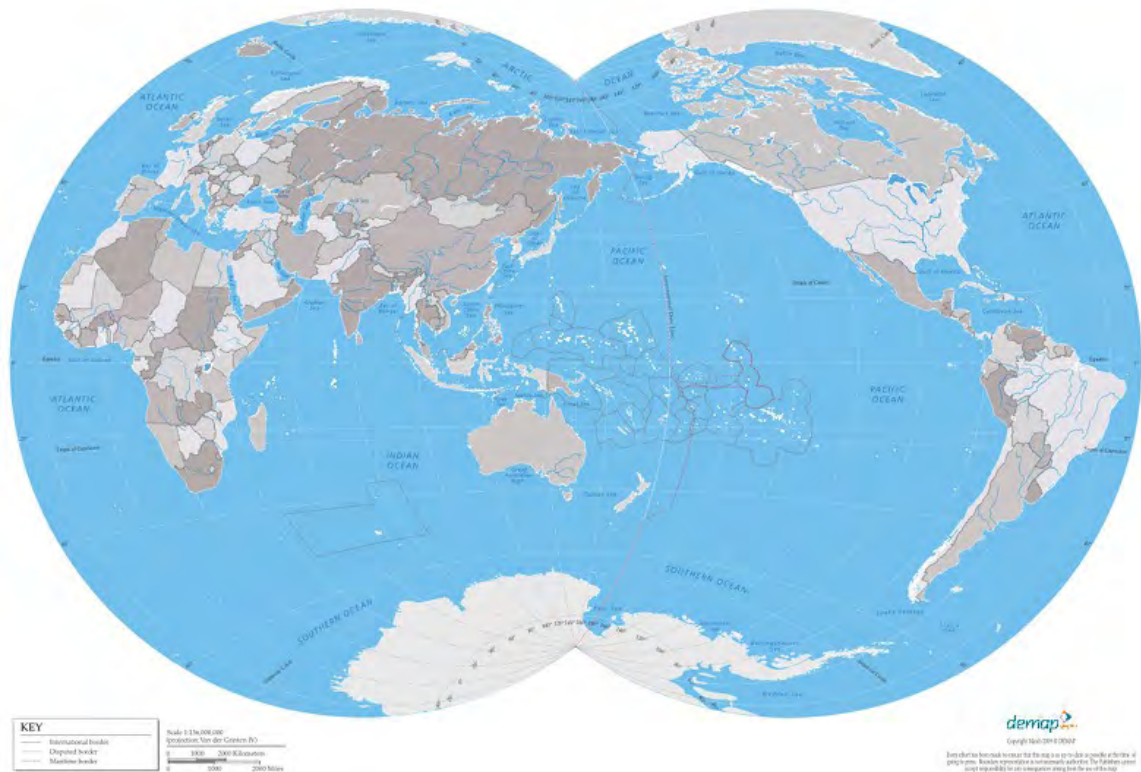




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## North by North West Cape: Eyes on China



**Richard Tanter**

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## Synopsis

Richard Tanter from the Nautilus Institute writes that the recent AUSMIN meetings between Australian and United States officials resulted in significant developments on two key issues: the unresolved but crucial conundrum of the Australian and US strategic relationship vis-a-vis China, and Australia's enthusiastic deepening integration into US global space-based intelligence and military communications systems. In particular, the ratification of a new treaty to build a new joint facility at North West Cape, as part of the US Space Surveillance Network, is clearly tied to US concern over China's challenge to American space superiority.

“What is most striking about the language of recent AUSMIN public statements about new United States and joint facilities”, Tanter argues “is that Australia is now an enthusiastic participant in these US global military systems.” He concludes that “Signals short of war in diplomacy don't come much bigger than enthusiastic building of military bases. The strategic options for Australia about China's rise that Hugh White urged for serious public discussion may well be enthusiastically pre-empted by what appear to China as all too concrete facts on the ground. The calculations about the costs and benefits of the joint US-Australian facilities carried out by Australian officialdom in secret almost forty years ago need to be revisited – this time in public.

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In early November this year, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates swung through Canberra and Melbourne for the annual AUSMIN talks, and held meetings with their counterparts, Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defence Minister Stephen Smith. There's always an appearance of 'head office'–'branch office' co-ordination about AUSMIN meetings, making sure both parties are reading from the same page. The problem is that in this bilateral relationship, there's not much doubt about who wrote the page.

AUSMIN's bland communiqués and announcements provide a window onto key developments. This year was no exception, with references to two central issues: the unresolved but crucial conundrum of the Australian and US strategic relationship vis-a-vis China, and Australia's enthusiastic deepening integration into US global space-based intelligence and military communications systems.

### **The China Conundrum**

In AUSMIN 2010 and in the 2009 Defence White Paper<sup>1</sup> the rise of China was expected to cause disruption and "turbulence" in the East Asian status quo, though both were silent on with the awkward problem of China being creditor to a bankrupt US and saviour of Quarry Australia. The issue was particularly difficult in the talks because neither country can make up its mind about whether China is to be the United States' strategic partner or strategic competitor. The WikiLeaks documentation of Rudd's self-styled "brutal realism" advice to Hillary Clinton to contain China, by force if necessary, confirmed the presumption that Rudd had effectively dictated the blunt and crude formulation of the "China threat" in the 2009 Defence White Paper. In the leaked cable, *The Australian* reported,

Mrs Clinton is quoted as asking Mr Rudd, "How do you deal toughly with your banker?"

Mr Rudd goes on to describe himself as a "brutal realist" on the issue of China and argues for a "multilateral engagement with bilateral vigour".

"(Which would integrate) China effectively into the international community and (allow) it to demonstrate greater responsibility, all while also preparing to deploy force if everything goes wrong" the cable quotes Mr Rudd as saying.<sup>2</sup>

However these reported preferences for tough-minded realism and induced participation in liberal rule-based multilateral institutions finally say little to answer Mrs Clinton's question about America's banker. Nor do they face the more fundamental implications for Australia of the already visible prospect of the end of American hegemony in Asia – in the Gramscian sense of acceptance by subordinate countries of the rules of the game set by the hegemon. The central part of that hegemony, epitomized by the 1972 meeting of Mao Tse-tung and Richard Nixon, was

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, Defence White Paper 2009, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Maley, "Kevin Rudd's plan to contain Beijing", *The Australian*, 5 December 2010.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/kevin-rudds-plan-to-contain-beijing/story-fn59niix-1225966044004>

the Chinese acceptance for the next three decades of American global dominance in return for both protection from the Soviet Union and the opening of the American market to Chinese state capitalism. The certainties of that period have passed.

The fundamental issues for Australia were constructively outlined at some length by former Deputy Defence Secretary Hugh White in his recent Quarterly Essay on “Australia’s Future between Washington and Beijing”<sup>3</sup>. White’s exploration has opened up a range of fundamental strategic options for Australia not publicly discussed seriously since the 1984 appearance of David Martin’s *tour de force* — *Armed Neutrality for Australia*.<sup>4</sup> White reminds us, as did Martin a generation ago, that there is at least one substantial and plausible alternative to reliance on the United States, if not several.

“In broad terms Australia has five alternatives in a more contested Asia. We can remain allied to America, seek another great and powerful friend, opt for armed neutrality, build a regional alliance with our Southeast Asia neighbours, or do nothing and hope for the best.”<sup>5</sup>

Yet for all of the virtue of his efforts to urge reconsideration of fundamental issues of national strategic posture, White and the 2009 Defence White Paper share the widespread assumption that China is a rising revisionist power that sooner or later must come into severe conflict with a status quo United States. White should be read together with the quietly iconoclastic critique of this position by the American theorist Steve Chan in his *China, the US, and the Power-Transition Theory*.<sup>6</sup> Without going into detail about his many stranded argument, Chan provides good reason for scepticism about those expectations – and an implicit warning of the consequences of uncritical acceptance of the power transition theory applied to China and America. Even without the WikiLeaks confirmation, AUSMIN 2010 and the 2009 Defence White Paper demonstrate the hold that a crude version of power transition theory has in Canberra and Washington’s thinking about China. And those assumptions about the certainty of turbulence in the wake of China’s rise in turn are now feeding back into the Rudd-Gillard governments’ enthusiasm for expanding United States bases in Australia.

### **Back to Bases, or Eyes on China**

Thus the second important issue in AUSMIN 2010 was a new agreement between the United States and Australia covering the North West Cape communications base. This was the latest in a series of AUSMIN base announcements. Since the beginning of the Australian involvement in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, there has been a steady stream of AUSMIN announcements of expansion or development of United States military access to existing or new Australian facilities. New joint facilities were announced at North West Cape (2008 and 2010), Kojarena near Geraldton (2007). New or increased United States access was announced to a number of existing

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<sup>3</sup> Hugh White, *Power Shift: Australia’s Future between Washington and Beijing*, Quarterly Essay 39, September 2010.

<sup>4</sup> David Martin, *Armed Neutrality for Australia*, Dove Communications, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> White, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Steve Chan, *China, the US, and the Power-Transition Theory*, Routledge, 2009.

facilities: the Bradshaw Field Training Area (2004) and the Delamere Air Weapons Range (2005) and Shoalwater Bay (2004) in the Northern Territory, the Joint Combined Training Centre (2004), and the Yampi Sound Training Area northwest of Derby, Western Australia.<sup>7</sup>

In AUSMIN 2008, Gates and Smith's hapless predecessor Joel Fitzgibbon signed the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Operation of and Access to an Australian Naval Communications Station at North West Cape in Western Australia* - somewhat bravely named the Harold E. Holt Treaty.<sup>8</sup> This allows the US to build facilities at North West Cape, and subsequently elsewhere in the country, as part of the US Space Surveillance Network, directly linked to the US Joint Space Operations Centre (which has Australian personnel on its staff) under the US Air Force Space Command. The precise nature of the new North West Cape facility was not specified, beyond saying that ground-based 'sensors', most likely including radars, would be established somewhere in Australia.<sup>9</sup> To date there has been little public curiosity about these technologies and systems and their possible locations, and their strategic implications for Australia or for the countries whose space assets may be monitored.

The *2010 Exchange of Letters* ratifying the Treaty required 'that US use of the Station be in accordance with the Australian Government's policy of full knowledge and concurrence.'<sup>10</sup> The significance of this particular one-page agreement — undoubtedly accompanied by a number of more important secret agreements related to the facility — becomes clear in the light of the history of the facility and its likely new functions.

At the same time Gates and Smith also signed a *Space Situational Awareness Partnership Statement of Principles* 'to further strengthen already significant Australia-US defence space cooperation'.<sup>11</sup> Publicly, this is to enable better tracking

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<sup>7</sup> For details see the relevant for each facility at *Australian defence facilities*, Nautilus Institute.

<http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/defence-facilities>

<sup>8</sup> *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Operation of and Access to an Australian Naval Communications Station at North West Cape in Western Australia*, signed, Washington, 16 July 2008.

<http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Info/Treaties/treaties.nsf/AllDocIDs/7C412787D76BB66FCA25747B000B6564>

<sup>9</sup> "While no decision has been made on the establishment of such sensors, the placement of ground-based SSA radars in Australia could extend the coverage of the US Space Surveillance Network in our region." *Space Situational Awareness Partnership fact sheet*, AUSMIN 2010.

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/Space-Situational-Awareness-Partnership-fact-sheet.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> *Australia-United States Exchange of Letters Relating to Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station, 2010*, AUSMIN, DFAT.

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/Exchange-of-Letters-Relating-to-Harold-E.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Defence and Robert M.Gates, Secretary for

of objects in space, especially 'space-junk' which could collide with operating satellites on which a great array of civilian and military activities depend. The *Statement* went on to outline the ways in which this initiative was prefigured in the *2009 Defence White Paper*:

The White Paper (paragraphs 9.99-9.100) identified that our ability to access space, gain the benefits of space-based systems and protect ourselves from foreign exploitation by space-based capabilities, such as intelligence satellites, are key requirements for our defence capabilities, and will play an increasingly important role in military operations.

Important and commendable though that function may be, the wider importance in the Space Command's overt goal of military command of space was clear, if unspecified: 'Australia and the United States intend to continue to grow their history of defence space cooperation, building upon recent initiatives such as investment in the US Wideband Global Satellite (WGS) program and Ultra High Frequency communications satellite sharing'.<sup>12</sup>

Although it did not use the word, the *Space Situational Awareness Partnership Statement of Principles* also made the connection between the new facility at North West Cape to the question of China's military rise which had preoccupied the strategic discussions at AUSMIN 2010 crystal clear:

The White Paper also identified an emerging threat from counter-space technologies such as anti-satellite missiles and signal jamming, and noted that protecting our assets from counter-space capabilities and from accidental damage caused by space debris will be critical.

The most important tests of "anti-satellite missiles and signal jamming" in recent years have been conducted by China. On 11 January 2007 China successfully launched a missile that collided with its target, an inactive weather satellite on a polar orbit at 865 km. This resulted in a vast amount of space debris, it also provided proof of concept of an anti-satellite capacity against low earth orbit (LEO) satellites - those orbiting between about 160 - 2,000 km above the earth's surface. Moreover, China has also apparently tested an anti-satellite capacity based on radio frequency and laser weapons systems capable of being directed against geo-stationary satellites - those orbiting at about 36,000 km above the earth's surface.<sup>13</sup> Desmond Ball made the significance of both sets of Chinese anti-satellite capacities clear:

Defense, *Statement of Principles, Australian-United States Space Situational Awareness Partnership*, 10 November 2010

<http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/smithstatementstpl.cfm?CurrentId=11059>

<sup>12</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs Kevin Rudd, Minister for Defence Stephen Smith, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, *Australia-United States Joint Statement on Space Security*, AUSMIN 2010, 8 November 2010.

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/Australia-United-States-Joint-Partnership-on-Space-Security.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Desmond Ball, *Assessing China's ASAT program*, Austral Special Report 07-14S, Nautilus Institute, 14 June 2007.

<http://www.nautilus.org/publications/essays/apsnet/reports/2007/0714s-ball>

China's ASAT test has been widely viewed as a direct challenge to US space superiority. The US maintains by far the largest fleet of military and intelligence satellite systems in the world, and the mission of the US Space Command is to maintain control of space. The transformation of the US military for Network-centric Warfare and Information Operations is increasing its reliance on space-based assets. American satellites are lucrative targets in the Chinese strategy of asymmetric warfare. As one Chinese defence analyst has noted: 'For countries that can never win a war with the United States by using the method of tanks and planes, attacking the US space system may be an irresistible and most tempting choice'. Even a limited ASAT capability would be extremely useful to the PLA in contingencies involving the Taiwan Strait.<sup>14</sup>

For all of the talk about the public good of tracking space junk, the American radars and other sensors to be deployed at North West Cape and elsewhere in Australia are fundamentally related to a potential Chinese challenge to United States goal to control space unilaterally.

### **Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt**

The Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt is presently made up of three sites some 60 kilometres apart running the length of the narrow peninsula separating the Exmouth Gulf from the Indian Ocean.<sup>15</sup> The original primary purpose of the US Naval Communication Station North West Cape when it opened in 1967 was to enable the US Navy to communicate with submerged submarines (and surface vessels) in the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean. Two important qualities of Very Low Frequency signals is that they follow the curvature of the earth and hence can be received at great distances, and that they can be detected by receivers more than twenty metres underwater. Transmission of such Very Low Frequency radio signals required more than a million watts of power and the construction of twelve towers more than 300 metres high to support a network of antenna wires for the transmission of these powerful signals. This 400 hectare site, known as Area A, lies at the very tip of the Cape, and for more than two decades was a key link in US Navy communications, with its Polaris and other strategic nuclear missile submarines. Areas B and C hold high frequency transmission and receiving facilities further south on the peninsula, and until 1998, a Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) satellite communications ground station.<sup>16</sup> Polaris submarines were retired from the

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Two key sources on the facility are Desmond Ball, *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate: American Installations in Australia*, Hale and Iremonger, 1980, pp.50-57; and the official Australian government history by Brian Humphreys, *Calls to the Deep: the Story of Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt, Exmouth, Western Australia*, Defence Publishing Service, 2006. See also *Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt (North West Cape)*, Australian defence facilities, Nautilus Institute (updated regularly).

<http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/defence-facilities/naval-communication-station-harold-e.-holt-north-west-cape>

<sup>16</sup> Desmond Ball, *Code 777: Australia and the US Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS)*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.56 (Strategic and

Pacific in 1982, and were replaced by Ohio-class submarines carrying Trident nuclear ballistic missiles of much greater range, which relied principally on Jim Creek in Washington for VLF communications.<sup>17</sup> But until that point, Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt would have been a high priority Soviet nuclear target.

Following the signing in May 1963 of the *Agreement with the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Establishment of a United States Naval Communications Station in Australia [North West Cape - Exmouth WA]*, it became clear that the Australian government had no control over or access to the contents of those communications. In March 1974 the Whitlam Labor government subsequently renegotiated the base treaty, leading to the dropping of the 'US' from the name of the facility, and an increased but still for many years insignificant Australian presence.<sup>18</sup> "In the Communications Centre, the only thing the Americans and Australians shared was the coffee pot."<sup>19</sup> During the 1980s "joint" operation came to have more substance. By 1992, the United States no longer needed direct access to the base and the long-resident Naval Security Group detachment was withdrawn in October of the year<sup>20</sup>, and full command passed to the Royal Australian Navy. In 1999 Australia took over responsibility for the facility, although US involvement and funding continued.

In AUSMIN 2008, as part of the gathering wave of new US military, intelligence and military communications co-operation with Australia, Fitzgibbon and Gates' signing of the Harold E. Holt Treaty, with Fitzgibbon announcing that

[T]his Treaty is yet another example of the breadth of the Australia–US Alliance. From the mountains of Afghanistan to the depths of the oceans, Australia and the United States are working together across a wide range of Defence activities aimed at maintaining a secure world.<sup>21</sup>

PR language apart, Fitzgibbon was quite right. AUSMIN 2007 saw the announcement of a new 'US strategic and military satellite communications system at the Australian Defence Satellite Communication Station (ADSCS) located at Geraldton in Western

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Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989) pp.142-55; and

Humphreys, *op.cit.*, p.140.

<sup>17</sup> Desmond Ball, "The Strategic Essence", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 55.2, 2001.p.239.

<sup>18</sup> *Exchange of Notes constituting an Agreement to further amend the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Establishment of a United States Naval Communication Station of 9 May 1963 [NW Cape Amendment]*.

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1975/2.html>

<sup>19</sup> Cited by Humphreys, *op.cit.*, p.154.

<sup>20</sup> *NAVSECGRU Stations Past and Present*, Navy CT History.

[http://www.navycthistory.com/CI\\_Stations\\_past\\_and\\_present\\_alphabetical\\_3a.html](http://www.navycthistory.com/CI_Stations_past_and_present_alphabetical_3a.html)

<sup>21</sup> *Minister For Defence meeting with US Secretary of Defense, Signing of Harold E. Holt Treaty*, Joel Fitzgibbon, Minister for Defence, Media Release MIN87/08, 18 July 2008

[www.minister.defence.gov.au/fitzgibbontpl.cfm?CurrentId=8000](http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/fitzgibbontpl.cfm?CurrentId=8000)



Australia'.<sup>22</sup> ACDS at Kojarena, 30 km west of Geraldton, is a major signals interception station operated by the Defence Signals Division, and contributes to the worldwide Echelon system. The new joint Kojarena facility will play a key role in the Pentagon's complex and continuously developing Global Information Grid.<sup>23</sup>

Renewed and heightened US involvement in the Kojarena and North West Cape facilities for space surveillance and global military signals intelligence and communication has followed on from a decade of rapid technical and organisational developments in the global US signals intelligence interception system of which the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap is a key part. The result is that Pine Gap, and most likely in turn Kojarena and North West Cape, are increasingly closely tied to US military operations worldwide, but particularly to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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### **“Full knowledge and Concurrence”**

It is here that the concern expressed in the most recent Exchange of Letters about the precise understanding of the two governments of the phrase ‘full knowledge and concurrence’ is salient, but in a manner almost completely opposite from any concerns about Australian exclusion from the key functions of ‘joint’ facilities in the past. The 2010 AUSMIN Exchange of Letters spelled out the public understanding of this ‘key underlying principle for all joint Australia–US facilities, including the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap and the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station’, whereby ‘full knowledge’ “equates to Australia having a ‘full and detailed understanding” of the facility and its capability:

Full knowledge and concurrence is an expression of Australian sovereignty; of our fundamental right to know what activities foreign governments conduct in, through or from Australian territory or national assets. ‘Full knowledge’ equates to Australia having a ‘full and detailed understanding’ of any capability or activity with a presence on Australian territory or making use of Australian assets. ‘Concurrence’ does not mean Australia approves every activity or tasking; rather, we approve the presence of a capability or function in Australia in support of its mutually agreed goals, based on our full and detailed understanding of that capability and the uses to which it can be put.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> On the Geraldton/Kojarena facility see *Geraldton Australian Defence Satellite Communications Station*, Australian defence facilities, Nautilus Institute (updated regularly).

<http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/defence-facilities/australian-defence-satellite-communications-station-geraldton/australian-defence-satellite-communications-station>

<sup>23</sup> “Special Report: The USA's Transformational Communications Satellite System (TSAT)”, *Defense Industry Daily*, 11 October 2007.

<http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/special-report-the-usas-transformational-communications-satellite-system-tsat-0866/#timeline>

<sup>24</sup> See Richard Tanter, *Pine Gap and the coalition wars in Afghanistan and Iraq*, (draft), presentation to public meeting, Alice Springs, 13 June 2007.

[http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/pine-gap/Alice meeting.ppt](http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/pine-gap/Alice%20meeting.ppt)

<sup>25</sup> *Australia-United States Exchange of Letters Relating to Harold E. Holt Naval*

This formulation results from attempts by Australian defence officials since the 1970s to gain greater access to both the operations and products of these facilities. The claim that these facilities really were a ‘joint’ operation and that Australia had both operational involvement and access to the intelligence product was – and remains – a politically crucial buttress to the wider claim that the hosting of the bases is of great benefit to Australia. Most importantly, the ‘joint’ claim helped former Defence Minister Kim Beazley and his successors to claim that the cost of hosting the bases, and in particular the high likelihood of Soviet targeting of Pine Gap, Nurrungar and North West Cape in the event of nuclear war, was a price worth accepting.

Ball summarised the situation concerning North West Cape, Nurrungar and Pine Gap:

During the Cold War, it was considered that in the unlikely but possible event of a strategic nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union, they would probably be high-priority nuclear targets. Australian sovereignty was compromised by operations involving some of the facilities (and especially North West Cape, where Australia had no control over or even any right to be informed about the communications passing through the station, including possible commands to launch nuclear missiles).<sup>26</sup>

After leaving office Beazley confided to a parliamentary committee that “we accepted that the joint facilities were probably targets, but we accepted the risk of that for what we saw as the benefits of global stability.”<sup>27</sup> Again, writing after leaving office, former Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Dibb put the secret calculations more explicitly still in the case of North West Cape:

We judged, for example, that the SS-11 ICBM site at Svobodny in Siberia was capable of inflicting one million instant deaths and 750,000 radiation deaths on Sydney. And you would not have wanted to live in Alice Springs, Woomera or Exmouth — or even Adelaide.<sup>28</sup>

Whatever approximation of “full knowledge and concurrence” the governments and officials of the day may have had of the operations and consequences of these facilities, it was withheld from the Australian public. Public concern was politically deflected by the mantra of achieving “joint” control of the facilities, with undocumented assertions of a contribution to global deterrence.

There was no public acknowledgement of these threats by governments of the day – or since. A decade after Beazley and Dibb spoke, after leaving office, of their acceptance of this calculus on behalf of the Australian public, there has still been little

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*Communications Station, 2010*, AUSMIN, DFAT.

<sup>26</sup> Ball, “The Strategic Essence”, *op.cit.* p.238.

<sup>27</sup> Kim Beazley, presentation to Seminar on the ANZUS alliance, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Parliament of Australia, 11 August 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Dibb, “America has always kept us in the loop”, *The Australian*, 10 September 2005.

by way of informed scrutiny of these claims – of either the benefits or the costs. Today, two decades after the end of the Cold War that spawned these facilities, supporters of the US alliance regularly cite access to US intelligence product from these facilities and elsewhere as an irreplaceable benefit of alliance.<sup>29</sup> As Ball put it,

it has been considered that hosting the installations, and accepting the attendant risks and costs, represents Australia's most meaningful contribution to the alliance, in return for which the United States provides the sophisticated technology necessary for Australian self-reliance in credible defence contingencies.<sup>30</sup>

What is most striking about the language of recent AUSMIN public statements about new United States and joint facilities is that Australia is now an enthusiastic participant in these US global military systems. Far from being fearful of what may not be known, Australian governments not only now give informed consent, but want to be enthusiastic participants.

This is certainly true of the facility first known as U.S. Naval Communication Station North West Cape, which is once again to become a joint Australia-United States facility. The details of the space surveillance sensor systems and radars to be installed at North West Cape and elsewhere are vague at this stage, but AUSMIN 2010 brought us a new “Space Situational Awareness Partnership” with every sign of a Chinese target. Most of the other new joint or shared facilities – Bradshaw, Delamere, Shoalwater Bay, and Yampi Sound – mainly relate more broadly to ADF-US military interoperability capacity or simple access to training territory (e.g. the use of Delamere Air Weapons Range for Guam-based US Air Force B-52 and B-2 strategic bombers bombing practice<sup>31</sup>). Kojarena contributes to US global communications and intelligence integration, as does Pine Gap on a much larger scale.

But the new North West Cape joint facility, unclear though its specifics may be, has a much more direct target in China. The WikiLeaks revelation of former Prime Minister Rudd's enthusiastic advocacy of a new containment policy towards China, seems, as the one of the best informed of Australian China correspondents put it, naïve.

It also seems short-sighted, given how tightly our economies, people and political and physical environments are intertwined. Australia should not be signalling to Washington, let alone Beijing, that it ranks China closer to an enemy than friend, given what's at stake if that favour is repaid.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See especially Testimony of Professor Desmond Ball to the Joint Standing Committee On Treaties, Reference: Pine Gap, Official Committee Hansard, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 9 August 1999, pp 1-16; and Testimony of Professor Paul Dibb to the Joint Standing Committee On Treaties, Reference: Pine Gap, Official Committee Hansard, 9 August 1999, pp 17-28.

<sup>30</sup> Ball, “The Strategic Essence”, *op.cit.* p.238.

<sup>31</sup> *Delamere Air Weapons Range*, Australian defence facilities, Nautilus Institute.

<http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/defence-facilities/delamere-air-weapons-range>

<sup>32</sup> John Garnaut, “Rudd meets a brutal reality”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 2010.

Signals short of war in diplomacy don't come much bigger than enthusiastic building of military bases. The strategic options for Australia about China's rise that Hugh White urged for serious public discussion may well be enthusiastically pre-empted by what appear to China as all too concrete facts on the ground. The calculations about the costs and benefits of the joint US-Australian facilities carried out by Australian officialdom in secret almost forty years ago need to be revisited – this time in public.

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