A Timely Visit: The Role of the Great White Fleet, Naval Defence and the Press in the British-Australian Relationship

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INTRODUCTION

When the Great White Fleet visited Australia in 1908 it became the focal point of an on-going test of wills between Britain and Australia. Relations between the two countries had become increasingly strained since Britain’s decision in the mid-nineteenth century to establish a new kind of relationship with its colonies. For the Australian colonies this meant moving towards independence within the Empire framework and assuming more responsibility for their own defence. This change had serious repercussions for the Australian colonies and British-Australian relations. Politically and psychologically the Australian colonies had developed an image of themselves as the inferior daughters of the superior and protective Mother Country. By changing the nature of the British-Australian colonial relationship, Britain not only challenged this Australian colonial self-image, it also heightened existing divisions among the Australian colonists. Anglo-Australian loyalists, enamoured of things British, clung to the established colonial image and remained subservient to Imperial wishes. Australian nationalists, on the other hand, tried to establish a new relationship with Britain, one in which Australian colonial concerns would have a greater voice. These divisions were exacerbated by Britain’s failure to prescribe guide-lines in establishing the new relationship. How much independence and defence responsibility the colonies would have was not quantified. In the event, Britain sought to base the process on Imperial needs while Australian aspirations were frustrated time and again. Typical of this process was Britain’s repeated restructuring of Australia’s naval defence arrangements. In this way, the issue of naval defence came to symbolise the divisions among Australians and the problematic British-Australian relationship. In this context, the Great White Fleet’s visit represented an opportunity
for Britain and Australia to resolve not only the naval defence issue but to re-define their relationship. Australian Prime Minister Deakin hoped to use the visit to turn Britain's attention to Australian security concerns and rally Australian support for a navy of its own. Britain, conversely, wanted to bring Australia into line with Imperial defence strategy. To this end, the London press used its advantages to try to shape Australian press and public perceptions of the Great White Fleet and rally Australian loyalty to the Empire.

For the purposes of exposition this thesis is presented in two parts. Part I serves a dual purpose. The first is to show how Britain's decision to change the role of its colonies challenged Australia's colonial self-image and heightened divisions among Australians. The second is to illustrate how the naval defence issue contributed to the friction in British-Australian relations, before and after Federation. This will be done through a comparison of contemporary and later historical assessments of the period.

Contemporary voices like those of The Age and Alfred Deakin and more recent writers like Neville Meaney have tended to focus on the Australian nationalists' desire for independence. In his 1976 book, The Search for Security in the Pacific, Meaney contended that Australia since the late 1860s had been developing a new sense of nationalism. As part of this process the Australian colonies made repeated efforts to take control of their own destiny - especially in defence and foreign policy - only to be thwarted at every turn by Imperial Britain.¹

Other recent studies of the period present different perspectives. United States historian Donald Gordon, in his 1965 book, The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense, 1870-1914 represents the friction between

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¹ Neville Meaney, The Search for Security in the Pacific, Sydney, 1976, passim. Meaney's argument finds support in Merze Tate's 1961 article, 'The Australian Monroe Doctrine,' in which he posits that the declaration of this doctrine showed the strength of the young Australian nationalist movement. Merze Tate, 'The Australian Monroe Doctrine,' Political Science Quarterly, 1961, 1, xxxvi, pp. 264-84.
Britain and the Australian colonies as a conflict of perceived needs deriving from divergent world views. Australian historians bring a different focus to the dynamics of the British-Australian colonial relationship. Charles Grimshaw and Gavin Souter posit that while there was a strong Australian nationalist movement, it has to be seen as one element of Australia’s dual loyalty to both the Empire and Australia. Grimshaw in his 1958 essay, ‘Australian Nationalism and the Imperial Connection,’ asserts that a strong nationalist movement begun in the late 1880s found legislative support in the early years of the Commonwealth. But he also points out that by 1900 a majority of Australians saw Australian nationalism as compatible with Empire membership despite disputes with Britain on regional issues. Grimshaw concludes that the depth of Australian loyalty to the Empire meant that Australia would move gradually towards independence within the framework of its dual loyalties. Gavin Souter, in his 1976 book, Lion and Kangaroo, extends Grimshaw’s argument by characterising Australians as embracing dual loyalties that shifted in intensity according to events. According to this theory, Australians were neither exclusively loyalist or nationalist but shared a vacillating loyalty to both causes. This thesis finds points of agreement with each of these writers. Gordon provides a basic understanding of British-Australian colonial friction as a clash of differing world views. Meaney, among others, illustrates how these differences challenged the established British-Australian relationship and heightened divisions among Australians. While Meaney’s argument represents a somewhat skewed picture of Australia as united in a nationalist campaign to overcome British authority, it does underline the importance the idea of independence held for colonial Australians. Other historians, including Grimshaw and Souter, redress the imbalance in Meaney’s argument somewhat by observing that despite the friction between the

4 As reviewer Neil Primrose pointed out “… Australian policy was plainly never consistent, cohesive, nor comprehensive … Australians did not always appreciate the differences between Australian and British interests, often because in many cases those interests were so closely interconnected … the essential
two countries, Australians were still basically loyal to the Empire. Therefore while loyalty to Australia seemed to predominate during the struggle over the naval defence issue, loyalty to the Empire had not dissipated. It needed only a stimulus to bring it to the fore. The London press would provide this stimulus during the Great White Fleet's visit.

Part II will examine the efforts of the London press during the Great White Fleet's visit to resolve the issue of Australian naval defence and redefine the British-Australian relationship. To understand the bases underpinning these efforts three interconnected elements will be examined: the role of the newspaper in Britain and Australia during the period under consideration, the connections between the London press and British Imperialism and the relationship between the London press and the Australian press. This will show that the London press enjoyed two important advantages in its dealings with the Australian press - the power of its editorial voice and the control of the flow of information to Australia. During the Great White Fleet's visit, the London press tried to utilise these advantages to rally Australian Empire loyalty behind the British view on naval defence. At the same time it attempted to divert the Australian desire to act independently into channels more beneficial to Imperial strategy. An analysis of the press reportage of two Australian newspapers - the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* - will demonstrate the effectiveness of the London press's efforts and reveal the strength of Empire loyalty among Australians.

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PART I

In the second half of the nineteenth century Britain decided to alter the role the colonies would play in the Empire. This decision was to have far-reaching consequences for the Australian colonies and their relations with Britain. The impetus for the change was recalled by Sir George Clarke, a key figure in Imperial strategy formulation, in his 1897 book, *Imperial Defence*. Clarke observed that a new kind of relationship had become a prerequisite for sustaining the Empire because, "Colonies, regarded mainly as sources of profit to the Mother Country, could not be expected to cherish a strong Imperial sentiment". Instead, Britain had to embrace the principle enunciated by Burke, 'that every considerable part of the British dominions should be governed as a free country.' To safeguard the future of the Empire, therefore, it was necessary to bring the colonies to the earliest possible maturity - socially, politically and commercially - to qualify them for self-government and eventual independence.6

The immediate effect of Britain's decision for the Australian colonies was to challenge the established relationship and the 'image' the colonists had developed of themselves. Recently, Richard White observed in his book, *Inventing Australia*, that there no such thing as national identity, positing instead that various forces coalesce to 'invent' an 'identity' that is beneficial to its inventors. In fact, White noted, there was not one identity, but six, as a result of colonial rivalries.7 While the limited nature of this paper prevents any detailed analysis of the question

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6 George Clarke, *Imperial Defence*, London, 1897, p. 164. Clarke was a member of the Colonial Defence Committee from its inception in the mid-1880s and, under the name Navalis, a frequent correspondent with the *Times* on defence issues. Clarke also served as the Governor of Victoria from 1901 to 1903.


of national identity, it will substantiate White's point that national identity is a kaleidoscope, changing as different individuals and groups look through the prism of their own reality. However, this thesis posits that an Australian colonial image was created by decades of British colonial rule. Politically and psychologically the Australian colonists came to see themselves as the inferior colonial daughters of the superior and protective Mother Country. Politically, the Australian colonies were British possessions, not independent political units. The Imperial Parliament and Home Government held the supreme power in the Empire and the colonies did not share that power as they had no representatives and no direct influence on policy adoption. This unequal political relationship placed Britain in a position of superiority which was compounded by Australia's geographic isolation. Before technology made the world a smaller place, a glance at the map would indicate that Australia was off the beaten path. This reinforced the Australian mind-set that saw Britain as 'the world' and Australia as its colonial outpost. Indeed, it was Australia's remoteness that made it an ideal dumping ground for British convicts. This, according to Noel McLachlan in his 1989 work, Waiting for the Revolution, formed the basis of colonial Australian feelings of inferiority. Its convict origins coloured Australia's image of itself and led to what McLachlan terms, the 'Botany Bay Complex'. As transportation did not end until 1868, the 'Convict Stain' had a very real impact on Australian colonial self-image during the period from 1860 to 1908. The effects of this stigma, according to McLachlan, depended on who you were. For middle class Australians it was an incentive to achieve respectability and reinforced their Imperial loyalty. For working class Australians it was a source of resentment towards British authority. As we shall see, these pre-existing divisions among Australian colonists would be heightened by Britain's decision to change the nature of the British-Australian colonial relationship.

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Besides challenging the Australian image of dependence, Britain's decision created other problems. Britain was engineering a major change in the British-Australian relationship and doing so without establishing guide-lines. This raised several questions for the Australian colonies - how much independence would they be allowed within the Empire framework? Where would the line be drawn between British authority and Australian sovereignty? As we shall see, Britain would alter the process to meet its strategic needs, in many cases disregarding Australian desires. This would lead to decades of friction in British-Australian relations before and after Federation.

A key element in the new relationship was the establishment of a new arrangement for defence. In 1862 the Mills Commission recommended that British troops be withdrawn from the colonies and that the colonies begin to assist in their own external as well as internal defence. This was followed by the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865 which stated, in part, that the colonies, "... were to be able to provide, maintain, and use their own vessels of war ... and to place these vessels at Her Majesty's disposal ..." when the need arose. These were the defence corollaries of the British scheme to move the Australian colonies towards independence. This shift in responsibility, however, broached the question, how much independence would the Australian colonies be granted in defence matters?

As events unfolded in the latter half of the nineteenth century, challenges to the new relationship arose. Colonial Australia's reaction to these challenges demonstrated the divisions among Australians. While some in the colonies still called on Britain to ensure their security, others took matters into their own hands. The first test the new relationship faced was Fiji. By the late 1860s appeals from Fiji for protection or incorporation within the British Empire led the colony of Victoria to

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10 Clarke, op. cit., p. 173.
consider imposing government control there.\textsuperscript{12} But British statesmen of both parties saw no advantage in the possession of such remote and scattered dependencies.\textsuperscript{13} While this belief conformed to Britain's view of Imperialism, it created the perception among colonial Australians that Britain was indifferent to their security\textsuperscript{14}. Colonial insecurities were exacerbated in the 1880s when the European powers showed renewed interest in Pacific colonisation. France, which had earlier taken Tahiti and New Caledonia, was joined by Germany as rivals to Britain in the South Pacific. Rumours indicated French interest in the New Hebrides while Germany allegedly had its eye on New Guinea. Queensland reacted in 1880 by annexing the Torres Strait islands.\textsuperscript{15} The following year the Australian Intercolonial Council appealed for an increase in British naval power in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{16} In 1883, with no change in British policy forthcoming, Queensland declared a protectorate over New Guinea. This action was disallowed by the British Colonial Office, however.\textsuperscript{17} As a result an Australian Convention was held late in 1883 and the delegates declared the Australian Monroe Doctrine, asking that New Guinea be annexed by Britain and that no foreign powers be allowed to acquire any further territory in those waters.\textsuperscript{18} The Convention also established the Federal Council of Australasia designed to speak on matters of concern in the South Pacific.\textsuperscript{19} This central representative body was a significant step in

\textsuperscript{12} Tate, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 268.
\textsuperscript{14} British and Australian views of Imperialism differed. For the Australian colonies British Imperialism was the process that expanded British hegemony - politically and economically - and offered security for the members of the Empire. Of course, the more territory Britain controlled in proximity to the Australian continent, the more secure the Australian colonies would feel. Indeed, that the waters around Australia were an 'an inviolable British preserve' had become an article of faith amongst Australians of all classes. Richard Jebb, \textit{Studies in Colonial Nationalism}, London, 1905, pp. 66-7. The British view of Imperialism was different, however. In \textit{Victorian Imperialism}, C. C. Eldridge argued that British Imperialism focused on trade, not territory. He observed that while British economic expansion overseas had been continuous in the nineteenth century, commercial penetration did not always require political domination. Rather the costly extension of formal political control was always a last resort. These perceptions or misperceptions of British Imperialism, would give rise to much ill-will within the Australian colonies as the move to Federation articulated new ideas of sovereignty.
\textsuperscript{15} C. C. Eldridge, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{16} Jebb, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{17} Jebb, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., Also Tate, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 276.
the development of Australian 'foreign relations' as the colonies struggled to adapt to their new role in the Empire. The Australian colonies still were not acting in harmony, however, as both New South Wales and South Australia refused to join the Federal Council.  

Australian colonial disharmony continued when British leaders rejected the Australian Monroe Doctrine out of hand and New Guinea was divided between Britain and Germany. Many Australian colonists, like Victorian Premier James Service, saw this as evidence of British indifference to Australian security concerns. Service warned that, "A strong feeling of dissatisfaction will spread throughout the colonies if England, while holding Australia back from acting in her own interests, at the same time neglected to take a step which Australia deems essential to her future security and welfare". When New South Wales and South Australia declined to join the protest against the German annexation of north-east New Guinea it underlined the importance of Australian colonial unity as a step toward Imperial unity. It also illustrated the point that divisions among the Australian colonists made it easier for Britain to control the British-Australian colonial relationship.

Britain, meanwhile, was not focusing on Australian concerns but on a new defence strategy for the Empire - federated Imperial defence. By the early 1880s Britain had come to believe that the colonies had grown populous and wealthy due to past British efforts and with the world made smaller by new technology - steam ships, telegraph, cable - the colonies could become allies in an integrated Empire defence. Their Australian daughters were growing up and had to accept more responsibility, but responsibility as prescribed by the Mother Country. This

21 McLachlan, op. cit., p. 129.
21 Roger Thompson, 'James Service : Father of Australian Foreign Policy?', Historical Studies, 1974, 16, p. 268.
23 Tate, op. cit., p. 273. Service was Victorian Prime Minister in 1880 and again from 1883 to 1886.
24 Clarke, op. cit., pp. 35-6.
view was bolstered by the British Imperial Commission's report of 1882. Assessing Australian naval defence the Commission concluded that the time had arrived when the Colonies could reasonably be expected to take upon themselves some share of defence through monetary contributions.26

This new strategy not only changed the nature of Britain's defence of the Australian colonies, it challenged the basis of the original British-Australian relationship and heightened divisions among Australians. 27 The former image of a mother protecting her children was being replaced by a financial arrangement - a nineteenth century version of economic rationalism. In addition, it altered the rules again for the Australian colonies already struggling to adapt to the changes set in train in the 1860s. This clash of local and British interests made Australian colonials aware that the age of self-centred, isolated colonies was coming to an end. Strength through union was needed and Australian nationalists and Anglo-Australian loyalists became rivals in shaping the future of the continent. According to historian C. S. Blackton, Anglo-Australian loyalists believed that Australians were essentially Britons and welcomed the guarantees promised by Imperial Federation. Australian nationalists, on the whole, believed that Australians were no longer Britons and that an Australian nation had to be created.28 The nationalist movement, however, was fragmented. There were militant nationalists who emerged in reaction to European imperialism in the Pacific and the apathetic response of the British. This group worried that Australia's weakness in the Pacific and closer ties with the Empire would jeopardise colonial freedoms and strengthen the loyalist position in the colonies.29 A second nationalist group, best typified by the Australian Natives Association30,

26 Macandie, op. cit., p. 20.
27 Tilby, op. cit., p. 213.
29 Grimshaw, op. cit., p. 166.
30 The Australian Natives Association began in Melbourne in 1871 as a Friendly Society for native-born Victorians, providing sickness and funeral benefits for the widows and orphans of deceased
regarded separation from Britain as an open question. To them, Australian autonomy within the British Empire meant that Anglo-Australians had to give way to 'Australianism' and that Australian imperial interests should be regarded as British imperial interests. From these two a smaller group emerged that typified the division among Australians. This group, which included Alfred Deakin, James Service and Samuel Griffith, supported some kind of imperial federation in order to win a voice in the making of Empire foreign policy.\(^{31}\) The sentiments of this small group of colonists coincided with the British concept of federated defence and led to the misconception among many Australians that colonial and Imperial aims were the same.

The first Colonial Conference, held in London in 1887, set significant precedents in Australian colonial naval defence. Britain agreed to provide ships for a colonially-subsidised Auxiliary Squadron which would be kept on the Australia Station unless the colonial governments consented to its removal. The significance of the Agreement for Britain was noted by Sir George Clarke, "By this Agreement, the vitally important principle of an obligation on the part of the Colonies depending on commerce to contribute to the maintenance of Her Majesty's Navy obtained, for the first time, practical recognition ..."\(^{32}\) For the Australian colonies, on the other hand, it established the precedent of an Australian naval force subsidised and controlled by the colonies. However, as the English emigrant Francis Adams noted in his 1893 book, *The Australians, A Social Sketch*, this also created a system based on taxation without representation. Adams predicted that, "The Colonies will be certain before long to want to have something to say as to management and placing of these ships ..."\(^{33}\) This warning highlighted an important cause of the
friction in British-Australian colonial relations. As the colonies embraced the idea of independence, they would also embrace the principles associated with independent nations. Britain and the Australian colonies would have to confront the question, where is the line to be drawn between Imperial authority and colonial independence?

At the same time, however, British actions in the Pacific continued to fuel colonial insecurity and undermine their confidence in the British government. After French troops landed in the New Hebrides in 1886 Australian colonists pleaded with Britain to annex the islands. Britain not only refused but scolded the colonists for worrying about such a distant set of islands. The matter was resolved in 1887 by the establishment of a joint British-French naval commission and the removal of French troops. Then in 1889 the most significant change in British policy came when the Naval Defence Act converted the Royal Navy to a doctrine of naval concentration and centralisation. When the Australian colonies tried to veto the reduction in Britain's naval presence in Australian waters, Britain merely expressed its regret.

In the 1890s British policy makers were faced with new challenges that prevented major collaborative efforts on imperial defence planning. In 1894 two events challenged Britain's Pacific defence strategy. The first was the Franco-Russian Alliance which united its two most formidable adversaries. In the Pacific region their combined naval forces now outmatched Britain's newly declared two-power standard. The second event to affect the balance of power in the Pacific was the Sino-Japanese War. Though ostensibly fought over control of Korea, Japan's victory made it a major power in the Pacific region. As such, Japan became a

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34 One of the major concerns of colonial Australians was that France would establish a penal colony in the New Hebrides. Meaney, op. cit., pp. 20-1.
35 N. Meaney, op. cit., pp. 21, 27. The naval concentration strategy required that the bulk of the British fleet be concentrated in home waters.
36 Gordon, op. cit., p. 111.
37 This alliance was in reality directed at the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, not Britain. William Langer, op. cit., p. 786.
38 Beginning in 1889, Britain's goal was to establish a navy numerically equal to the navies of any other two powers.
potential British ally to balance France and Russia in the region. The *Times* began to advocate a friendly policy towards Japan by observing that, "... Great Britain and Japan have no interests which are obviously in conflict".³⁹ Britain and Japan, in fact, had already begun the process by signing a commercial treaty in 1894.⁴⁰

The effect of these events on the Australian colonies was summed up by the English historian A. Wyatt Tilby in his 1912 work, *Australasia 1688-1911*:

The withdrawal of the British fleet from the Pacific and the emergence of Japan as a new naval and military power ... entirely altered the balance of international relations in the Pacific. Both Australia and New Zealand ... saw the menace to their independence; and both were compelled henceforth to rely partly on their own resources, as well as on those of the British Empire.⁴¹

As a consequence, Australian colonial attention focused on Federation and defence. A series of conventions was held throughout the decade to hammer out a constitution that would bring about Federation while Inter-Colonial Military Conferences worked on 'Australian' defence concerns.⁴²

In 1889 General Bevan Edwards' report on the Australian colonial military revolutionised colonial thinking. The general's report, which characterised Australian military defences in case of invasion as utterly inadequate, almost started a colonial panic.⁴³ As a result military conferences in 1894 and 1896 developed a scheme for Australian Federal defence. The official troops from each colony that remained after providing for local defence would be converted into a federal defence force for Australia.⁴⁴ In addition, a larger Australian defence sphere - including New Zealand, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, New Guinea and

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⁴¹ Tilby, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
⁴³ Tilby, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

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portions of Borneo and Java - was suggested. These changes in defence reflected colonial Australia’s heightened awareness of its vulnerable position in the Pacific world. It also demonstrated that the Australian colonies were willing to act independently of Britain to ensure their security.

In Britain, the Colonial Defence Committee was not happy with the military emphasis of Edwards’ report. The CDC had been created in the mid-1880s as a standing committee of the Colonial Office to deal with matters related to colonial defence arrangements. They felt the Australian colonies had little to fear from invasion and that any menace to its trade routes could be handled by the British fleet. This illustrated once again the muddled and contradictory nature of Imperial decision-making vis-à-vis its Australian colonies. British officials, like Edwards, sent to give advice to the colonies on defence pointed out the need to defend against invasion, while the officials in London deprecated any such worries.

At the 1897 Colonial Conference Britain tried to bring Australia around to the idea of Imperial defence and to re-establish British control of Australian naval defence. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, warned that Australian interests, which already had threatened to come into conflict with several European powers, could lead to difficulties with Japan or China as well. Because of these dangers, Chamberlain asserted, it was best for the Australian colonies to participate in the Imperial defence system. Therefore, the Australian colonies were asked to give up their veto power on removing ships from Australian waters and to increase their naval subsidies. The colonies conceded that ships could move to the South West Pacific without consent, saying this

46 ibid., pp. 98, 99, 102, 109. The CDC frequently tried to prod colonial governments into action. It also collected and collated data on colonial defences and military resources and got all governments to prepare defence schemes. In the case of Australia it promoted the benefits of the of Australian defences and the colonies themselves. Among the members was Sir George Clarke.
47 Macandie, op. cit., p. 55.
was ‘the outer limit of local defence’. All the Australian delegates, however, insisted that the subsidy was not to be regarded as a contribution to imperial defence but as a means of attaining local security for Australian interests. Instead of agreeing to an increase, the colonies introduced Captain Creswell’s proposal, which would replace the monetary contribution with a Royal Naval Reserve to train sailors for service in Australasian waters. Creswell, who had retired from the Royal Navy and become a lieutenant-commander in the South Australian Defence Force, warned of the dangers that faced Australia:

the rise of Japan, as a naval power and her well-known aspirations ... may have in the future an effect which will be undesirable to Australasia; the New Hebrides question of the next generation may be one much more threatening to our well-being, and one which an Australasia unable to take upon herself an honourable share in the burden of resisting would be unable to evade.49

In reaction, the Admiralty proposed to leave the agreement in its existing form.50

In the aftermath of the conference the subsidy/Naval Reserve issue became the focus of the naval defence debate among Australians. Federalist orators like Commander Robert Collins, Secretary to the Defence District of Victoria, created the impression that the existing naval agreement was undignified and repressed Australia’s national development.51 Commander Collins warned that Australia, “... will not be content to leave their naval protection wholly to other hands than their own. They will require a further interest and share in it than is represented by an annual contribution”.52 By 1899 the proposal for a Naval Reserve had brought Australian dissatisfaction to the fore and several colonies appointed a committee of naval officers to devise an

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48 Meaney, op. cit., p. 27.
49 Macandie, op. cit., pp. 58, 59.
51 Jebb, op. cit., p. 152.
52 Macandie, op. cit., p. 62.
alternative plan. The result was a proposal calling for a diversion of the naval subsidy to the training and maintenance of an Australian naval force controlled and paid for by the Federal Government. During war time this force would act partly as a reserve for the British fleet and partly to man five cruisers lent by Imperial authorities. The five cruisers would provide training in peace time and would remain in Australian waters to protect coastal and inter-colonial trade in time of war. This plan would prove less degrading to Australia as its forces would be under Australian Government control.\textsuperscript{53} The disagreement over control of naval defences illustrated the problem Britain had created by moving the Australian colonies towards independence. Independence could not be doled out in measured increments without creating the desire for more, especially where matters of security were concerned.

In Britain, meanwhile, the Australian plan was denounced. The \textit{Times} called it, "...inadequate, inconsequent, and altogether inadmissible ..." The \textit{Times} informed Australians that they could not have a naval defence separate from that of the Empire as a whole. The naval defence of Australia was not the business of Australia but of the British Navy and must therefore be under the 'absolute control' of the British Admiralty. The \textit{Times} declared that the Admiralty had conceded the utmost to Australian political opinion when it disregarded sound naval strategy to restrict the operations of the subsidised squadron to Australian waters. The Admiralty could go no further in that direction and recommended instead that colonial contributions towards imperial defence be applied by the Admiralty without restrictions of any kind. The gist of the matter, according to the \textit{Times}, was that "... naval defence, such as Australia needs, is not to be had upon these (Australian) terms".\textsuperscript{54} This view was endorsed by the Secretary of the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee which also urged the colonies to "... pay their money towards the maintenance of the Royal Navy, and allow their local navies to come to

\textsuperscript{53} Jebb, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 152, 153.

an end". In the Committee’s view, Australian desire to take part in nautical life could be satisfied by the opportunities offered by the Royal Navy in Australian waters.55

This reaction showed how out of touch Britain was with Australian sentiment. The notion that service in the Royal Navy would satisfy the Australian desire to participate in Australian defence revealed the Imperial government to be utterly lacking in sympathy with local requirements or national instincts.56 Britain’s determination to establish a federated imperial defence also ignored British General E. H. T. Hutton’s warning that such a system would not be supported by a majority of Australian colonists if it was directed from British interests only. Hutton, appointed commander of the NSW Defence Force in 1893, declared that there was a depth of affection and loyalty for England but entwined with that was a feeling of independence, “... which resents an injury and brooks no interference ...” And, overlaying all, was Australian colonial self-interest. Hutton observed that it was “... in the best interests of the Empire to base our schemes upon these (Australian sentiments) and upon the force of public opinion, which has nowhere in the world so quick and intelligent exponents as in the Australian press”.57 This prescient remark foreshadowed the important role the press would play during the Great White Fleet’s visit in 1908.

In summary, by the end of the nineteenth century the British and Australian views of the Empire and its defence were at odds. The British Imperial view of defence had come to include several precepts. Its goal was to protect and defend the Empire as a whole but to do this, naval strategy had to be offensive, not defensive, in nature. To achieve this there had to be unanimity in the Empire and one navy under Admiralty

55 Imperial Federation Committee 1894-1902. Reports published in London, 1894-1902, inside cover of 1894 issue. The Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee was formed in the early 1890s to secure the permanent unity of the Empire through Federation. The first aim of the Committee was to make the people of the United Kingdom aware of the precarious state of defence and encourage HMG to induce the colonies to combine their defence efforts. Jebb, op. cit., p. 155.
56 Jebb, op. cit., p. 154.
57 Hutton, op. cit., pp. 43, 44.
control. Every colony should participate by maintaining the Royal Navy through subsidies and utilising local forces to defend the coaling ports and harbours. Most Australians, on the other hand, had come to accept the inevitability of independence and that naval defence was a local matter. This dual realisation and the diminished presence of the Royal Navy in Australian waters made the threat of European and Asian expansion in the Pacific seem even more perilous to Australians. It also raised several questions for colonial Australians. How could the Australian colonies be independent without controlling their own defences or having a voice in defence policy formulation? Where was the line to be drawn between independent colonial action and Imperial authority?

The establishment of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901 did not resolve the divisions among Australians. Instead Australians embraced one or more of the following beliefs - loyalty to the Empire, the need for independent action, especially in defence matters, and the dream of Anglo-Saxon unity. The events of the first decade of the twentieth century moulded these desires into an Australian nationalism that affected, and was affected by, the problematic Australian-British relationship. The conflict over the issue of Australian naval defence continued to typify this process.

In assessing the role Australian nationalism played in this period, Charles Grimshaw disputes Meaney’s assertion that Australians were united in their efforts to wrest control of Australian defence from Britain. Grimshaw posits instead that by Federation a majority of Australians had come to see Australian nationalism as compatible with continued Empire membership but that Australia had its own regional interests which did not always square with those of Britain. This meant that while Australia

58 Clarke, op. cit., pp. 135-6, 210, 212-3. Also Hutton, op. cit., p. 38.
59 Cole, op. cit., pp. 169, 170, 177-8, 179. As Federation approached Australian nationalism began to transform into a white or Anglo-Saxon hybrid. According to Cole, this was because, “Among Australians ... pride of race counted for more than love of country”. The Anglo-Saxon creed reflected both the interests of Australia and its ethnic consciousness. This belief could be a rallying point for Australian unity bringing together Australian nationalists and Anglo-Australian loyalists to create ‘independent Australian Britons’.
moved gradually towards national independence, it did so within the framework prescribed by its dual loyalties.\footnote{Grimshaw, op. cit., p. 161, 162. Jebb observed that, "... if Australian nationalism inclines at present to imperial co-operation, the explanation appears to lie mainly in the sense of solid national advantages accruing from the imperial connection, especially in view of potential foreign complications". According to Jebb, the Australian federalist was inclined to exaggerate the force of spontaneous national consciousness. "His attitude ... indicates the pathetic futility of that conservative English imperialism which takes refuge from proposed innovations in the thought that racial sentiment, or artificial 'loyalty,' is an effective and enduring counterpoise to the native patriotism which ... aims at complete national independence". Jebb, op. cit., p. 84.}

Australia's dual loyalties were illustrated by its participation in the Boer War and in the framing of its new constitution. Widespread Australian support for Britain against the Boers showed that Australia was still loyal to the Empire and that an Empire war was still an Australian war.\footnote{Gavin Souter, Lion and Kangaroo, Sydney, 1976, p. 22.} But the solidarity evinced by the outpouring of Australian support for Britain masked the divisions among Australians.\footnote{Jebb, op. cit., pp. 134, 136. Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, III, 2963-4, 2979. Australia also rejected Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs Joseph Chamberlain's offer of involvement in the peace settlement. Meaney, op. cit., p. 37.} Some Australians had, in fact, been unhappy with the conduct of the war or that Australia had even been involved. Loss of Australian control over Australian troops, their use as firing squads and the idea of a professional military caste developing instead of a citizen army all played a part in Australian discontent.\footnote{Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates III, pp. 2963-4, 2979.} In the new Australian constitution, meanwhile, Britain conceded control of external affairs to Australia but also asserted that Australia was "... a subordinate and not independent sovereign community or state". The British government retained the sole right to determine Empire foreign policy.\footnote{Jebb, op. cit., pp. 162, 176.} The Australian constitution, in essence, affirmed Britain's superiority and the old mother-daughter image of the British-Australian relationship while many Australians still struggled to establish a new relationship.

At the same time international events affected the British-Australian relationship and tapped into the Australian desire for Anglo-Saxon union. In the early years of the twentieth century British
supremacy was challenged by the Russo-French alliance, German naval expansion and the economic rivalry of the United States and Germany.\textsuperscript{65} In January of 1902 Britain reacted to these pressures by signing a treaty of alliance with Japan. This pact sought to resolve two British concerns: the threat from the Russo-French alliance of 1894 that outmatched its two-power standard in the Pacific and Britain's reduced Pacific presence as a result of its naval concentration strategy.\textsuperscript{66} The Anglo-Japanese alliance also allowed Britain to focus on the European balance of power and the growing German challenge. For Australians the alliance raised concerns about the threat from the 'Yellow Peril',\textsuperscript{67} especially among the younger generation of Australian nationalists who were worried about Asian incursion into the sparsely populated regions of tropical Australia.\textsuperscript{68} In 1901, these fears led to the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act - the 'White Australia' policy - to prevent coloured immigration into Australia. The NSW politician Bernhard Wise noted in his 1909 book, \textit{The Commonwealth of Australia}, that the Australian determination to bar coloured immigration was a policy of high patriotism calculated to conserve the Empire's strength. It was supported with passionate conviction by the majority of native-born white Australians who saw it as their duty to civilisation to preserve their land for the white race.\textsuperscript{69}

From a different perspective, Richard Jebb noted that many Australians were predisposed to imperialism so long as it connoted the co-operation of white nations for the defence rather than the exploitation of Australia by

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{66} George Monger, \textit{The End of Isolation}, London, 1963, p. 62. The alliance was to last five years and became operative when, "... either party was involved in war, in defence of its interests in China or Korea, with two other Powers; neither could, without consultation, enter separate arrangements affecting its partner's interests; and the naval provision" remained, as the British had wished, a mere statement of intention". According to the naval provision, each partner was to maintain in the Far East naval forces superior to those of any other power. Monger, pp. 57, 62.
\textsuperscript{67} Australian fears of Asian immigration or invasion dated back to the Chinese immigration experience during the Australian gold rush of the 1850s. As its power increased, Japan came to symbolise the threat from the 'Yellow Peril' for many Australians. David Johnson, 'History of the White Australia Policy,' in K. Rivett (ed.), \textit{Immigration: Control or Colour Bar? The Background to 'White Australia' and a Proposal for Change}, Melbourne, 1960, pp. 12-3, 15-6.
\textsuperscript{68} Jebb, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{69} Wise, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 274. The Sydney \textit{Bulletin} journalist, Frank Fox, noted in his 1910 work \textit{Australia} that "With a better understanding in Great Britain of the danger in which Australia once stood of being actually swamped by Asiatic immigrants and its identity as a white race obliterated, there is going to be more sympathy with the 'White Australia' ideal. It has ... this advantage ... it keeps one continent free from any race problem for the unlettered growth to maturity of a new Anglo-Saxon race". Fox, \textit{Australia}, London, 1910, p. 47.
the coloured races. These sentiments were strong among Australians even though they contradicted Britain's imperialist policy and alliance with Japan.\textsuperscript{70} The 'White Australia' policy was the Commonwealth’s first expression of the new Australian 'independence.' Its dual significance was that it opposed a key element of British foreign policy - the Anglo-Japanese alliance - and accentuated the element of Australian nationalism that favoured Anglo-Saxon unity.

After Federation, the Commonwealth’s first Attorney General, Alfred Deakin, became a leading voice for Australian-controlled naval defence. Writing as the anonymous 'Australian Correspondent' for the London Morning Post, he spearheaded the campaign to gain British understanding of the Australian point of view.\textsuperscript{71} Prior to the 1902 Colonial Conference, Deakin described the Hutton memorandum on Australian defence issues for his English readers. He noted that Sir Edward Hutton, the first Australian Commandant, stressed the fact that in Australia as much as, if not more than, in the Mother Country, the navy was the first line of defence. In this context, Deakin presented two alternatives for Australian defence: increase the Australian subsidy and remove the limitation on the free movement of the vessels, or supply men and money to gradually build up an Australian naval contingent that could, in time, become an Australian Navy. Deakin opined that,

... there is a strong body of local opinion in favour of the introduction of an Australian element into the Imperial navy, or forming a branch of it. The forces of judgement make for the first, and of sentiment for the second scheme. With us sentiment is likely to prevail.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{70} Jebb, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 85. Deakin, writing as the Australian Correspondent for the London Morning Post, observed that the Bill would pass both Houses with unanimous support and was an open challenge to the British Government to exercise its veto power. "The situation is fraught with great possibilities of friction for ... this is the one question on which all classes and colonies are most united". Deakin, \textit{Federated Australia}, 1905, p. 77.


\textsuperscript{72} Deakin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 100-1.
While this assessment reflected the nationalist-loyalist division among Australians it also warned Britain of the depth of Australian sentiment for its own naval force.

Australia and Britain brought different aspirations to the Colonial Conference of 1902. When the conference convened Britain had high hopes of harnessing the loyalty shown by Australians in the Boer War to bring about Imperial Federation. The Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, saw three areas in which to achieve imperial unity - political relations, commercial union and defence. Chamberlain felt a political federation of the Empire was possible as the Boer War had, "... brought home to all of us the essential unity of sentiment which unites us".73 Chamberlain began the debate by comparing defence expenditures: U. K. - 29s. 3d per capita versus Australia - 4s. per capita. He observed that while this had been excusable in the early days of colonial development, it was now, "... inconsistent with their dignity as nations".74 The Admiralty followed up by reiterating its belief that naval defence of the Empire was in no way a merely local issue and that its offensive strategy required a single navy under its control. To bolster this view the Admiralty presented a cost comparison for defending Australian trade routes: Britain - 15s 1d per capita versus 10 3/4d per capita for Australia. Lord Selbourne, First Lord of the Admiralty, criticised the existing Australian Agreement and recommended three proposals to replace the subsidy scheme: that one or two cruisers be manned exclusively by Australasians under the command of imperial officers, the establishment of a colonial branch of the Royal Naval Reserve and an Australian squadron not confined to certain areas of operation.75

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73 Jebb, op. cit., p. 137. The issue of protective tariffs pitted Australian desires for a preferential trade arrangement between the colonies and Britain and Britain's traditional Free Trade policy. While a crucial bone of contention between the two, a detailed description is not in the purview of this study. Suffice it to say that the Australian choice of Protectionism - tariffs to protect its nascent industries - assured that Australia would grow away from Britain economically. Grimshaw, op. CID, p. 169.
74 Ibid., p. 139.
75 Ibid., pp. 142, 143. The military aspect of the defence issue was addressed by New Zealand Premier Seddon who proposed the formation of an Imperial Reserve Force in each Dominion for service outside the Dominion. The Secretary of State for War Brodrick urged support for this request because Britain might need assistance in future wars and it should be established "... on the ground of reciprocity ..." not as "... a donative on the part of colonies out of loyalty". This proposal ranged Australian nationalists.
The head of the Australian delegation, Prime Minister Edmund Barton, under pressure from London business and financial circles about Australian loans, as well as official imperialists, abandoned the nationalist point of view and agreed to Britain’s plan for naval defence. When Barton introduced the Naval Bill to the Commonwealth Parliament he asserted that the agreement was a bargain for Australia when compared to the cost for Britain to defend Australia and its trade routes. He urged Australians to “... look at questions of Empire as citizens of the Empire rather than as citizens of Australia”. He asked, “If an Englishman in England pays from 15s to 17s towards the maintenance of the navy, why should an Englishman in Australia object to pay 1s?” Barton observed that an Australian navy was too costly at present, especially when compared with the benefits accruing from defence based on imperial cooperation. Although he endorsed Admiralty arguments on extending the zones of operations, the Prime Minister emphasised that the training of Australian seamen would provide the basis for the future Australian navy.  

Barton’s rationalisations notwithstanding, Australia had effectively ceded control of its naval defences to Britain and demonstrated the depth of Australian loyalty to the Empire.

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against loyalists. Jebb observed that, “To establish a special force ... practically under the absolute control of the Imperial Government, was objectionable in principle as derogating from the powers of self-government ...” Australians were willing to raise the standard of training and organise a field force but wanted it left to Australia how and to what extent the force would render assistance. Jebb, op. cit., pp. 146, 148.

76 ibid., pp. 155, 156, 157-61, 167. Barton endorsed this sentiment by adding the following clause to the Bill: “Nothing in this Act ... should be deemed to affect the purely Australian naval defence forces ... maintained in the Commonwealth for harbour and coastal defences. Such Australian forces ... as may be approved by Parliament shall be maintained by the Commonwealth and be solely under its control”. A majority of those who supported the new Agreement agreed with Barton that an Australian navy was inevitable. The leader of the Opposition, George Reid, characterised the new agreement as changing from the former partnership in Australian defence to a partnership in imperial defence. However, he agreed it was too expensive to start an Australian navy at present, and therefore supported the Bill though he repudiated “... the attempt that is obviously being made to change the position and relationship of the Commonwealth and the imperial Government in matters of imperial policy”. Jebb, op. cit., pp. 163-165. Commenting on the economic aspect of the British-Australian relationship Edward Pulsford, Senator from NSW, asserted that because of borrowing from Britain every year the Australasian colonies were repaying “... from 15 to 18 millions sterling for interest. The United Kingdom collects money for the interest on its own debt, and then distributes the whole amount within its borders. Australasia collects money for her interest and sends it right away ... Roughly ... (it) may be reckoned as £4 per head ...” Because of these interest payments, “... Australians ... cannot do what they would be proud to do in the matter of defence”. Edward Pulsford, Commerce and the Empire., London, 1903, p. 87.
Ironically for Britain the passage of the Naval Agreement in 1903 rallied the forces of Australian nationalism around the issue of naval defence. *The Age* declared that,

The people of Australia undoubtedly entertain the utmost distrust of the new agreement by which even the Auxiliary Squadron, maintained by Federal funds, may be withdrawn in time of danger in order to be used in the larger sovereign strategy of the high seas ... But a more fundamental objection to the agreement is that it seeks to impose upon the people of Australia taxation without representation.

*The Age* suggested that while the Royal Navy was the first line of defence, Australian resources should be directed to local naval forces. These sentiments echoed Francis Adams' warning in 1893 that the argument on defence would eventually focus on the principle of 'taxation without representation'. Shortly after passage of the Naval Defence Act Barton resigned and the next election saw a surge in nationalist sentiment. There was a large swing to the Labor Party which supported an Australian navy as part of its program. Alfred Deakin replaced Barton and began the first of his three stints as Commonwealth Prime Minister. In and out of office, Deakin continued to speak out in support of an Australian-controlled naval defence force. Deakin represented the views of many Australians in a *Morning Post* article written in May 1903:

There are many Parliamentarians among us who will oppose all contributions to the British Exchequer that are not accompanied by our direct representation at home ... There are others ... who contend that the best contribution that Australia can make would be in the form of ships, locally controlled and manned, capable of providing for our coastal protection during any necessary absence of the

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77 *The Age*, 12 Nov. 1902, p. 4. Hereafter, *The Age* will be abbreviated as *Age* in the footnotes.
78 Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-4; see also Deakin, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Jebb observed that, "... on the whole the Labour members figure as the most ardent adherents of the nationalist idea connoting national defence undertaken by Australian men, paid for out of Australian taxes, and controlled entirely by the Commonwealth Government". Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-4.
79 Deakin's term as Prime Minister ran from September 1903 to April 1904, July 1905 to November 1908 and June 1909 to April 1910. Deakin was also acting Prime Minister while Barton represented Australia at the 1902 Colonial Conference. La Nauze, *op. cit.*, pp. 649-50.
80 From April 1904 to July 1905 the Prime Ministership was held by Labor's John Watson and Free Trader George Reid. Though this was a period of considerable political activity, the various factions vying for power, "... were manoeuvring for the privilege of helping to put into effect some part of Deakin's programme". La Nauze, *op. cit.*, pp. 253, 368, 649-50.
Imperial squadron usually stationed in these seas. Not a few maintain that what the Mother Country needs everywhere, and especially in this remote quarter of the world, is a body of trained seamen fit to be put on board her modern battleships and capable of assisting ... them at the shortest notice.

Deakin concluded that any of these options would have been better than just an unspecified subsidy payment that disappeared into Imperial defence coffers. 81 This was a clear signal that Australia would continue to challenge Britain's position on Australian naval defence.

Instead of accommodating Australian sentiment, Britain tried to bring the colonies around to its way of thinking on naval defence by sending a special envoy to promote Colonial Office policies. Mr. H. F. Wyatt, who began his colonial tour in September of 1902, outlined its results in a letter to the Times on 6 October 1904. Wyatt declared that in Australia he had met with "... greater difficulties than anywhere else and undoubtedly a strong feeling there exists in favour of a local navy for the exclusive protection of Australian waters". He concluded that an organised effort to explain the fallacies involved in this demand was required. 82 This aptly described the role the press could play as an important disseminator of government views, a role the London press would assume during the Great White Fleet's visit to Australia in 1908.

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82 See jobb, the change in principle of an Australian Auxiliary Squadron was dictated by other than strategic considerations. "... the present proposal, abolishing the squadron altogether, seemed to be merely a further step in a deliberate policy of preventing Australia from obtaining an independent and responsible part in her own naval defence. It was the policy of perpetuating the colonial status, of checking the expansion of colonial autonomy into national responsibility; substituting for the ideal of national equalisation the anti-national notion of a centralised imperial federation". Each imperial issue that arose revealed, "... the impetus of centrifugal national tendencies, counteracting the efforts of British statesmen to promote federal union with the self-governing colonies. The popular habit of alluding to 'the British nation,' in a sense inclusive of colonial peoples, already is an anachronism ... the fundamental principle of any real advance towards closer union must be the frank recognition of independent national instincts ... But that recognition involves the rejection of the imperialist conception which hitherto has been current in the mother country ... In general ... the union ... must resemble an alliance of independent nations rather than a federation of scattered States ... The principle of alliance would leave intact the sovereign right of each ally to act upon its own responsibility in foreign affairs in the last resort ... in organising for defence, the principle of alliance secures to each nation perfect freedom to develop and control its own military and naval resources". However, Jobb explained, in the British view, "... the idea of mere alliance does not satisfy the well-established faith of English imperialism. It fails to provide for the future organic unity of the Empire ... Further, in history alliances are ephemeral". Jobb, op. cit., pp. 165-7, 272-4, 277.
82 LT, 6 Oct. 1904.
British concerns in the Pacific were heightened by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. If Russia won it might attack China and this induced Britain to consider an alliance with the United States to protect China’s integrity. The destruction of the Russian fleet, however, allowed Britain to focus on Germany as its primary rival. After the Japanese victory Britain decided to renew the Anglo-Japanese alliance and tried to bring the United States into the agreement. President Theodore Roosevelt and the British Foreign Office agreed on what the Russo-Japanese treaty should entail and Japan concurred. But while Roosevelt wanted the closest working relationship with Britain, no official agreement between the United States and Britain ensued. In September 1905 Roosevelt negotiated the Portsmouth Treaty ending hostilities between Russia and Japan. By the end of the month Britain and Japan announced the renewal of their alliance which had become the linchpin of British defence strategy in the Pacific.83

Japan’s victory only heightened Australian security concerns. According to Grimshaw the fear of Japan became the most powerful impetus in the development of British-Australian relations in the region.84 Support for this view came from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and Dr. William Maloney’s 1905 book, *Flashlights on Asia*. The *Herald* observed that, “... the yellow man has taught the white man a lesson that Australians can reflect only at their peril”. *The Age*, meanwhile, began to doubt whether the Anglo-Japanese alliance was an adequate safeguard of Australian interests.85 Dr. Maloney, a Melbourne MP, went further by declaring that, "The conservative statesman ... seeks to fill us with assurances of the close and lasting alliance between the Empire and Japan..." But it was "... madness to deny the supreme temptation this underdeveloped, marvellously rich continent must offer to an awakened East ..." In Maloney’s opinion, Britain had to draw a line in the ocean, ‘far to the north of Cape York’, relinquish India and divide

84 ibid., p. 177.
85 Grimshaw, op. cit., p. 177.
the world along racial lines. Maloney lent further support to the cause of Anglo-Saxon unity by asserting that what Australia needed was a British-United States alliance. "So far as we in Australia are directly concerned, I see ... one effective ally ... that will beget a confident hope ... a sure trust in any future, and that is with the United States".86 In the aftermath of Japan's victory over Russia the United States had taken on new significance for both Britain and Australia, though the role the United States would play, if any, was still unsettled.

After Deakin resumed the Prime Ministership in 1905 he sought to obtain a final resolution on the New Hebrides issue.87 The status of the islands had worried Australians since the 1880s. Now that British-French relations had started to thaw the New Hebrides question seemed open to resolution. France favoured partition, while Australia opposed it. Britain and France instead agreed to maintain the status quo. Prime Minister Deakin reproached the Colonial Office for indifference to Australian interests and accused it of dragging its feet. The Colonial Office replied that the New Hebrides had no strategic value. Australia, on the other hand, saw the New Hebrides as analogous to Britain's Channel Islands. Finally, in February 1906, Britain and France declared joint ‘paramount rights’ in the islands without informing or consulting Australia. Deakin remonstrated against Britain's failure to inform them of the talks and declared that it typified the wilful indifference of Britain to Australian affairs. The Colonial Office replied that Australia had no direct acquaintance with international affairs and could not appreciate how the agreement fitted into the broader imperial policy picture. Australia replied that Britain lacked understanding of Australia’s perspective on world affairs, arbitrarily ignored Australian representations when they were likely to prove embarrassing and used its control of the machinery of

87 La Nauze, op. cit., p. 440.
imperial diplomacy to ensure that imperial policy served Britain's own purposes.  

Deakin also maintained the pressure on the naval defence issue, hoping that Britain would realise how important it was to Australians. In an August 1905 dispatch to the British Government, Deakin criticised the 1903 Naval Agreement as arousing no patriotism among Australians since their subsidy payments were used to cover general Admiralty expenditure. In fact, he declared, the Naval Agreement was not, and never had been, popular in the Commonwealth. It had been approved only in default of a better means of indicating Australian acceptance of Imperial responsibilities. In the event, the Agreement had failed to enlist a fraction of the support that was spontaneously accorded in all the States to the despatch of military contingents to South Africa. Deakin asserted that, "What is really required is that any defences, if they are to be appreciated as Australian, must be distinctively of that character". The British Government did not answer this critique, choosing to respond instead to a Commonwealth request for an Australian defence plan. The Committee on Imperial Defence reply finally came in May of 1906 and stated in part that,

A separate Australian navy could not find in any effective organisation of the naval forces of the Empire a role commensurate with the cost of its creation and maintenance or worthy of the aptitude for sea service of the inhabitants of the island continent.

The Committee went on to say that the vessels already committed to Australian defence were obsolete and that the only reason this force had not been eliminated before was that it provided Australians with a way to contribute men as well as money to Empire defence. The Committee,

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88 Meaney, op. cit., pp. 93-105. In 1904 an Anglo-French entente was signed. Monger, op. cit., pp. 157-9. This agreement and Japan's victory over Russia allowed Britain to concentrate on the German threat while reducing its concerns about the Pacific.


90 By 1905 Britain's Committee of Imperial Defence had grown to become an important part of the government machine. Established in 1902 the CID dealt with military planning and general problems of imperial strategy. The Prime Minister was the only permanent member and the ubiquitous George Clarke was appointed its permanent secretariat. Monger, op. cit., pp. 93-4.
however, assured Australians that their aspirations would be satisfied when the scheme initiated by the Naval Agreement of 1903 had had time to take full effect. This was a slap in the face for Australia and typified the dealings between a superior Mother Country and its inferior Commonwealth daughter. The nine month gap between Deakin’s critique of the Agreement and the Committee reply showed that Britain was unhurried and unworried about Australia’s situation. The Committee’s reply also indicated that previous allowances for Australian naval forces had been a sop to keep the colonists happy.

In an article written for the *Morning Post* in August of 1906, Deakin criticised the Committee on Imperial Defence for condemning “…any and every form of distinctively Australian naval defence …” like coastal destroyers or harbour torpedo boats. The Committee had noted that this arrangement had been tolerated to satisfy Australian sentiments whereas the Admiralty had approved only the gradual enrolment of Australians in the Royal Naval Reserve under the Agreement of 1903. Deakin warned that “…agreements will not decide this issue - sentiment will decide it, and soon”. Australian sentiment would not be appeased by contributions of men and money to a British fleet which might be removed from Australian waters at the whim of the Admiralty. Deakin asserted that the decision on how Australia would contribute to its defence rested with Australia and would continue to do so until Australia had a voice in the Council of the Empire. Because of their perilous position south of the awakening Asiatic peoples, there was increasingly strong sentiment among Australians to provide for their own defence. Deakin observed that, "This sentiment, which the report mentions only to ignore, will on this point ignore the report". Deakin’s scathing criticism foreshadowed the events of the 1907 Colonial Conference, in which he would play a dominant role.

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91 Macandie, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 142, 162, 164.
Historians Meaney and Grimshaw present possibly complementary opinions on the evolution of Deakin’s views prior to the conference. Meaney sees the New Hebrides incident as the decisive factor in shaping Deakin’s attitude towards imperial relations, defence and foreign policy. After the New Hebrides were ‘lost’, Meaney asserts that Deakin questioned whether the Colonial Office and through them the British Government could be trusted to watch over Pacific security. Perhaps this was the impetus behind Deakin’s advocacy of, as Grimshaw termed it, a ‘more sophisticated conception of nationalism’ that would secure for the dominions consultative rights on questions of high foreign policy. In the event Deakin re-examined the nature of imperial relations and organisation, groping for a new theory to reconcile the inherent contradiction of a centrally-controlled empire of self-governing colonies. From this exercise came Deakin’s quest to reshape imperial institutions to represent all the parts of the Empire and give the colonies direct influence over those imperial defence and external policies which affected them.

More ammunition for Deakin’s case was provided by Captain Creswell’s Memorandum on Naval Defence. Filed on 6 March 1907 the memo criticised the Committee on Imperial Defence for failing to realise that open trade routes were vital to Australian livelihood. If the Admiralty was unhampered by the Naval Agreement, it would reduce the squadron’s strength and remove some of the ships to other waters. Additionally, Australia had to be concerned with the growth of foreign navies, especially those with interests in the Pacific - Germany and Japan. Therefore, Creswell argued, Australia had to become as self-sufficient as possible - including the establishment of an Australian navy. The best way to begin was to "... do our own training, our own building, and all else so far as possible ..." Even a comparably small navy, Creswell concluded,

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93 Meaney, op. cit., p. 107.
94 Grimshaw, op. cit., p. 179.
95 Meaney, op. cit., pp. 141-3. In Blackton’s opinion, Deakin embraced Imperial Federation after Australian Federation and modified his earlier ANA creed without losing faith in Australian destiny or Australian nationality. Blackton, op. cit., p. 15.
would make the successful defence of Australia 'reasonably probable'.\textsuperscript{96} Armed with this advice and his new plan for Imperial relations and organisation, Deakin went to London for the 1907 Colonial Conference.

At the Conference Deakin submitted several resolutions that reflected his theory: establishment of an Imperial Council composed of colonial Prime Ministers to discuss matters of common imperial interest at Conferences; a permanent secretariat to gather information, execute Council decisions and keep the Dominions informed; colonial representation on the Committee on Imperial Defence; a re-examination of the 1903 Naval Agreement.\textsuperscript{97} In presenting his arguments Deakin was handicapped because he had to be ambiguous about his real aim - the elimination of the Colonial Office as the formal link between the self-governing dominions and Britain. To Deakin, effective Australian independence meant cutting loose from the Colonial Office and forging closer ties between the governments themselves in imperial decision making. As part of his strategy Deakin attacked the Colonial Office's casual and secretive handling of the New Hebrides affair as "... the strongest possible impeachment of the methods that have obtained in this office". The Colonial Office was apathetic and sceptical of the proposal for a standing commission with its own secretary to maintain imperial liaison between Conferences. The Colonial Secretary Lord Elgin instead offered the creation of a section for the dominions within the Colonial Office. This was dismissed by Deakin as a reshuffle of the old cards.\textsuperscript{98}

Deakin took his case for revising the Naval Agreement to the Admiralty. He presented his objections and argued that the subsidy was like a 'tribute'. Australia wanted to find a way to co-operate in Empire naval defence while retaining the constitutional principle that the government that levied the taxes should be responsible for expenditure and management. Deakin therefore proposed the creation of a local

\textsuperscript{96} Macandie, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 176, 177, 180, 181, 182.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates}, 1907, XXXVI, pp. 123-8.
\textsuperscript{98} La Nauze, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 503, 504, 507.
defence force financed and controlled by the Australian government, even in time of war. The Admiralty responded that the proposal raised a number of problems which had to be examined, though doubtless they could be settled amicably.99 With yet another assurance from the Mother Country that the issue of Australian naval defence could be resolved, the conference ended.

After returning to Australia, Deakin refined his thoughts on the 1903 Naval Agreement and proposed the following scheme in October 1907: the subsidy to be replaced by 1000 seamen, Australian if possible, paid for by the Commonwealth, for service on the Australia Station; the remainder of the subsidy to be used by the Commonwealth on submarines or destroyers or similar local defences; two cruisers to be manned by 400 of the 1000 Australians and retained on the Australian coast in war or peace; the loan of two cruisers to be used to train local Naval Militia and paid for by the Commonwealth. But the Admiralty did not accept the proposals as the basis for a new agreement and so correspondence between the two sides continued.100

In December Deakin and Defence Secretary Thomas Ewing devised a defence plan which was presented to the Commonwealth Parliament. Deakin warned that Australia had to be prepared if the Royal Navy was completely removed from Australian waters. The naval aspects of the scheme called for arming and modernising the shore forts as recommended by the Committee on Imperial Defence and acquiring a local flotilla for harbour and coastal defence, which Deakin believed the Admiralty had accepted in principle. Developing the flotilla would require three years but would result in a local naval force manned and controlled by Australia. Deakin observed that in time of war Australia would probably place the ships under Royal Navy command but the

99 Gordon, op. cit., p. 211.
100 Macandie, op. cit., p. 208.
Commonwealth Government reserved the right to place conditions on the transfer of control.\textsuperscript{101}

While the dialogue with the Admiralty continued the potential for a United States role in Australian defence took on a new dimension. Many Australians had taken heart when the United States defeated Spain in 1898 and entered the Pacific, filling the void left by Britain's reduced presence. In part this was because many Australians saw the United States as a 'brother', derived from the same stock and sharing the same heritage and traditions as themselves.\textsuperscript{102} This appealed to the element of Australian nationalism that dreamed of Anglo-Saxon unity. Also, United States influence had a strong tradition in Australian history from literature and law to mining and irrigation.\textsuperscript{103} As such, the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} portrayed the growing United States presence in the Pacific not as a threat but as a replacement for waning British power in the region.\textsuperscript{104}

At the same time changes in United States attitudes towards Japan after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War seemed to dovetail with Australian concerns.\textsuperscript{105} In 1906 riots erupted in San Francisco directed against the Asian population already present while some groups along the United States West coast commenced an anti-Asiatic campaign. This was followed by calls for legislation to exclude Asian immigrants. Although a 'Gentlemen's Agreement' to halt further immigration was reached between the United States and Japan, riots continued to erupt from time to time.\textsuperscript{106} President Roosevelt's naval build-up coincided with this racial furore and his decision to send a fleet on a cruise around the world, therefore, became the subject of much speculation. Was it 'merely' a

\textsuperscript{101} Meaney, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 153-4.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 8 Aug., 1908, p. 7. Hereafter, the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} will be abbreviated as SMH in the footnotes.
\textsuperscript{105} Levi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88.
demonstration of the emergence of the United States as a world power or was it a signal to Japan to curb its ambitions in the Pacific and elsewhere? 107

With no action forthcoming from the Admiralty, Deakin issued an invitation for the United States’ fleet to visit Australia. Perhaps because of his experiences with the Colonial Office and the Admiralty, Deakin chose an unorthodox method for issuing the invitation to the fleet. Rather than address the invitation through regular channels - that is, the British Foreign Office - he first conferred with the United States Consul-General in Australia and the United States Ambassador in London. Only after their assurances, and complaints from the Colonial Office, did he conform to the dictates of Empire protocol. Though embarrassed that they could not match the United States’ naval demonstration in the Pacific, the Admiralty left the decision on what to do about Deakin’s invitation to the Foreign Office. But the Foreign Office’s hand was forced when the United States Secretary of State Elihu Root announced that the United States’ fleet would be happy to visit Australia. Though the Colonial and Foreign Offices were infuriated by Deakin’s independent actions, Britain was faced with a fait accompli. 108

When Deakin outlined what he hoped the visit would do for Australia in the Morning Post on 14 and 24 April 1908 he also highlighted the challenges facing Australia. Firstly, he opined that the visit would rouse popular support for his naval defence plan 109, thereby acknowledging the divisions among Australians. Secondly, he hoped it would show Australian dissatisfaction with Britain’s neglect of the Empire in the Pacific. 110 Deakin wanted Britain to listen to, and act on, Australian concerns, not base decisions solely on the needs of Imperial strategy. Thirdly, the visit would be a symbolic expression of the concept of Anglo-Saxon solidarity based on common interests and threats in the Pacific

107 See New York Times, 28 Oct. 1907, p. 5., for Pres. Roosevelt’s statement that the cruise is not directed against Japan.
region. In this context, Deakin observed that Australians would welcome a British-United States alliance.\textsuperscript{111} Taken together Deakin’s invitation was a challenge to both Australia and Britain that a new relationship had to be established between them; one in which Australia would have an effective voice. This was not the ‘new kind of relationship’ that Britain had envisioned in the mid-nineteenth century. As such, the invitation appeared to be another challenge to its supremacy in the British-Australian relationship.

\textsuperscript{110} ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} ibid.
PART II

By 1908 the British-Australian relationship was under a severe strain as the two countries reaped the harvest of British policy decisions of the previous fifty years. Unfolding events, like the emergence of Germany as an economic and naval rival, had shifted Britain's focus away from the Pacific at precisely the time it was trying to establish a new kind of relationship with its Australian colonies. To exacerbate the situation, Britain called upon the Australian colonies time and again to alter the relationship to suit the needs of the Empire. This heightened colonial feelings of isolation, vulnerability and insecurity and created the impression among many colonial Australians that Britain was indifferent to their concerns. This was especially true in the case of Australian naval defence. After initially having defence responsibilities thrust upon them, the colonies were then asked to relinquish them in the name of federated Imperial defence. In reaction some Australians tried to establish their own naval defence force to ensure their security. This effort cast doubts on Australia's loyalty to the Empire and appeared to challenge Britain's supremacy in the British-Australian relationship. A line had to be drawn between Australian sovereignty and Imperial authority and the Great White Fleet's visit to Australia provided Britain an opportunity to do so.

During the fleet's visit the principle of British supremacy would face several challenges beyond the issue of Australian naval defence, however. The concept of Anglo-Saxon unity, which envisioned an alliance among countries that shared an Anglo-Saxon heritage, had fired the imaginations of many Australians since the late nineteenth century. This was due to two interconnected factors: Australia's heightened sense of vulnerability because of the new British defence arrangements and the fear of Asian invasion - the 'Yellow Peril'. The passage of the 'White

Australia' policy, in spite of the racial mixture of the Empire and Britain's alliance with Japan, was due, in part, to the dream of Anglo-Saxon unity. This placed Britain in an awkward situation. Australia was not only challenging its naval defence strategy, it was challenging the composition of the Empire as well.\textsuperscript{113} The United States' fleet visit added a wild card to this British-Australian test of wills and raised several questions: How would the Australians react? Would they seek closer ties with the United States? Would United States and Australian hostility towards Japan challenge the Anglo-Japanese alliance? While the British Foreign Office worked to prevent any untoward results by helping to arrange a Japanese invitation to the fleet and refusing to send the Prince of Wales to act as the fleet greeter for Australia, the Admiralty developed its own strategy to counter Deakin's plan for naval defence.\textsuperscript{114} During the visit itself, however, it was the London press that played the crucial role of influencing Australian press opinion and acting as alternative voice to those challenging British policy.

To understand the role the London press would play during the Great White Fleet's visit one has to examine several factors: the role of newspapers in early twentieth century society, the role of the press in Australia - specifically the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} and \textit{The Age} and the connections between the London press and the Australian press.

The newspaper of the early twentieth century was the product of an evolutionary process begun with the invention of the printing press. We who live in the late twentieth century, with its profusion of media and the promise of an information superhighway, might have difficulty imagining a time when the daily newspaper was the main, and in many cases, the only source of news for most people. Yet before the advent of radio in the twentieth century this was the case. The newspaper was the step between news by word-of-mouth and today's age of mega-media giants. In the early

\textsuperscript{113} Souter, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 87-8.
days of newspapers the role of the press was that of a purveyor of the news, offering their readers a recapitulation of events from near and far. In this way the newspaper established itself in Western society as an adjunct, if not an alternative, to gossip for spreading the news.

In the nineteenth century two elements coalesced to transform the role of newspapers in Britain and Australia: the spread of education created a larger consumer base for news while new technologies - the telegraph and cable - changed news-gathering methods. More information was available more quickly for more people than ever before. These factors not only altered the role of newspapers, they increased the ability of the press to influence public opinion. The press became the context within which people received their information of the outside world and those who owned, edited and wrote for the press came to wield considerable power. As a result the newspaper evolved from a purveyor of the news, to an interpreter and commentator on those events. The role of the newspaper became both reflective and constructive, i.e., it created as well as mirrored the times it reported. The result was an on-going mutual exchange of information and opinions between the newspaper and its readership which helped to define the times in which they lived.

As part of this process the Australian press developed an inordinate influence in the colonies and, after Federation, in the Commonwealth. Australia's unique population distribution enhanced the press's power as well. The Australian colonies experienced a demographic phenomenon that saw the concentration of over half the population in seaboard cities which assured a large circulation for city dailies. This caused Deakin to declaim that,

Everywhere in Australia the Press is in the ascendant... No agency... can compare in influence with the newspapers ... It is the

116 Ibid.
newspaper men who by every device of the pen create, develop and
direct public opinion... Of course, they follow public opinion
whenever it declares itself, but within certain limits they guide it
much as they please.\textsuperscript{118}

Emigrant Francis Adams agreed that "The power of the Press is a very
considerable fact everywhere; but in Australia ... the newspaper is the best
if not the greatest institution in the country".\textsuperscript{119} This was no less true for
the bush population whose isolated condition made the newspaper the all-
important messenger of civilisation. As author Edward Kinglake observed
in his 1891 book, \textit{The Australian at Home}, "If anything puzzles him (the
country reader), whether it be a point of law, or the best method of dyeing
his hair ... he has only to write to the editor and his question will be
answered ... in a special column set apart for the purpose".\textsuperscript{120}
Contemporary opinion was agreed on the power of the Australian press;
the question remained as to what purpose that power would be turned.

In the event, Australian conditions helped to translate the press's
influence into political power as well. Adams, commenting on the
important connection that had developed between the Australian press
and politics, said, "Only two forms of the national life are yet strong
enough and have sufficient volume to produce men of mark ... politics
and trade, and in politics is included journalism".\textsuperscript{121} Perhaps Deakin was
the best authority on the axis formed between the Australian press and
Australian politics as he epitomised the connection between the two. He
had worked for \textit{The Age} as a journalist in the late 1870s and, supported by
owner David Syme, became an MP in the Victorian House where he
served from 1880 until Federation. During this time he fought for
protective tariffs and enunciated nationalistic policies for Australia which

\textsuperscript{118} Deakin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 39, 40, 178.
\textsuperscript{119} Adams, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 48, 95-6.
\textsuperscript{121} Adams, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 85. There was statistical proof of the connection between press and politics
according to Richard Walker's study which revealed that by 1898 twelve per cent of the members of the
lower house in New South Wales were also journalists. R. B. Walker, \textit{The Newspaper Press in New
were usually supported by *The Age*. Deakin observed that Australia was composed of states whose chief voice was that of their principal journals. This made the Commonwealth as much a federation of newspapers as of colonies. Newspapers were interposed between the voters and their representatives, shaping the opinions of both according to their own aims and ideals. According to Deakin,

> The natural result is that, while the creature of public opinion, the Australian press is largely its creator, and that in the political world it is often the maker of Premiers and destroyer of Cabinets.

As we shall see the Australian press's importance as a conduit between Australian political and public opinion also made it an excellent instrument through which the London press could transmit it views to Australians.

Two of the most prominent Australian dailies were *The Age* of Melbourne and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. *The Age* was proclaimed by many as the most important daily newspaper in Victoria and, after Federation, in Australia. Ambrose Pratt, in his 1908 biography, *David Syme*, noted that the powerful owner of *The Age* had grasped the changing role of the press and concluded that the newspaper was more than an organ of public opinion. Syme believed that while the Press may represent public opinion, its role was to form public opinion: "A newspaper ... has its own opinions. It does not ask the man in the street what he thinks, but it tells him what he ought to think ..." Syme's ambition was to use *The Age* to bring about social and economic reform. To do this, Syme determined that he would have to make his paper a political power and that the basis of this power would rest on the confidence of his readers. Pratt observed that to ensure the people's trust, "Syme only supported men as long as they were whole-souled ministers of the principles he advocated,

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123 Deakin, op. cit., p. 41. Echoing Deakin's observation, Pratt, Syme's first biographer, asserted that Syme's power was such that for over a quarter of a century he selected every Victorian Premier and almost every Cabinet Minister and that before every general election the ministry of the day submitted a list of candidates for his approval. Pratt, op. cit., p. 269.
and the parties as long as they proved faithful to the democratic cause". In this way, "The paper began quietly and unostentatiously to rule the State by a process of plausible suggestions. Its leading articles actually made public opinion, yet they affected merely to reflect it". One example of The Age's political influence was its campaign against new railway construction in Victoria in 1890. The Age published a series of articles showing that national insolvency would follow if the plan was adopted. As a result the Victorian assembly was stopped from spending £41 million on the rail scheme.

The Sydney Morning Herald, owned by the Fairfax family, has been described variously by modern historians as the voice of pragmatic conservatism, as disinclined to push any argument or policy to the extreme, or simply as less nationalistic than The Age. Contemporaries, however, voiced stronger opinions. Jebb depicted the Herald as, "... wedded by half a century of tradition to the notion that England was the great repository of commercial and political wisdom; and that the system which suited the English importer, financier, or absentee landlord, was the only 'natural' system for a loyal dependency". This assessment was affirmed by Francis Adams who called the Herald the mouthpiece of the 'antique Anglo-Australian' and characterising it as "... too wise to take any decided position whatever, with the accompanying risks. Its timidity ... costs it all political influence ...". To Adams the Sydney Morning Herald was the

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125 Pratt, op. cit., pp. 244-8, 513. This is supported by Syme’s correspondence. Pratt, op. cit., p. 303. The power of The Age was noted by the English emigrant, Francis Adams, "The Age ... is the only Australian daily with a really large circulation ... It is, indeed, the very mouthpiece of Melbourne and Victoria". Adams, op. cit., pp. 49-50. During their visit to Australia in 1898 English collectivists Beatrice and Sidney Webb observed that the Victorian Premier, George Turner regarded himself as a servant of The Age newspaper and that the majority of the Victorian House took their opinions from "The Age" and its editor, "... David Symes (sic), a determined commonplace old man, who governs the colony". Beatrice Webb, Diary of Beatrice Webb, vol. 19, 15 July 1898-8 Dec. 1898, Typescript, pp. 1866, 1870. Deakin, in his introduction to Pratt's work, commented on Syme's influence, "The relations between its (The Age's) proprietor and public men were intimate to a surprising degree. He enjoyed their confidence in and out of office, shaping their programmes from time to time, governing their selection of colleagues as incoming Premiers and enjoying afterwards a knowledge of the innermost secrets of Cabinets often undiscovered to many of the Ministers within them". Pratt, op. cit., pp. viii-ix.
128 Jebb, op. cit., p. 191.
mouthpiece of the 'antique Anglo-Australian.' These contemporary assessments indicated that The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald epitomised the divisions among Australians. The Age represented the Australian nationalist view that was unwilling to bow to British pressure on issues it considered vital to Australia's sovereignty. The Herald, conversely, represented the more subservient view of the Anglo-Australian loyalists and therefore less inclined to dispute Imperial policy.

The Australian press's counterpart in London, because of its place at the centre of the Empire, wielded even greater power. For the purposes of this study we need examine only two aspects of that power: its belief system and its ability to influence Australian press opinion. Modern historians like James Startt and G. A. Cranfield, among others, have documented the domination of the London press by Imperialists during the second half of the nineteenth century. Stanley Morison in A History of the Times, described how the city's premier newspaper, the Times, came to embrace the Imperialist cause during Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations in 1887:

... collectively and individually the staff responded to the prevailing sense of mission and the paper became one of the principal agencies by which the nation was taught to 'think Imperially.' The policy was to maintain the Empire as it stood and to demand scope for expansion when it was thought necessary ...

This was particularly significant as it was the Times that took the lead in the London press campaign during the Great White Fleet's visit to

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130 In the late nineteenth century many newspapers among the London Press had come to be dominated by Imperialists - both Liberal and Unionist - whose greatest desire was to see the Empire maintained. As several of these newspapers were cited on a regular basis in the Australian Press it is important to note their views on imperialism and the Empire. St Loz Strachey, editor of The Spectator, "... often expressed his willingness to do 'everything in the way of encouraging a closer connection between the Colonies [the self-governing Colonies] and the Empire'." In his memoirs, Strachey explained, "Throughout my life I have been a strong democratic Imperialist. To me the alliance of the free self-governing Dominions, which constitute the British Empire, has a sacred character." The Westminster Gazette, under editor John Spender, was not only the most authoritative voice of the Liberals in power but also the steadiest and strongest supporter of a Liberal imperial policy to be found in the press. James Startt, Journalists for Empire, New York, 1991, pp. 18-23. Other London dailies which embraced the policy of Imperialism included the Morning Post and the Daily Telegraph. The Morning Post had been won over to the Imperialist cause by Disraeli in the 1870s. Cranfield, op. cit., pp. 209-10. The Daily Telegraph was owned by Sir John Fisher, First Lord of the British Admiralty. SMH, 5 Sept., 1908, p. 5.
131 Morison, op. cit., p. 17.
Australia. To carry out its 'mission' the Times would use its traditional advantages: a vast news-gathering network and an unmatched number of contacts with public figures, including many at high levels of government. Two key men at the Times were its editor, George Buckle and Charles Bell, at various times its assistant manager, manager and managing director. Both Buckle and Bell supported the imperial aim of consolidation of the colonies and dependencies. To these and the other London press Imperialists, news stories became the raw materials for transforming an event into a building block of policy formation with news reports used to bolster the policies outlined in their editorial pages. In this way the London press became a quasi-official promoter of British Imperial policy.

The London press's ability to transmit its beliefs to the Australian press involved several factors. To begin with, the interaction between the London and Australian press reflected that of the British-Australian relationship. Just as political power flowed from the Mother Country to its Australian daughter, information about the world flowed from the London press to the Australian press. The process that made this possible began in the late nineteenth century with the growth of large news-gathering agencies. In the 1880s three major agencies run by Julius Reuter, Auguste Havas and Bernhard Wolff agreed to divide the world into spheres of influence. Wolff retained his native Germany and received Austria, Scandinavia and Russia. Havas received control of France and its empire as well as the Mediterranean and Reuters was granted control in Britain and its empire. In Britain itself the collection of news had been taken over by the Press Association in 1870. After Reuters became the news-gathering agency for the British Empire a reciprocity agreement between the two was negotiated. Reuters also reached a similar agreement with the Associated Press in the United States. This, in effect, meant that Reuters controlled the gathering and dissemination of news between Great Britain and the United States. It also meant that London not only


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controlled the flow of information from Britain to Australia but from the United States to Australia as well. This situation not only reinforced the superior mother-inferior daughter nature of the British-Australian relationship, it would prove to be a critical factor in the London press campaign during the Great White Fleet’s visit.

Another factor that made the London press so influential in Australia was the gradual reduction in cable rates introduced towards the end of the nineteenth century. While this made it more economical for the Australian press to get its news from London, it also increased British influence on Australian life. As the Australian-born percentage of the population increased each year it seemed only natural that the forces of Australian nationalism would gradually displace the Anglo-Australian element. Indeed, by 1890 a sizeable majority of those living in Australia had never seen the British Isles. However, the increased availability of British news resulting from reduced cable rates made it possible for Australians to participate in British public life on a day-to-day basis. This inhibited the process whereby the ideas of the older British-born generation would be replaced by those of the younger, native-born Australians. The forces of technology and economy had combined to validate Australia’s self-image as Britain’s inferior daughter by increasing the London press’s influence in Australian life.

During the Great White Fleet’s visit, the London press used these advantages to exploit the divisions among Australians. It did this by focusing on two ideas: loyalty to the Mother Country and the desire to take action to ensure Australian security. The London press endeavoured to rally the spirit of Australian loyalty while simultaneously diverting the desire for a proactive Australian role in defence into channels more beneficial to Imperial strategy. To accomplish these ends the London press used its editorial voice to express its Imperialist beliefs while controlling the flow of information to Australia. Combining these strategies and

methods, the London press attempted to rein in Britain’s recalcitrant
daughter and rally Empire loyalty so that a line could be drawn between
Australian sovereignty and Imperial authority.

When the Great White Fleet entered Australasian waters in August
of 1908 it sailed on a sea of ambiguity, bringing in its wake both concerns
and opportunities for Britain and Australia. While it offered Britain the
possibility of establishing closer ties with the United States, it also
represented a threat to Britain’s relationship with both Australia and
Japan. Britain’s on-going conflict with Australia over the naval defence
issue, compounded by the Commonwealth’s adoption of the ‘White
Australia’ policy had turned British-Australian relations into a test of wills.
When United States and Australian hostility towards Japan and Australia’s
desire for Anglo-Saxon unity were added to the equation, Britain had cause
for concern. For Australia, as Deakin had hoped, the fleet’s visit brought
the issues of naval defence, British neglect of Australian concerns and the
possibility of an Anglo-Saxon union to the fore. Seen in this context, the
Great White Fleet’s visit becomes a window on British-Australian
relations, played out in daily press reports.

In early August 1908 The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald
editorially established their viewpoints on the eve the Great White Fleet’s
visit. The Age confirmed its nationalist stance by expressing concern that
the naval question was still unsettled and warned that if war broke out the
British would remove the Australian Squadron. Meanwhile, the
Melbourne daily declared, the Deakin government waited for the
‘procrastinating’ British Admiralty to act on Australia’s proposals. The
Age concluded that one thing was clear, "... we must have a navy and must
instantly set about procuring it. If Britain will help us with her expert
counsel, well and good. If not, let us act on our own responsibility like
men ..."136 The Herald on 10 August was more circumspect, calling the

136 Age, 3 Aug, 1908, p. 6. Please note that all remaining newspaper references are from 1908 unless
otherwise indicated.
fleets an "... expression of the amity of nations - of the brotherhood of the Anglo-Saxon race ..." and while this "... must be held to be the supreme motive of the visit ... there are wider implications". To the loyalist Herald, one of these wider implications was the establishment of closer ties between the United States and Great Britain. But the Herald was still pragmatic enough to observe that, "... It is likely enough that America may become our first line of defence against Asia. But whether so or no, the ties now formed will remain, and we hope that time will only serve to strengthen them on both sides". Except for the possibility of a British-United States alliance, none of the sentiments expressed by the two Australian papers were shared by Britain.

To counteract these sentiments the Times on 10 August defended British naval policy and issued its first warning on Australasian disloyalty. After characterising the United States as a natural ally of the British Empire the Times added that there were those who suggested that the welcome was a sign of disloyalty to England but quoted Mr. Deakin's denial that the idea was 'too silly for words.' The Times agreed that England had no fear of this and, in fact, envied its colonies and were glad of the warmth displayed. After all, Australia and New Zealand knew that, "... the naval protection which we guarantee them is not best demonstrated by the presence of a large fleet tied to Australian waters". This editorial typified the London press approach to the fleet visit: it appealed to the Australian sense of loyalty by intimating disloyalty and affirming the wisdom of Britain's concentrated naval strategy.

137 SMH, 10 Aug., p. 6. One Australian, however, had a stronger opinion about what the fleet represented to Australians. The Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Moran, saw the fleet as, "... coming from their brothers beyond the Pacific ... to which they might look for assistance. But they must bear in mind that any enemies that would assail them would be much nearer than the fleet from beyond the Pacific ... The coming of the fleet should teach them the comparative insignificance of the home fleet that pretended to guard their shores. The great lesson was that they needed a fleet of their own. An Australian fleet alone could defend the shores of Australasia". SMH, ibid., p. 8. Also Percival Serle, Dictionary of Australian Biography, vol. II, pp. 155-6. Another letter to the editor Mr. W. C. Kelk rebutted Moran's remarks by declaring that "... the time for an efficient Australian fleet is not yet (sic) ... The prelate does not properly appreciate the source of the British fleet in Australasian waters as compared to the sum of the subsidy paid ... The cardinal takes gibes at the Empire and the Empire tolerates him!" SMH, 15 Aug., p. 8.

138 LT, 10 Aug., p. 9. The gist of this report was published in the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age on 11 August.
On 11 August the *Herald*’s response to the charge of disloyalty revealed its ambivalence about the Australian naval defence issue. After noting that recent wars in the Pacific had made Australasians aware of the value of first-class warships the *Herald* declared that it did not follow that Australia should spend millions on a fleet. While United States and Australian interests were practically one, the British navy was the first line of Australian defence. Therefore Australian naval defence should be based on loyalty to, and in harmony with, British policy, not on some ‘stupid and farcical thought of independence.’ ’The visit of the American fleet should teach us the value of union ... those who read disruption and disloyalty into it had better go to school again’. The editorial concluded that the solution to Australia’s defence problem was to add more white population as quickly as possible.\(^{139}\) This response showed that the *Herald* not only espoused ardent loyalty to Britain but that any plan for Australian naval defence should accept this principle as well. In addition, the *Herald*’s concluding remark acknowledged the link between population and defence and Australia’s deficiency in this area. This provided the London press with an alternative focus for Australian security concerns that would be beneficial to Imperial strategy.

To counteract Australian enthusiasm for the United States the London press relied, in part, on controlling the flow of information from the United States to Australia. In one instance, selected United States news reports were used to show United States’ reactions to the Great White Fleet’s visit to Australasia. The *Times*’ Washington correspondent reported that the United States Press was giving far less attention to the fleet’s visit than the London press. The article then quoted reports from the *New York Herald* and the *Philadelphia Enquirer* (sic) that referred to

\(^{139}\) *SMH*, 11 Aug., p. 6. Another editorial on 14 August reiterated the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s ambivalence. It characterised Australia as an outpost of the Empire which saw danger at its doors but was ignored ‘... by those whose outlook is West instead of East’. This rebuke was then softened: ‘We are still loyal to the old flag and can declare our fealty as Britons when we claim a share in this Anglo-Saxon heritage of the Pacific. But while the United States finds it necessary to send a navy to adequately sustain the white man’s burden, our duty covers a wider range ... We are bound to do everything in our power to support and sustain the British Navy ... but the truest wisdom will consist in filling Australia with millions of white people and in making the continent ... a true comrade in arms to the continent on the
the common bond between the United States and Australasia owing to "... exposure to the 'yellow' peril..." and that both Australia and New Zealand were pleased that the United States "... means to become powerful in the Pacific to be, if not their champion, a leader in any impending race struggle. The Times cited the New York Herald as pointing out, "... not very tactfully perhaps, that American strength in Eastern waters should do much to ensure peace". According to these selected quotes, the United States either was not that interested in the fleet's visit or, conversely, it was sowing the seeds of dissension among Australasians by representing itself as a potential 'champion' in the 'impending race struggle.' The former sentiment again raised the question of loyalty while the latter depicted closer United States-Australia ties as a possible threat to the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

A second instance of control of information demonstrated the importance of omitting news that might imply hostility between the United States and Japan. The United States press was experiencing a resurgence of interest in the 'Japanese threat' because of an interview with Count Okuma in the Japanese journal, The Hochi. Excerpts of the Count's remarks were reprinted in the New York Times and the San Francisco Chronicle on 12 August. Okuma, commenting on United States naval expansion, observed that, "Judging from the fragmentary speeches of President Roosevelt, as they have been transmitted here, it is not difficult to infer that the augmentation of the United States Navy in the Pacific is directed at Japan ..." and its rise as a world power. This news did not

\[\text{other side. The British Empire on such terms will be doubly guarded, and Anglo-Saxondom will be mightily reinforced}.\] SMH, 14 Aug., p. 6.

140 LT, 11 Aug., p. 5.

The London Times on 17 August, merely mentioned that, "... a speech by Count Okuma which, if correctly reported, is somewhat ill-timed ..." LT, 17 Aug., p. 6. Another example of the British Press's control of information from the United States occurred after the Count Okuma story resurfaced in the United States Press. On 13 September the New York Times published an article entitled 'Present and Future in the Far East Outlined by Count Okuma.' This was a fuller version of the interview which had caused a stir in the United States press but had drawn no notice in Australia. The points raised were the subject of a New York Times editorial that observed: "... the Count speaks with emphasis, with no reserve, and with a certain recklessness. He assumes that 'America is striving to acquire control of the Pacific Ocean,' that by the accomplishment of this ambition 'Japan will be reduced to a fatal condition,' and he declares that
appear in *The Age* nor the *Sydney Morning Herald*, indicating that anti-Japanese sentiments in the United States would not filter through to Australia.

Instead the London press offered editorial sympathy for Australian sentiments and a warning about the role of the Great White Fleet. Alluding to a speech made by Colonel Seely, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, the *Times* on 17 August observed that on the racial question, "It behaves (sic) the Mother Country to meet these self-governing communities in the same spirit of forbearance, patience, and sympathy in mutual dealings with a very difficult problem".142 This reaffirmed the mother-daughter image of the relationship by promising patience, sympathy and forbearance for Australia's concerns while repriming the oft-mentioned British regard for Australian sentiments. At the same time an article from the *Spectator* warned that the rise of the United States Navy ought to mean peace in the Pacific if mischief makers were not allowed to represent the navy as a weapon to be used in a race feud between English-speaking peoples and Asiatics.143 This warning also tapped into the mother-daughter and superior-inferior aspects of the British-Australian

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142 *LTT*, 17 Aug., p. 9;
143 *LTT*, 19 Aug., p. 7; *SMH*, 19 Aug., p. 9. Before the Great White Fleet entered Australasian waters the British Press reported a Parliamentary speech showed that the Colonial Office was sympathetic to Australian sentiments. In early August, with the Great White Fleet a week away from New Zealand, the British Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Col. Seely, addressed Parliament on the issues of immigration and the Imperial Secretariat. He posited that, "The first principle was that ... they must agree to the demand that those colonies might exclude whom they pleased." Speaking on behalf of the government he declared that "... if a self-governing colony decided that they must exclude a certain class of persons, the Home Government could not interfere." To assist in the resolution of this and other colonial problems the Colonel thought that "... it was necessary to make the Imperial Secretariat a reality, to make it ... the great clearing house of the Empire." On 3 August the *Sydney Morning Herald* reacted to these statements in an editorial: "Colonel Seely's statement of the Liberal Policy ... (on) Asiatic immigration goes a long way to clear up a situation that has several times ... threatened to become acute. 'Self-government,' said Lord Beaconsfield on one occasion, 'when it is conceded, ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation.' On the whole, the colonies have moved forward to that idea with more assured step than has either political party in Great Britain and for precisely the reason that the colonies realise that their loyalty to the Empire must be measured by the completeness of their autonomy". The editorial concluded that, "...Colonel Seely has happily seen things in their right perspective ..." and that the suggestions to use the Imperial Secretariat to keep the Imperial Government and the colonies in closer touch, are excellent". This was reassuring to Australians as it revived Deakin's 1907 Imperial Conference proposal for an Imperial Secretariat and illustrated British concern for Australian opinion. *LTT*, 1 Aug., p. 9; *SMH*, 3 Aug., p. 6.
relationship as the London press communicated its expectations of how Australians should view the fleet.

When, on 20 August, the United States’ fleet neared Sydney, the significance of its visit for Australians became apparent. With the fleet still thirty miles from Sydney Harbour, steamers full of Sydneysiders appeared to greet their guests. As the fleet sailed up the coast it was cheered by people in ships and thousands standing along the bluffs. In response Admiral Sperry gave a fine exhibition of naval manoeuvres as he brought the fleet into the harbour. Franklin Matthews, a United States newspaperman who accompanied the Great White Fleet, described the reception in Sydney in his 1909 book, Back to Hampton Roads:

When the ... harbor came into view it was seen that it was as black with people as the cliffs toward the south ... the wonder was where the masses could have come from ... On every point there seemed to be a band playing 'The Star Spangled Banner,' and from headland after headland, hill upon hill, slope after slope, there came an outburst of cheers ... (I)t lasted an entire week ...144

The Herald, meanwhile, showed the first signs of 'Fleetitis,' that peculiar affliction which caused euphoria wherever the fleet anchored in Australasia.145 The Herald quoted from Admiral Sperry’s greeting to the Australian people, "... to whom," the Admiral said, "we feel closely related and with whom we have many interests in common". It also carried Prime Minister Deakin’s greeting to the fleet in which he cited the late Premier of New South Wales Sir Henry Parkes, whose imagination Deakin said,

... would have traced the 'crimson thread of kinship,' our chief bond of union with the Empire, extending throughout the great Republic whose sailors ... are thrice welcome as blood relatives ... May our cordiality convince our kin that even the giant strength of majestic battleships counts for less than the strength of the invisible

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144 Franklin Matthews, Back to Hampton Roads, New York, 1909, pp. 59-62. The Herald estimated the crowd at 500,000, the largest crowd yet gathered in Australia. SMH, 21 Aug., p. 9.
145 Authorship of the term, 'Fleetitis' was claimed by reporter Franklin Matthews in his book, Back to Hampton Roads.
ties drawing us closer together as States united in affection, in our heritage of freedom, and in humane ideals.\textsuperscript{146}

This reference to Parkes, the ‘Father of Australian Federation’, symbolically linked the United States and Australia in common cause. The *Sydney Morning Herald* added its own words of welcome which said, in part, that Australians regarded themselves as trustees for the white race and that the fleet’s visit recognised Australia’s special place in history. The *Herald* observed that,

...We know that no people can preserve its self-respect unless it is prepared to stand alone, and we appreciate our debt to the British Navy ... Our welcome to-day can in no way be interpreted as a sign of anxiety for new alliances, or a forgetfulness of our place in the British Empire. It is rather proof that whatever place will ultimately be given to us ... we shall continue to recognise the fundamental unity of the English-speaking nations, and the duty that is cast upon their representatives when their traditions are most likely to be exposed to danger.\textsuperscript{147}

The *Herald* also quoted President Roosevelt’s belief that for a nation to able to assert its rights, it had to maintain an efficient naval force. The *Herald* concluded that such a fleet would be the most potent guarantee a nation had or ever could have.\textsuperscript{148} While the *Herald* was still ambiguous about the nature of Australian naval defence, it clearly acknowledged its importance. The *Herald’s* observations illustrated the misperception of many Australians, including Deakin, that colonial and Imperial aims could be the same.

Perhaps because of this response, the London press on 22 August showed a marked change in its coverage of the fleet’s visit by elaborating four themes: denigrating the efficacy of an Australian navy, rallying support for the Admiralty’s naval defence strategy, minimising the Japanese danger and undermining the status of the United States. One example of this was a *Daily Telegraph* editorial, cited by both Australian

\textsuperscript{146} SMH, 20 Aug., p.3.
\textsuperscript{147} ibid., p.4.
papers, which emphasised the cost of a navy and asserted that Australia’s naval interests would be best secured by a more generous contribution to maintain the British Navy, "... which is powerful to protect her, even though no British battleships are seen in Australian port (sic)". The Asiatic question would be settled because, "... the great fleet on both sides of the Pacific, and the leagues of ocean separating them, almost as good as impose a reasonable temper on those in authority". The Telegraph observed that President Roosevelt’s reference to the fleet as an asset for ‘peace and justice’ and Deakin’s as ‘harbingers of arbitration’ would best be shown when the fleet reached Japanese waters and received a magnificent welcome.149 This reference to the fleet’s scheduled visit to Japan reiterated the British position that United States-Japanese relations were not an issue of concern.

Utilising its control of information from the United States to Australia the London press cast doubts on United States motives and sentiments. Citing selected United States press commentary, the London press asserted that some United States newspapers were politically exploiting the warm welcome of the fleet in a sense hostile to the Anglo-Japanese treaty. Excerpts from the New York Sun declared: “Australia says hands across the sea, meaning to America, not to the motherland...” and that “The occasion shows the Australians flying in the face of Imperial policy”. Conversely, other United States newspapers were cited as declaring that if Great Britain and Japan fought over the integrity of Australasian territory, the United States would not interfere.150 By using selected United States press stories the London press tried to neutralise the effects of ‘Fleetitis’ by representing the United States in a negative light while appealing to Australian loyalty by depicting Australia as disloyal in United States eyes. This was akin to the Mother Country saying to its Australian daughter, 'What will the neighbours say?'

148 Ibid., p. 6.
150 Ibid. On occasion unfolding events gave support to British aims. On 20 August it was reported that the United States Pacific squadron was getting ready to sail to Samoa by German invitation. This pictured the United States as a friend of Germany, a country that threatened both Britain and Australia. Age, 20 Aug., p. 7; SMH, 20 Aug., p. 13.
On 24 August the *Sydney Morning Herald* reassessed its view of the fleet in two editorials. The first, noting that the London press looked upon the reception from 'an Imperial point of view,' declared that Australia's first allegiance was to the Empire.

... (W)e are one with Imperial policy; and those journalists who for political purposes see fit to twist the facts the other way need not trouble us much ... the true point of view is suggested by the London *Daily Telegraph* ... the British navy is powerful to protect us though no battleships be seen in our ports. The integrity and strength of the British navy is the one hope for Imperial solidarity, and that the navy must always ... have the whole Empire behind it.

That said, the editorial added that it would be shrewd and sound policy for Britain to send a fleet to visit Australia since enthusiasm was one of the bases of the Empire's foundation.\(^1\) By asking for the reassurance that only a British fleet visit could bring, the *Herald* was reinforcing the mother-daughter imagery of Australia's relationship with Britain. The second editorial - 'Fleet Means Money' - reacted to the news of Britain's strained finances by pointing out the high costs of building and maintaining modern navies. Reprising Barton's argument for the 1903 Naval Agreement, the *Herald* compared the £32 million Great Britain had spent on the navy to protect Australia to Australia's contribution of £200,000. The editorial went on to cite cables received from Britain that indicated British financiers had offered to lend the Imperial Government £100 million to assist the naval building program. According to the Sydney daily, this showed that the elasticity of the British financial system had been severely strained and made it all the more essential that Australia should lend a hand. The editorial concluded, however, by saying, "... whether we should knit ourselves more closely to the Imperial navy or attend more to our unprotected coasts, remains for the Australian people to decide".\(^2\) These editorials indicated that the *Herald* had accepted much

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1 SMH, 24 Aug., p. 6.
2 ibid. An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the following day declared that while Australia and the United States shared common problems the Australian greeting was in reaction to the difficulties
of the London press interpretation of events: the relationship in question was United States-British, not United States-Australian; the Daily Telegraph view of the British navy and Imperial unity was correct; the financial situation in Britain required more help from Australia. But the Herald was still unwilling to take the decision on a naval force out of Australian hands.

The success of the London press influence on the Sydney Morning Herald readership can be gauged by the letters-to-the-editor published on 28 August after the fleet had departed from Sydney. T. M. D. Mundle of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve reckoned that more had been spent on the week’s visit than was spent on the Australian navy in a year:

... I cannot help thinking that the people of this country care little or nothing for the first line of defence of this great Empire of ours ... The only way to get out of our present defenceless condition is ... to pay to the upkeep of our British navy and demand in return more boats and men to protect us ...

Other writers - J. W. Kettlewell and Charles Allen - broached the possibility of drawing United States emigrants to populate the vast unsettled areas of Australia thereby acknowledging an area for Australian action that would benefit Imperial strategy. The outpouring of Imperial loyalty continued on the following day. Mr. F. S. Thomas expressed an "exceeding admiration that the people of the tight little island over there can keep, almost unaided, the most powerful navy afloat". Therefore, "Let us ... do our share and demand more ships if we like, but let us do our share!" An 'Australian' wrote that Australians, "... can now see what a superb force the old navy is and ... Even if Australia starts a new navy we

the United States faced at home. Australia, for its part, thrived because of the British flag and with the liberty this assured Australia, it was able to concentrate on its internal development. "Australia certainly should be up and doing. For the sake of the Empire and the flag above it, we must fill our wide spaces, settle our defence problem and in all reasonable ways open to us prepare for a future in which this continent will loom ever larger". SMH, 25 Aug., p. 6. Another instance where events reinforced Britain’s position occurred on 18 August when news broke that Great Britain was considering taking out a loan to maintain its naval arms race with Germany. This appealed to patriotic feelings of Australians by casting the Mother Country as vulnerable to German threat. Age, 18 August, p. 5; SMH, 18 Aug., p. 9.

153 SMH, 28 Aug., pp. 6, 8.

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should increase the subsidy to the old". The writer then trenchantly remarked: "We owe the Americans nothing and I doubt if any American will ever die in our defence". These responses showed that the opinions of the Herald and its readership were being constructed, at least in part, by the London press.

A Herald editorial on 29 August offered further evidence of the effectiveness of the London press campaign by asserting that Australia was helpless without British naval control of the seas and that the United States had been able to leave its Atlantic coast unprotected because of the British navy. Following the London press lead, the Herald observed that a British-United States alliance would be very popular with Australians. It warned, however, that without this alliance, "... it would be delusive to pretend ... that if Australia were involved with an Asiatic enemy, America would lend more than her sympathy". The Herald declared that Australia's protection was in the hands of the world's greatest fleet - the Royal Navy. But it also wondered how long Britain could guarantee Australia's safety while engaged in a naval arms race with Germany. The Herald noted that Australia had an obligation to itself and the Empire to build a fleet. "It may cost a deal to build a fleet, but we know ... that no nation in the world could afford it better". The statement that the United States wouldn't help if Australia was attacked indicated that the British reports of United States Press opinion had hit their mark. But the Herald still refused to give up on the idea of an Australian navy.

The Great White Fleet's landing at Melbourne on 29 August was not as smooth as at Sydney - the ships were going too fast and almost hurtled into the docks and the waiting welcoming committee. The reception, however, rivalled that of Sydney as 'Fleetitis' spread to Melbourne. The visit was filled with festivities including visits to the countryside, sporting events, luncheons, dinners and banquets, with speeches and toasts

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155 ibid., 29 Aug., p. 13.
accompanying each. Admiral Sperry counted seventeen dinners, dances and parties in a single day. United States author Robert Hart in his book *The Great White Fleet* observed that the Americans were thankful a week later to have escaped Melbourne with their lives. Hospitals were full of people who had been trampled in the streets or had fallen off buildings while watching parades; two sailors were killed by rampaging trolleys whose motormen seemed infected by the general madness. The victims could not be buried because the city of Melbourne had decreed that there should be no funerals to mar the happiness of the visit.\(^{156}\)

The fleet’s arrival provided an opportunity for Melburnians to give vent their views on a more independent defence policy. The Reverend Doctor Watson predicted that if the Asiatic menace was aroused, “... Big Brother America would cry, ‘Hands off! Leave my little brother alone’”. *The Age* asserted that the British Empire had been “... made great in spite of itself ... This lack of policy bothered Australia in the Pacific with France and Germany moving in ...” for, without a firm grasp, the Empire was “... a weary titan staggering under the burden of too heavy a fate”.\(^{157}\) After hinting that the time had come for Australia to provide its own means of naval defence a second editorial posited that two results of the visit would be, “... a warmer corner in Australian hearts for Americans ...” and the proclamation by the United States that, “... Australia is a land to be reckoned with in the immediate future...”.\(^{158}\) These reports typified the differing viewpoints of the two papers. *The Age* was unaffected by London press blandishments while the *Herald* was ambivalent. *The Age* denigrated British policy while warming to the United States; the *Herald*, though still open to an Australian navy, on the whole supported British policy and spoke of a British-United States alliance.

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156 Hart, op. cit., p. 193. According to Matthews, funerals were cancelled in Melbourne only on the first day of the fleet’s visit. Matthews, op. cit., pp. 83-5.
157 *Age*, 31 Aug., p. 6. This echoed an earlier *Age* editorial which placed the blame for the current situation squarely on Britain: “If Britain had maintained an adequate progress of Dreadnought construction from the outset this peril would not have befallen us. Dreadnoughts would have freed her cruising fleets to protect her colonies. Now it must protect the heart of the Empire and neglect the limbs. All this points to the imperative necessity of expeditiously acquiring an Australian navy ... To postpone that duty a day longer ... would be to open our arms to financial ruin and to court national extinction”.
158 *Age*, 27 Aug., p. 6.
At the official banquet Deakin linked the Great White Fleet with Australian defence. The Prime Minister observed that,

To-day was the opening of a new chapter in Australian history ... American leaders all helped to teach us ... that what America has done Australia ought to do. They had taught us how a nation was made, and how it was to be preserved, and the battleships preached the lesson that we would not always tread the path under the wattle blossom.159

Admiral Sperry diplomatically replied that,

... you are dependent and independent, you are members of this glorious empire which represents the other great English-speaking State, and between us we stretch from one side of the Pacific to the other and across the Atlantic we join hands.160

While this exchange touched on the dream of Anglo-Saxon unity, Sperry studiously avoided committing the United States to join Australia in alliance against the 'Yellow Peril'.161

On 1 September both The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald reprinted London press observations of the festivities that again replayed several chords of the London press siren song designed to woo Australians to its viewpoint: Japan was not a threat to Australia, but an ally by virtue of the British-Japanese alliance. For that reason, and the improbability of United States-Japanese hostilities, a closer United States-Australian relationship was unnecessary. To this was added the reassurance that the British navy was protecting Australia by pursuing a concerted naval strategy that kept the fleet in home waters. The Daily News, commenting on Melbourne's welcome reminded Australians that, "... Japan as an ally of Great Britain is also an ally of Australia". It then justified the withdrawal of British battleships from the Pacific by emphasising that concentration

158 Age, 31 Aug., p. 10.
159 SMH, 1 Sept., p. 7; Age, 1 Sept., p. 8.
160 SMH, 1 Sept., p. 7.

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was the first rule of naval strategy. The *Daily Chronicle* elaborated on this point by observing that as long as the British fleet commanded the sea it would secure Australia. "The protection is not less or more effectual according to the concentration of the fleet ... the real protection is afforded by striking far or near as circumstances require".162 Additional support for this view was provided by British Admiral Hemphill in an interview from Hong Kong. In the Admiral’s opinion there would be no trouble between the United States and Japan, especially given Japan’s financial situation. Hemphill added that talk of commercial development should replace speculation about war.163 The *Herald’s* reaction to the London press’s observations was to attack Australian government policy. After noting the activities of Germany in New Guinea and France in the New Hebrides, the *Herald* declared that, "(the) Australian government (was) not acting but drifting ..."164 This showed the differing opinions of the *Herald* and *The Age* on the dynamics of the British-Australia relationship. While *The Age* blamed Britain for its Pacific problems, the *Herald* blamed the Australian government.

On 2 September the differences between the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* were further illustrated by their coverage of Deakin’s remarks to the fleet’s officers. The speech appeared to be an attempt by the Prime Minister to clarify his position and answer his critics on the need for an Australian navy. The *Herald* reported that Deakin had declared that without the British navy there would be no Australia. But, he asked,

did that mean, therefore, that Australia should sit still under the shelter of the British navy? (No, No) Those who say we should are not worthy of the name Briton. You cannot be content to expect defence at any other hands than your own. You must do your share;

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162 SMH, 1 Sept., p. 7; Age, 1 Sept., p. 10.
163 Age, 1 Sept., p. 10. On 27 August *The Age* had published two items concerning Japan that had originated in London. The first stated that several non-official Japanese journals, commenting on the fleet’s visit to Yokohama spoke of, “the warmest reception by the Government and people of Japan”. The second noted that it was the Jubilee of the first British-Japanese treaty and included friendly comments on relations between the two countries from the Times. Such news helped to dampen speculation about trouble between Japan and the United States while reaffirming the strong ties between Britain and Japan. *Age*, 27 Aug., pp. 6, 7.
164 SMH, 1 Sept., p. 6.
but the share of five million people is not the share of forty-five million ... We cannot displace the squadron in these seas; but we can add from our own blood ... something that will make such a common cement as shall launch us upon the beginning of our naval career...\textsuperscript{165}

*The Age*, meanwhile, was adamant about the need for an Australian navy and open to the possibility of a United States role in Australian defence. Its coverage of Deakin's speech omitted reference to Australia not being able to exist without the British navy and added Deakin's observation that the United States had not been able to take a first place in the world without a first class navy. *The Age* also expressed the belief that if Australia got into a scrap it would want America by its side.\textsuperscript{166}

*The Age* and several Victorians rallied behind the ideas of closer United States-Australian ties and Anglo-Saxon unity. An *Age* editorial quoted Admiral Sperry's remark, "Why not clasping of hearts as well as hands?,” which the paper said provided, "a singular thrill as if the people realised in the words the giving of a great historic promise”. Sperry expressed his hope that the bonds of friendship would be drawn closer as the United States saw Australia as a brother with common interests. This caused *The Age* to exclaim:

These are just the thoughts which are pulsing through every patriotic brain, as we should hope, in both New York and London today ... amidst all this uncertainty a great glad gleam of enduring comfort for our five millions of people here ... to know that we have eighty millions in the New World whose hearts go out to ... 'the call of blood.' We in Australia have more constantly turned our eyes to America for light and guidance than we have to the mother country...

The editorial concluded by asserting that if Australia was threatened the United States would be willing to act in Australia's defence.\textsuperscript{167} Many of these sentiments were echoed at the Masonic reception of the United

\textsuperscript{165} SMH., 2 Sept., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{166} Age, 2 Sept., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{167} ibid., p. 6.
Grand Lodge of Victoria. The Grand Master, George E. Emery, greeted fleet members as 'brothers' and declared that "(I)t is in the interests of justice and equity throughout this world that English-speaking nations should be united". Sir Alexander Peacock, past and future Premier of Victoria, added his hope that the visit would awaken the Australian people to their responsibility for their own defences and to have a fleet of their own.168 These public statements continued to go well beyond the question of Australian naval defence by again raising the possibility of either Anglo-Saxon unity or closer United States-Australian ties, with Japan as the implied enemy.

On 2 September the London press turned up the heat in its campaign to influence Australian opinion. The Pall Mall Gazette's Washington correspondent reported that, "American newspapers consider that the demonstrations in Australia and New Zealand ... denote the popular conviction in those States that American naval power would in emergency become a barrier against the extension of Japanese rule in the Pacific". Other (unspecified) United States papers, he added, considered Australia closer to the United States than it was to England because Australia and the United States shared common ideals. Another (unnamed) United States writer was cited as declaring that, "there is no sentimentalism about the saying 'blood is thicker than water,' but enlightened self-interest". What the correspondent called 'sober writers' suggested the existence in Australasia "... of a lack of confidence in the willingness and the ability of the motherland to protect those States against what is described as the Eastern Peril". The Gazette correspondent concluded by emphasising the "... exceedingly embarrassing consequences of the tour to the Washington Government".169 Whatever embarrassment existed in the United States Government did not surface in the Washington Post, New York Times nor the San Francisco Chronicle. Apparently this was an attempt by the London press to manufacture news

169 Arg, 3 Sept., p. 7; SMH, 3 Sept., p. 7.
to manipulate Australian perceptions of the United States and rein in the
euphoria of Fleetitis'.' The Times' correspondent in Melbourne was quick
to reply to intimations of disloyalty in Australia. In a report filed on 3
September he declared, "I say emphatically that I have heard no such
suggestion (of disloyalty) ... Great Britain may be confident that there is no
feeling of the kind at all". 170 This denial would be used by the London
press and the Herald to absolve Australians of the charge of disloyalty and
shift the blame to the United States.

On 4 and 5 September more reports from London designed to
undermine the status of the United States and lessen Australian concerns
about Japan were published by the Herald and The Age. The first was a
letter from President Roosevelt to his Secretary of State Elihu Root
reaffirming United States-Japanese friendship. According to the Times
correspondent this was to counter "... the continuance of the absurd
agitation for a Chinese alliance against Japan, the anti-Japanese twist given
to Australia's reception of the fleet ..." and "... persistent rumours that
Japan is secretly building up her navy," all of which made the 'Yellow
Peril' loom in people's minds. The New York Evening Post was also cited
as doubting the, "... anti-Japanese scare in Australasia is permanent or
sincere, and whether eventually the obvious difficulties in the way of a
Japanese attack upon her coasts will not dispel Australian fears". 171 Added
to this was an article on Japanese budget cuts, also date line London, 4
September, in which the Times observed that the Japanese plan for
retrenchment "... should allay fifty per cent. (sic) of the tremors of
imaginative persons regarding her supposed bellicose aspirations". 172
With this approach the Times sought to neutralise the effects of 'Fleetitis'
by undercutting the desire for closer ties with the United States, obviating
the fear of Japan and reducing the urgency of an Australian-controlled
naval force.

170 LT, 4 Sept., p. 5.
171 LT, 3 Sept., p. 3; Age, 4 Sept., p. 4, 5 Sept., p. 12; SMH, 4 Sept., p. 7, 5 Sept., p. 13
172 SMH, 4 Sept., p. 13; Age, 4 Sept., p. 12. Previous items had indicated there would be a 30% cut in
military expenditures and a 10% cut in naval expenditures. LT, 31 Aug., p. 3; Age, 31 Aug., p. 6;
SMH, 31 Aug., p. 7.
In their 5 September editions the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age reprinted the denial of disloyalty as it appeared in the Times the previous day and added articles from the Westminster Gazette and the Daily Telegraph that affirmed Britain's superiority in policy making. The Gazette pointed out that, "Australia knows that the Imperial Government must act as the trustee of the Empire ... However much she dislikes the Japanese alliance on sentimental grounds, Australia cannot say she is injured". The Gazette went on to assure Australia that Japan knew that every British colony could exclude foreigners.\textsuperscript{173} An excerpt from the Daily Telegraph concerning an Australian navy declared that so long as the security of Australia depended primarily on the British Navy the Admiralty had to command any Australian naval force if it was to be employed to the best advantage. The Herald noted that, "The London Daily Telegraph is one of the organs of Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Fisher and so may be considered to have drawn from the Admiralty its inspiration for the article condensed in our cables".\textsuperscript{174} This postscript gave the imprimatur of official Admiralty policy to the report.

On 4 September the Sydney Morning Herald reacted, observing that the comments in the United States and London presses on Australia's reception of the fleet,

... show how difficult it is for people on the other side of the world to get opinion on this side into focus ... If our critics in New York would attempt to look at the visit of the American fleet from our point of view they could not possibly take the demonstrations in Australia and New Zealand as indicating a popular conviction that a barrier against the extension of Japanese rule in the Pacific was being erected for our benefit ... If the Government at Washington is exceedingly embarrassed ... it cannot be because our welcome has suggested or expressed disloyalty to our own flag. Our thoughts were never more loyal.

\textsuperscript{173} SMH, 5 Sept., p. 13; Age, 5 Sept., p. 12.\textsuperscript{174} ibid.
The editorial denied everything in the cables' interpretation of events and declared that Australia did not need United States protection against Asian aggression. The Herald bolstered its argument by noting that cuts in Japan's defence budget indicated that it was not inclined to provoke hostilities with the United States.175 The Herald's denial of disloyalty and acknowledgement that Japan was not preparing to confront the United States showed the effectiveness of the London press campaign. Most significantly, its silence on the issue of Australian naval defence signalled that it now accepted the British viewpoint in toto.

By 5 September the Herald and its readership provided a clear example of the constructive-reflective role of the newspaper in society and the depths of loyalist sentiment among Australians. Two letters to the editor asserted that an Australian navy was impractical. The first, from 'W. J. C.,' said that Australia could not afford an adequate fleet, "Until Australia has adequate population we can't consider a fleet of our own". A second letter declared that an Australian navy was "...opposed to strategy ..." and "... would be a toy fleet". The writer, 'Australian,' declared that naval defence had to be controlled by the Admiralty because, "The Empire is one".176 At the Governor-General's State Banquet NSW Premier Wade said Australia was "... content to remain partners under the Imperial flag (loud applause) ..." When he alluded to impressions abroad that Australia was "... anxious to shake off the Imperial union ..." his words were met with vociferous shouts of 'Never!' Wade concluded, to loud applause, that "...Australia had no ulterior purpose of being disloyal to the old stock".177 These sentiments showed how the interchange between the Herald and its readership was mutually shaping opinion and aligning both against the idea of an Australian-controlled navy.

This was further illustrated in a Herald editorial the same day that offered a 'new' solution to the Australian defence problem. The Herald
began by attacking Deakin's defence proposals as impractical and questioned whether he would follow up on them. The editorial went on to assert that Australia should rely on the British navy for defence and that the naval defence question should be seen from the Imperial point of view. The Herald reiterated the point that Australia needed to increase its population as part of the answer to its defence problem. This analysis of the naval defence question affirmed two points. It acknowledged the superiority of British naval strategy and gave Australia an alternative to creating an independent naval force to assuage its security concerns.

The Age, on the other hand, was unmoved by London press reports designed to depict the United States as embarrassed or disinterested, or the Japanese as non-threatening. The Age portrayed the United States and Australia as brothers travelling parallel routes to a similar goal and doing so to a far greater degree than Australia and Britain. These thoughts were echoed in the column, 'News of the Day,' which observed that the Australian people were more like the American than any other nation.178 Continuing its anti-Asian campaign, the paper printed excerpts from Edward Foord's Contemporary Review article in which he compared Japan with the Huns. "There is now a Tartar race in the Far East which less than three years ago showed itself capable ... of inflicting bloody defeats upon a powerful European antagonist ..." Therefore, "...the same Asiatics are fully equal to the people of the West in the qualities that go to the making of great nations".179 While the first article showed The Age's support for closer Australian-United States ties and its disaffection with Britain, the second illustrated why many Australians felt threatened by Japan and why Australia's need for naval defence was so urgent.

On 5 September the Times summarised the salient features of the fleet's visit, highlighting three issues: the encouragement of Australian disloyalty by the United States, the correctness of British naval policy and

178 Age, 5 Sept., p. 4.
179 ibid., p. 10.
the problematic 'White Australia' policy. In the first part of the editorial the Times absolved Australians of disloyalty and pointed its finger at an irresponsible section of the United States press which had "... gone so far as to suggest that the enthusiasm of Australia's welcome ..." implied "... distrust of 'Britain's will or power to protect her against possible hostilities in the Pacific'". The Times trusted that the emphatic repudiation of these views as cited by its Australian correspondent would be faithfully recorded. The editorial then turned to British naval policy and the 'White Australia' policy. The Times asserted that the Empire depended on naval supremacy and until the colonies are able to support that supremacy with ships and men, the burden of defence was entirely Britain's. Unfortunately, the Times opined, Australia's desire for racial purity had led some sections of Australian opinion to take a mistaken view of British policy in the East. Britain's policy of naval concentration was based on strategic considerations, not on popular sentiment. Therefore, the Times observed, "... it need not surprise us that the Australian public is somewhat slow to appreciate the assured merits of the policy which concentrates our main fighting strength in European seas". The Times concluded that Australians were starting to realise what maintaining the 'White Australia' policy would entail. 

This editorial, which was carried by both Australian dailies, contained several elements designed to shape Australian opinion. Australia was absolved of the charges of disloyalty while intimating that the United States was the real villain. The pledge to maintain naval supremacy, though the burden fell entirely on Britain, was both reassurance for its Australian daughter and a subtle reminder that Britain needed financial help to maintain its supremacy. That Australians might be slow to grasp the necessity of the naval concentration strategy also played on the ingrained Australian image of itself as inferior to the

180 I.T., 5 Sept., pp. 5, 9. The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age reprinted this editorial with the Herald adding its own editorial reply. "Contrary to the impression which our welcome of the fleet seems to have made upon some commentators abroad, Australia has not come to doubt either the willingness or the ability of the British navy to guarantee the safety of this part of the Empire. But it has made her
superior Mother Country. Perhaps most significantly, though, it cited the 'White Australia' policy as a factor in undermining Australian support for Britain's naval strategy.

This was followed on 7 September by the text of a cable from the Governor of Victoria to Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for the Colonies:

I am asked by the Ministers of Victoria to acquaint you with the satisfaction which they have derived from the presence during the last week in Hobson's Bay of the United States Atlantic Fleet in the course of its visit to the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Ministers believe that the enthusiasm called forth among the people of Victoria by that visit, and the Mutual Exchange of Courtesies between the Fleet and the Representatives of the State helped to Confirm the Demonstrations of Friendliness towards the Government and People of the United States so eloquently made for the Commonwealth, and they recognise that the Assurance of Affection and Regard for the British Empire and for His Gracious Majesty the King, so often and so felicitously expressed on behalf of the Fleet, could only serve to strengthen, if that were possible, the feeling of Loyalty which is so deeply rooted in our State.

This 'cable of loyalty' was published in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald in its entirety, and reflected the strength of loyalist sentiments among Australians, at least in Victoria.181

On 9 September the Times increased its focus on the 'White Australia' policy, warning Australia that:

... the Empire can hold empty spaces for Australia only if she will do her utmost to utilise them. The Empire, as the price of support of the 'white Australia' policy, may fairly require, and must request, conscientious effort on the part of Australia to set aside jealousies between State and State and between States and the Commonwealth, which now check or hamper the needed stream of immigrants, and dangerously retard the peopling of the continent.

181 Agr, 8 Sept., p. 5; SMH, 8 Sept., p. 7; LT, 8 Sept., p. 3; NYT, 8 Sept., p. 9.
This editorial, cited in *The Age* and the *Herald*, reiterated that until Australia assumes her own defence, the Royal Navy was responsible for the security of Australia. Less than a month after the *Times* had urged forbearance and patience on the racial issue, it now made the 'White Australia' policy a central point in its effort to affirm British supremacy. Australia was being told that to retain the one ideal that nearly all Australians agreed upon, it had to resolve its internal disputes on the immigration issue. In this way the London press sought to shift attention away from the divisive issue of naval defence to one which a vast majority of Australians supported.

The *Times* monitored the Australian reaction to this article and followed it up with more 'advice' for its colonial daughter. On 10 September its Australian correspondent noted that the *Times'* editorial demanding conscientious efforts to end the local jealousies hampering immigration was the subject of much discussion and approbation among Australians. According to the *Times*, both Federal and State politicians agreed that the demand was reasonable but that the State Premiers at their last conference had agreed to resist or hamper any movement by the Federal Government to encourage immigration. The *Times* correspondent opined that,

... Unless well-weighed expressions of opinion from Australian Governor-General Lord Northcote and the leading London papers cause the Premiers themselves to alter their compact, the Federal Government will introduce, and pass a substantial immigration program, independently of the States and will throw on the State authorities the onus of hampering it, if they are so determined.

Following this acknowledgement of the influence of the London press and British-appointed officials in Australia the *Times* once more urged the Commonwealth Government and the States to co-operate for the good of the country. The *Times* added that it was time that the Commonwealth had a representative in London: "Australia cannot, with self-respect,
continue to let it be believed that no adequate representation is to be found ..."183 The Times had placed the onus for resolving the intertwined problems of population and defence on Australia while providing another outlet for the Australian action. In reply, the Sydney Morning Herald agreed with the Times' advice on immigration declaring that Australian efforts had to be co-ordinated and that it was more than high time that a High Commissioner was appointed.184 By promoting the Times' solutions for Australia's problems, the Herald had accepted the premise that Australia could take other actions to resolve its defence needs without establishing an Australian naval force.

On 11 September the Great White Fleet landed at Albany, Western Australia for refuelling. Coal supplies were the key to keeping the fleet afloat but from Auckland to Albany British coal ships had not fulfilled their contracts. This meant that the fleet had to negotiate for supplies along the way and Albany became its last coaling station before leaving Australia.185 This showed how Britain could exert its power and hold the fleet hostage to lessen its impact on Australians. The people of Albany, however, appeared unaffected by any of this as they introduced the fleet to the song, 'We've Got a Big Brother in America.' Written by a Perth newspaperman, the song said in part, "We'll all stand together, boys, If the foe wants a flutter or a fuss, And we're hanging out the sign ... This bit of the world belongs to us!"186 But after the events which had preceded it in Sydney and Melbourne, the visit to Albany was an anti-climax.

By 12 September London press opinion had united to represent Australia's defence problems as self-made because of dissension among the States and the maintenance of the 'White Australia' policy which had resulted in low population. This viewpoint was accepted by the Herald which carried the Westminster Gazette's commentary on the Australian

183 LT, 10 Sept., pp. 3, 7.
184 SMH, 10 Sept., p. 6.
185 Hart, op. cit., p. 198.
State Premiers conference. The *Gazette* noted that the Premiers had decided to hamper and resist the Federal Government’s encouragement of immigration. This led the *Gazette* to observe that “... the successes of the ‘White Australia’ policy will depend upon whether sufficient numbers are attracted to justify the exclusion of non-whites”. Even the *Standard* which had formerly seemed supportive of Australia on naval defence, now saw difficulties for Australia because of internal wrangling and meagre population.\(^{187}\)

On 15 September both the *Times* and *The Age* turned to the topic of immigration. The *Times* referred to a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial that had declared the State immigration policy a failure. The solution, the *Times* reiterated, was a High Commissioner who “... everyone agrees ... should be quickly appointed”.\(^{188}\) An editorial in *The Age* the same day used the immigration issue to attack British policy once more. It noted that Great Britain was facing gloomy industrial and economic prospects for the coming winter. But to *The Age* this was “... a contemptuous reflection on Imperial statesmanship. Britain has excess population seeking work - Australia is in need of people to fill the continent”. In spite of this attack *The Age* had conceded the oft-mentioned point that immigration and Australian defence were intertwined.\(^{189}\)

With the Great White Fleet gone from Australian waters, the Admiralty’s long-awaited reply on Deakin’s new defence proposals arrived.\(^{190}\) On 25 September *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*...

\(^{187}\) *SMH*, 11 Sept., p. 7; 12 Sept., p. 13. On 12 September part XI of the series ‘The Australian Ideal’ was published. In this instalment the correspondent predicted a radical division in Australian politics between the forces of nationalism and colonialism. The supporters of nationalism stood for an immediate effort by Australia to face the responsibility for its own defence while the other camp favoured continuation of the subsidy to the British Navy. There were stirring forces and awakening ideas abroad but while Mr. Deakin has seen the vision and expounded upon it, “... he has not the temperament which translates ideas into action and compels their realization in the world of votes and facts.”\(^{188}\) *LT*, 12 Sept., p. 4. (*My emphasis.*)

\(^{189}\) *Age*, 15 Sept., pp. 4, 6.

\(^{190}\) *SMH*, 22 Sept., p. 7. Significantly, word of the Admiralty’s reply was reported to the Australian papers by Reuters rather the London press, a rare occurrence during this two month period. Considering that the reply was dated 20 August and that at least some of its members must have known the contents indicated that the London press wanted to distance itself from the news. On the twenty-third the *Herald* reported that the * Pall Mall Gazette* “... expected that a special service squadron of modern British ships...
published the Admiralty’s despatch though they differed in their interpretation. The Age boasted that the Admiralty had conceded to Deakin that, “... (the) Admiralty recognises the strong sentiment that Australian defence policy must be on our own and that it is better to accept what we freely give as our own voluntary concession than to attempt any enforcement upon us of views which are alien to our feelings,” The Age added that, “... the history of the British Admiralty is not one which inspires anyone with a high sense of its competency,” and concluded optimistically that the issue may be regarded as practically settled.\(^{191}\) The Sydney Morning Herald, on the other hand, noted that while Mr. Deakin could say the despatch supported his position, this was true in only the technical sense. The Admiralty hadn’t advised Australia on its choice of options. In the Herald’s estimation there were two main considerations in the despatch: “... (the) integrity and freedom of action of the Royal Navy must be unimpaired... and ... Australia’s wishes must be met as far as possible”.\(^{192}\) With the Admiralty’s reply in hand the Herald and The Age continued to play their loyalist and nationalist roles respectively.

After a closer reading of the Admiralty’s reply, however, The Age conceded defeat. In a bitter editorial, The Age lashed out: “The Admiralty is resolved the squadron should be Australian in name only. Under nominal Australian control in time of peace but under Admiralty orders in time of war which can take it to the other side of the world”. After noting that Australian control would cease when leaving territorial waters in peace time, the editorial declared, “Australia wants ships to defend its waters and not to rely on the Royal Navy”. Australia would still assist Britain in an emergency. It seemed that Britain mistrusted Australian intentions while Australia was asking for less from Britain than Britain gave willingly to Japan. This indicated that, “She (Britain) would rather have us as vassals than her allies ...” Since no one in the Australian naval

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\(^{191}\) Age, 25 Sept., p. 4.
\(^{192}\) SMH, 25 Sept., p. 6.
force would have a voice in making or ending war in which Australian men and ships were used by Britain this was a case of "... taxation without representation with a vengeance". The Age sadly concluded that the dream of an Australian navy would never materialise.\(^{193}\) As the final blow had come from the Admiralty, this admission of defeat by the nationalist Age signalled the strength of Australian loyalty to the Empire rather than the success of the London press campaign.

For the Times it was a time for reflection. On 29 September it published a lengthy report from their Sydney correspondent dated 24 August. It began with what was, in hindsight, an apt warning that this was not the time to judge Australian feelings, "... wait until it has visited Japan or possibly when we know how much of it will permanently remain in the Pacific". The correspondent concluded that the fleet's visit was "... a stimulus to greater achievement, to making the Commonwealth ... a helpful, useful daughter in the Imperial household".\(^{194}\) This statement aptly described the psychological mind-set of the British-Australian relationship that had made the London press campaign as successful as it was.

**Epilogue**

The outcome of the fleet's visit was mixed for the parties involved. The rejection of Deakin's defence proposal was followed by his resignation as Prime Minister in November.\(^{195}\) The reception the fleet received in Japan stabilised relations between the two countries and ended talk of war.\(^{196}\) By the end of November Japan and the United States reached an

\(^{193}\) Age, 28 Sept., p. 4.

\(^{194}\) LT, 29 Sept., p. 4.

\(^{195}\) Walter Murdoch, Alfred Deakin: A Sketch, 1923, p. 278. On 2 October the New York Times reported that P. M. Deakin had invited President Roosevelt to visit Australia. The invitation had been cabled in mid-September but a report from Washington stated the message had not been received until 29 September from counselior Esme Howard of the British Embassy. The president replied that he was unable to accept the invitation. Why it had taken the British Charge d'Affaires two weeks to pass the message to the president was not revealed. NYT, 2 Oct., p. 5.

agreement on policy, aims and intentions in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{197} That British-
United States relations were as good as, if not better than before, was
indicated by the invitation tendered to United States ambassador to Britain,
Whitelaw Reid, from Sir Edward Grey of the British Foreign Office. It
cconcerned the London Naval Conference and proposed a preliminary
exchange of views between their respective delegates. Reid reinforced the
openness between Grey and himself by revealing the contents of the
proposed United States-Japanese agreement before it was announced. Grey
commented that, "... a similarity of interests in the Far East has so long
placed the United States and Great Britain in agreeable understanding".\textsuperscript{198}
As for the Australian press, an Imperial Press Conference was called in
1909 summoning to London, "...the men who permanently reflect and
influence the opinion of their Commonwealths". The conference was
called to promote Imperial unity.\textsuperscript{199}

In the event, however, the efforts of the London press only delayed
the establishment of an Australian navy. In July of 1909 a special Imperial
Conference was held on defence matters. While the conference was a
reaction to the naval arms race between Britain and Germany, the results
for many Australians were nonetheless gratifying. The British
government changed its attitude toward colonial participation in defence
with the Admiralty decreeing that an Australian and New Zealand
Squadron might be established "... capable of action not only in defence of
coasts, but also of the trade routes, and sufficiently powerful to deal with
small hostile squadrons ..." In response the Australian government, with
Deakin Prime Minister once more, introduced a bill authorising the
government to finance the construction of the Australian vessels.\textsuperscript{200}

\textsuperscript{197} ibid., pp. 460-1; NYT, 29 Nov., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{198} Gooch and Temperley, op. cit., pp. 330-1, 460-1.
\textsuperscript{200} Gordon, op. cit., pp. 234, 237, 244, 245.
CONCLUSION

Britain’s decision from the mid-nineteenth century to move its Australian colonies towards independence and give them more responsibility for defence had serious repercussions for British-Australian colonial relations. While Britain saw the establishment of a new kind of relationship with its colonies as a way to sustain the Empire, its decision challenged the Australian colonies both politically and psychologically. Politically it forced the Australian colonies to abandon their comfortable cocoon of self-centered isolation fostered by decades of Imperial protection. Psychologically it challenged the Australian colonial view of themselves as the inferior daughters of the superior and protective Mother Country. This process heightened existing divisions among Australian colonists, pitting Anglo-Australian loyalists against Australian nationalists in an effort to re-define the British-Australian colonial relationship. When British actions in the Pacific, e.g., New Guinea, indicated that the new relationship would be based on Imperial, not colonial, needs the Australian colonists grew increasingly concerned about their security. This, in turn, led to strained British-Australian colonial relations.

Australian colonial security concerns were heightened by continual shifts in their defence arrangements. The issue of colonial naval defence had become a key element of the new relationship in the 1860s when Britain decided the colonies should take on more responsibility for their defence. This led in 1887 to the establishment of an Australian-controlled naval defence force. This trend in naval defence was altered two years later when Britain adopted a concentrated naval strategy which significantly reduced the Royal Navy’s presence in Australian waters. As Britain began to concentrate its focus on Europe and the perceived German threat, it had to provide for the Empire’s security in the Pacific. To do this, Britain sought closer ties with Japan and initiated efforts to
regain control of Australian naval defence. These actions exacerbated two interconnected colonial Australian concerns - the perception that they were being abandoned by Britain and the fear of the 'Yellow Peril'. The Australian colonies reacted by fighting to retain control of their naval defence force at the Colonial Conference of 1897 and the Commonwealth's establishment of the 'White Australia' policy.

For Britain, these actions appeared to be a challenge to Imperial authority and defence strategy and raised doubts about Australian loyalty to the Empire. Were Australian security concerns stronger than its feelings of loyalty to the Empire? When Australia ceded control of its naval defence force as a result of the Colonial Conference of 1902, the situation appeared to be resolved. In the event, however, the loss of control over its naval defence forces only fuelled nationalist sentiment among Australians. Australia, under the leadership of Deakin, set about regaining control of its naval forces. After failing to do so at the 1907 Colonial Conference, Deakin's invitation to the Great White Fleet opened a different avenue to the same end. As a result, the London press, acting as an agent of British Imperialism, tried to rally Empire loyalty among Australians by neutralising the effects of the fleet's visit and reinforce British supremacy in the British-Australian relationship.

To accomplish this, the London press used its advantages - its editorial voice and control of the flow of information to Australia - to try to shape Australian perceptions of the Great White Fleet and undercut Australian support for an Australian navy. The London Press's initial strategy had a two-fold thrust. It would rally Australia’s loyalty to the Empire by playing on Australia’s self-image as the inferior daughter of the superior Mother Country. At the same time, the London press would try to divert Australia’s desire to take independent action to ensure its security into channels more beneficial to Imperial strategy. These efforts had to be expanded when Australians became infected by Fleetitis'. The
London press attempted to do this by undermining the status of the United States and diminishing the Japanese threat in Australian eyes.

A day-to-day examination of the reportage of the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age demonstrates that the London press campaign was not uniformly successful. Contrary to contemporary opinion, the Herald did not act as the mouthpiece of Anglo-Australian loyalists, at least initially. While the Sydney paper clearly accepted much of the British Imperialist argument as expounded by the London press, it supported the idea of an Australian-controlled naval force until the Pall Mall Gazette report that the United States government was embarrassed by Australia's welcome for the fleet. But even the London press's assertions that internal Australian dissension and the 'White Australia' policy were the real cause of Australia's defence problems failed to dissuade The Age from supporting the establishment of an Australian navy. Only the Admiralty's reply to Deakin's defence proposal was able to do that.

As Australia was granted its own naval force less than a year after The Age had bitterly conceded it would never eventuate, the significance of the London press campaign was not its success or failure. Its significance was in showing the predominance of the sentiment of Empire loyalty among Australians in spite of Australian concerns about its security. Despite decades of friction the overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic Australians could no more cut the 'crimson thread of kinship' to Britain than it could accept Asian immigrants. It would take the very real threat of Japanese invasion in World War Two to embrace the United States as its protector and an additional twenty five years to end the 'White Australia' policy. The process of cutting the final formal ties with Britain by establishing a Republic continues today.
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