) are particularly sedimented and resonant in the national imagination. At different points in time (including under the current Labor Government) dominant narratives of Australian identity have emphasised multiculturalism and egalitarianism as key values of the Australian self, applied to reconciliation with indigenous populations, a more humane immigration and asylum policy and the expansion of the welfare state. In foreign policy terms, different Governments (again including the current Labor Government) have articulated the need to consider foreign policy interests from outside the straightjacket of the US alliance, and have suggested that Australian interests and security can best be advanced through constructive regional engagement and the pursuit of 'middle power' diplomacy in an international society of states. And of course even sedimented narratives of identity (eg the ANZAC sacrifice as the birth of the Australian nation) can be applied in different ways to contemporary events, to point to the need to avoid the bloodshed of war wherever possible or the dangers of foreign policy tied to the interests of 'great and powerful friends'.[95] John Howard has not had the 'last word' on Australian identity, but coming to terms with his conception of Australian identity is crucial to making sense of the Government's approach to Australian security and the processes through which intervention in the 'war on terror' became possible for Australia.

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[95] See McKenna, 'Patriot Act'.

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