

MORE THAN CRICKET? MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA[†]

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Introduction: Neglected Neighbour?

If there is a single theme which is repeated, with variations, over the postwar decades, it is that Australia has persistently neglected its relationship with the countries of South Asia, especially with India. Snippets from titles and subtitles of books, articles and theses convey the burden of the repeated argument: *A Tale of Missed Opportunities* (Gurry 1993b), *No Will or Way?* (Gurry 1993a), *Australia's Neglected Neighbour* (Gurry 1996), *Peaks and Troughs* (Kuruppu 2000), *The Diplomatic Vacuum* (Vicziány 1994). Occasionally authors suggest that things have changed for the better: *Renaissance in Australia's Relations with South Asia* (Teague 1994), *Evolving Australia-India Relations* (Gopal 2002).

[†] This paper was presented to the 17 Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Melbourne 1-3 July 2008. It has been peer reviewed via a double blind referee process and appears on the Conference Proceedings Website by the permission of the author who retains copyright. This paper may be downloaded for fair use under the Copyright Act (1954), its later amendments and other relevant legislation.

Without question, the most memorable image of the repeatedly neglected relationship with the region, generally, was that offered by then Minister for Foreign Affairs Bill Hayden:

Let me start with an unfortunate fact. This is that in public affairs and in political discourse—the Indian Ocean has normally been more down the priority scale than up. It has depended on the circumstances prevailing. When the times have demanded a bit of a show (like an election campaign) the Indian Ocean has been plucked out and dusted off. At all other times, it has been left packed away like Aunt Tilly's expensive bone china teaset— an object of occasional curiosity but not much practical use. (Hayden 1984)

Australia and India

It is analytically sensible to divide Australia's links to post-Independence India into four phases: the first corresponds to the years immediately surrounding Indian Independence when Labor was in power in Australia. The second period is the Menzies Years, the third we may term the post-1971 Re-discovery of India, and the last is the current engagement with Emerging India. While the first three periods correspond largely to changes of party in power in Australia, the most recent is largely bipartisan.

Phase I: India's Independence and Australia

When India became independent in 1947, Australia's relations with India under Labor, which remained in power until 1949, were 'close and sympathetic' (Watt 1968, p. 220). At India's invitation, two representatives from Australia participated at the 1947 Asia Relations Conference held in New Delhi. Reports presented by the two delegates back to the Australian government noted little negativity in the relationship, although the question of restrictions on immigration was raised during the conference (Watt 1968, pp. 222-223).

Phase II: Nehru and Menzies: The Doomed Legacy of a Clash of Dominant Personalities?

What emerges in striking fashion from the interpretations of a number of the studies of the first two decades after India's Independence in 1947 is the argument that relations in those formative years pivoted around the strong personalities of Sir Robert Menzies and Jawaharlal Nehru. In her Ph.D. thesis and works derived from it, Meg Gurry placed greatest explanatory weight for the failure to develop closer relations squarely on the clashing personalities of Menzies and Nehru (Gurry 1992-1993, p. 511; cf. ,Gurry 1996, p.15).

In his Ph.D. thesis which sought to analyse bilateral ties from the Indian perspective, Nihal Kuruppu arrived at similar conclusions. He also identified the importance of clashes of personality, background and ideology between Nehru and Menzies as being of major importance in this first period (Kuruppu 2000). In a section he subtitled “The Clash of Titans”, Kuruppu explores the inevitable conflicts between the strong personalities of Menzies, the anglophile Empire loyalist, and Nehru, the leader of struggles against colonialism in India and the Third World. Menzies thought India not yet fit for self-rule (Kuruppu 2000, p. 193), regretted the passing of the White Commonwealth of the 1930s (Kuruppu 2000, p. 137) and decried India’s unwillingness to offer loyalty to the Crown in the changed post-colonial Commonwealth (Kuruppu 2000, p. 130). It was not until India’s border clashes with China in 1962 that the two nations were firmly on the same side of a major international crisis.

Differing Positions in the Cold War

An alternative position to the emphasis on personality clashes is one which focuses on the broad differences in strategic position adopted by Australia and India, in particular the incompatibility in their positions on the Cold War.

In his Ph.D. thesis- one of the first detailed studies of the India-Australia relationship- F. A. Mediansky placed the primary emphasis on the differences in approaches to security which emerged soon after 1947. While Australia hoped to establish a regional security arrangement which included India, India expressed no interest in the proposal. Australia’s growing alignment with the USA in the emerging Cold War “virtually removed any possibility of bilateral defence co-operation” (Mediansky 1971, p. 27).

As an aside: Mediansky adds several other issues on which the two countries differed including Australia’s Trusteeship position in Papua New-Guinea and the clash between India and Pakistan over the accession of Kashmir. Regarding the latter he quotes from a confidential Foreign Affairs document:

In determining the line to follow [on Kashmir] the fundamental principle should be to cultivate Pakistan rather than India if we must make a choice. (Mediansky 1971, p.61 emphasis in original document)

Kuruppu argues that the differences in strategic outlook can be understood in India’s

adoption of ‘idealism’ in its approach to international affairs, while Australia under Menzies opted for ‘realism’ (Kuruppu 2000, p. 25, pp. 28-32).

Phase III: Relations 1971-1998-Silence Punctuated by Occasional Hiccups

Too little trade

A theme which becomes increasingly important in studies from 1980 onward is the lack of substantial economic reinforcement in Indo-Australian relations. Then Senator Baden Teague argued that what he identified as a ‘post-1986 renaissance’ in relations had its basis in “diplomacy, trade and investment” (Teague 1994, p. 21).

Episode 1: Concern over Indian Intentions in the Indian Ocean

In the past 20 years, the Australian government has paid considerable attention to India as both a security threat and as a potential trading partner. One of the early manifestations of the ‘renaissance’ of interest was the establishment of the Indian Ocean Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Western Australia in 1990.¹ This may well have been a response to emerging concerns in the late 1980s over the build-up of India's defence forces, especially the extension of its naval capability. So, too was a pioneering report by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (of which Teague was Deputy Chairman) in 1990 (1990). Some of the testimony to the Committee utilised a distinctly alarmist tone about Indian intentions in the Indian Ocean. The National Council of the Australian Defence Association for example, in their submission to the Committee expressed their fears that India might use its new naval capabilities to annex Australian territory in the Cocos Islands.

The Association wishes to emphasise the significance of Cocos as potentially Australia's Falklands...It is the Association's view that Australia could marginally deter an [Indian] attack on Cocos by demonstrating a commitment to the islands' defence but would find their recovery virtually impossible. (Hansard 1989, p. 191)

The Committee, wisely, did not accept the alarmist views of the Australian Defence Association. It did urge government to invest increased resources into the study of India,

¹ When initial funding expired in 1995, the Centre moved to Curtin University to become the Indian Ocean Centre.

greater internal coordination within government, and better support for Australian firms seeking to do business with India (Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs 1990). In addition to its other recommendations, the Committee recommended the establishment of an Indian Studies Centre, a proposal which led to the all-too-brief establishment of the National Centre for South Asian Studies in Melbourne in 1993. The Australia-India Council was also established in 1992 as an immediate outcome of a recommendation in the report.

Episode 2: Selling Mirages to Pakistan

Another ‘hiccup’ in the Australia-India relationship also arose in the sphere of defence when in 1990 Australia sold 50 mothballed Mirage III jets to Pakistan during a period of heightened tension over Kashmir (Cheeseman 1992).

The Senate Standing Committee Report of 1990 was followed by a succession of others. An outstanding example was the report produced by the East Asia Analytical Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade *India’s Economy at the Midnight Hour: Australia’s India Strategy (1994)*. Based on impressive work by the late Meredith Borthwick, the report was a comprehensive survey of the Indian economy following the initiation of reforms in 1991. This ground-breaking report also introduced a change in emphasis: instead of reiterating the slenderness of Indo-Australian ties, it placed emphasis on the opportunities which India’s reforms had opened to Australian business.

In 1996 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sponsored *New Horizons*, a major relationship-building event which brought business, academic, political and cultural leaders from Australia to India.

In 1998 the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade issued a report the focus of which was exclusively upon the trade relationship (1998). As with *India’s Economy at the Midnight Hour*, the emphasis was again on opportunities to deepen Australia’s trade and investment relationship with India.

The most recent addition to the detailed reports on the Indian economy was *India: New Economy, Old Economy* published in 2001 (Economic Analytical Unit 2001).

The shift in focus in official reports from political to economic relations is also reflected in the scholarly literature which has emerged since 1961. One of first of these studies was the

collection edited by Marika Vicziany in 1993 (Vicziany 1993a) contributors to which explored politics (Gurry 1993b), conditions for market success (Vicziany 1993b), the trade performance of each partner (Mathur 1993), business culture in India (Mayer 1993), a major Australian transfer of coal mining technology (Paligaru 1993), and the migration of Indian IT professionals to Australia (Lakha 1993).

In 1994 the National Centre for South Asian Studies and the Indian Ocean Centre for Peace Studies produced a wide-ranging study of Australia's relationship with the countries of South Asia (Vicziany and McPherson 1994). Intended to complement *India's Economy at the Midnight Hour*, the 30 contributors looked at political, economic and cultural facets of the relationship with India and its neighbours.

In the early 1990s, a number of postgraduates in Australian universities produced theses which explored the economic relationship between the two countries in depth (Mathur 1999, Khan 1999).

'the relationship we have been just about to have' (Henningham 1995, p. 5) ?

As this brief review indicates, if there is a consistent theme in the literature devoted to the Australia-India relationship, it is that, in its greater attention to Japan, China and Indonesia, Australia has devoted too little effort in building a firm relationship with India. Although this might almost deserve to be termed the 'mating cry' of specialists working on India, it is appropriate to ask if it is, indeed, valid to charge Australia with neglect of its relationship with India. We would argue that rather than engage in repetitive exercises in self-flagellation, it is time to recognise that if there has been neglect in the relationship, it has been largely because of indifference on the part of India that the relationship has never achieved the depth which many Australian observers have hoped for.

This is not an entirely original observation. What Kuruppu in his thesis observed of India in the period 1947-1949 may well be said to be true of much of the past sixty years:

[N]onaligned India, with its major international stature at the time and its sheer size in population, was neither conscious of being neglected by Australia, nor particularly interesting in upgrading the relationship. Australia did not excite the attention needed to figure in India's global interests. To say otherwise is to skirt the truth.

Kuruppu also cites an earlier observation to this effect by R.G. Neale:

The first thing to strike the inquirer into Australia's relations with India is, I think, the contrast between the tremendous importance attached by Australia to India's role in Asian and world affairs, and the insignificant extent to which Australia has figured in India's view of Asia and the world (Neale 1968, p. 67 cited in Kuruppu, p. 58)

One way of illustrating India's lack of interest in deepening the relationship is provided by a comparative schedule of visits to the other country by prime ministers of the two countries.

Table 1-Reciprocal Visits by Australian and Indian Prime Ministers, 1951-2008

Year	Australian PM	Indian PM
1951	Menzies	
1959	Menzies	
1973	Whitlam	
1978		Desai [Regional CHOGM]
1979	Fraser	
1980	Fraser [Regional CHOGM]	
1981		Indira Gandhi CHOGM
1983	Hawke [CHOGM]	
1986		Rajiv Gandhi
2000	Howard	
2006	Howard Rudd	
2008	(proposed)	

Sources: (Gurry 1996; Varma 2002, plus various internet sources)

As can be seen in Table 1, Australian prime ministers have made 3 visits to India for every 1 Indian prime ministerial visit Down Under. Most notably, since the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, every Australian prime minister-with the glaring exception of Paul Keating-has made at least one visit to India. By contrast, it has been 22 years since an Indian prime minister has come to Australia. Many of the visits from either side related to participation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM), underscoring the role played by multilateral memberships.

Another indicative measure is to consider the extent of Indian examination of the relationship with Australia. To our knowledge, there have been no equivalents of the parliamentary reports prepared by committees of the Parliament of Australia. Nor are we aware of any publications comparable to the economic studies issued by the Economic

Analytical Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

There have been a number of scholarly examinations of the relationship, most notably the contributions to *Australia in the Emerging Global Order: Evolving Australia-India Relations* edited by D. Gopal (2002). The contributors to the section on Australia-India relations (Agrawala 2002; Bala 2002; Kaul 2002; Kaur 2002; Varma 2002) are on the whole all able and perceptive. What is striking about both their contributions and about Gopal's volume, more generally, is the dependence of the authors on Australian sources and of the editor on the Australia-India Council for financial support. The dependence on Australian sources reflects both the difficulty in gaining access to official records in India as well as the fact that there is little to cite.

India's neglect of the Australia relationship can most usefully be seen as part of its broader neglect of its relationship with Asia in the years before the adoption of the 'Look East' policy. The collapse of the principal structure of Indian foreign policy which followed the implosion of Soviet Union in 1989 led the country to give serious attention to its relationships with the countries of Southeast Asia and North Asia (Thakur 1995).

One significant recent development which runs counter to the broad pattern sketched here is the emergence of a group of Indian scholars engaged in Australian Studies. The annual meetings of the Indian Association for the Study of Australia may mark the beginning of a significant shift in attitudes and attention from the subcontinent.

Phase IV: Nuclear Bombs and Terrorist Threats

Episode 3: India's nuclear tests and after

The Australia-India relationship that had shown a degree of warmth in the 1990s with the publication of several reports containing recommendations for further strengthening the relationship dipped fast in the wake of India's nuclear testing in May 1998.

Prime Minister John Howard condemned it saying it was an 'an ill-judged step' that would have 'damaging consequences for security in South Asia and globally'. His foreign minister Alexander Downer called the tests 'outrageous acts perpetrated by India'. In the aftermath of

the tests, not only did Canberra withdraw its High Commissioner from New Delhi, it imposed severe sanctions on India (and later on Pakistan when it also tested nuclear devices) including suspension of ministerial and official level visits and defence relations, and cancellation of naval ship and aircraft visits, officer exchanges and other defence-related visits. India was not surprised at Australia's condemnation but rather by the severity of its condemnation (Bonnor 2001, p. 6), stronger than those of the US, UK or Canada. Stung by the reproof, India reacted by announcing that it too would sever all military ties with Australia. The following two years after India's nuclear tests were without doubt the most difficult period in the bilateral relationship.

With the US attitude softening towards India, especially as US President Bill Clinton visited India in March 2000, Canberra also began to warm up to New Delhi. As the reality that India was a nuclear state hit the world and Canberra, politico/security ties began to be restored slowly and upgraded vastly in the post 9/11 security environment. Then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer visited New Delhi in March 2000 and announced resumption of defence ties. He laid the groundwork for the visit to India of Prime Minister John Howard in July.

Both on political and official levels signs of improvement in the relationship began to appear as official pronouncements began to acknowledge India's importance to Australia. The 2000 Defence White Paper, for example, mentioned India in numerous places recognising its growing importance in the context of Australian security by stating that 'it is India's growing role in the wider Asia Pacific strategic system that will have more influence on Australia's security.' (Department of Defence 2000, p. 19). It further noted that India is increasingly important to the wider regional strategic balance. The document stated that effort should be made to set up the kind of dialogue that will allow both nations to explore and better understand one another's perspectives (Department of Defence 2000, p.38).

The importance of India noted in the Defence White Paper was further reinforced in the defence update papers published every two years by the Department of Defence. Although the 2003 Defence Update did not mention India and South Asia in its report, the 2005 Update (Australia's National Security) recognised both strategic and economic importance of India (Department of Defence 2005, p.1).

In the post 9/11 environment, a Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in

Combating International Terrorism was signed in August 2003 followed by a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in 2006.

Apart from signing the MoUs at government level, interactions at non-official levels to discuss and debate security and defence cooperation have also occurred in a structured way. Since 2001 a second-track security dialogue meeting between the two countries has taken place about every eighteen months consisting of leading security and defence experts and observers from government departments of both countries. This is an informal process where participants take part in their private capacities and do not necessarily represent their countries or governments. But the outcome of their deliberation and recommendations are presented to government departments of both countries for their consideration.

The navies of Australia and India together with the US, Japan and Singapore participated in an exercise off the coast of India coded the Malabar Exercise. Navy-to-navy talks began in January 2007 and proposals were made to joint talks between the Indian and Australian air forces (Dodd 2007).

Quadrilateral framework

A proposal was floated to expand the existing trilateral framework consisting of the United States, Japan and Australia to include India and start a quadrilateral process. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was one of the chief proponents of this proposal and according to its supporters, these four democratic nations in the Asia Pacific had shared security concerns and together they must discuss their concerns in a multilateral setting. Attractive as it might seem, there was little enthusiasm in Australia as the Chinese leadership criticized the proposed grouping as ganging up against Beijing (Jain 2007). While ministers of these four nations met once in Thailand in 2007, the quadrilateral framework has virtually fizzled out especially as Abe is no longer in his position and the new government in Canberra pronounced it dead when Foreign Minister Stephen Smith announced Australia's withdrawal from it in the presence of the Chinese Foreign Minister. India clearly resented the way the shift in Australian policy was announced as it was construed as crude diplomatic support for China at the cost of India.

With the arrival of the Rudd government in Canberra, the developing Australia-India ties

under the later half of the Howard government have suffered several setbacks. The most serious of which was Canberra's announcement of scrapping the uranium sale deal agreed by the Howard government in 2007.

Episode 4: To sell or not to sell: Uranium

Supply of uranium to India has become a huge political issue in the Australia-India bilateral relationship. After a civilian nuclear technology deal signed between the United States and India in 2006, pressure on Australia to consider supplying uranium to India grew from different quarters, but most notably from India. Then Prime Minister John Howard resisted the pressure by asserting that Australia's policy was not to supply the yellow cake to a country that has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Indian policymakers and strategists have the habit of comparing India's relations with other nations in the context of China. Such commentators criticised Australia's hypocritical approach to the issue. They ask how Australia justifies its policy of exporting uranium to China which, though it is a signatory to the NPT, is a known proliferator as Beijing has reportedly supplied nuclear technology and materials to North Korea and Pakistan, states run by autocrats and military dictators, and has nuclear ties with Iran. On the other hand India claims it has never proliferated nuclear weapons or technology to a third party despite not signing the treaty due to its discriminatory nature. Providing access to Communist China and withholding such access to India, the world's largest democracy does not go down very well among many commentators and officials in India.

Under pressure Howard later changed his tune by accepting that India's behaviour as a nuclear weapons state had been 'impeccable; since the country first exploded a nuclear device in 1974'. In August 2007 he announced that Australia was willing to sell uranium to India under strict conditions and Howard communicated his decision to his Indian counterpart. (Shanahan and Ryan 2007). The agreement would have allowed Australian nuclear inspectors to ensure that the uranium was used only for the power generation purposes (Dodd 2008). Then in Opposition, Kevin Rudd had vowed to "tear up" any nuclear deal with India if he won government.

Soon after it came to power, the Rudd Labor government reversed Howard's decision and

announced in January 2008 that Australia would scrap the deal that was signed by the Howard government in August 2007 concerning the sale of uranium to India on the grounds that India was not a signatory to the NPT, reverting to Australia's long-held stance on the issue. The volte-face by the Rudd administration on the sale of uranium to India came as a significant blow to India's energy security needs especially as Australia holds the world's largest known reserves of uranium, approximately 40% of the total worldwide supplies. It is not just the Indian strategists who have criticised Rudd's reversal of Howard's policy on legal, political, strategic and pragmatic grounds (Chellaney 2008), but in Australia, too, politicians on the opposite side in federal parliament have ridiculed Rudd's reversal policy (See for example, Johnson 2008, Australian, 2007).

Strategic commentators such as Sandy Gordon have also supported supply of uranium of to India on grounds of India's clean record of non-proliferation and its energy requirements (Gordon 2007, p. 56).

The uranium issue will remain as the most important bilateral matter which does not seem to be resolved easily. India will keep pressuring the Labor Government to change its policy, although it is highly unlikely that the Labor Party is going to make changes in its 'no uranium to India' in a hurry.

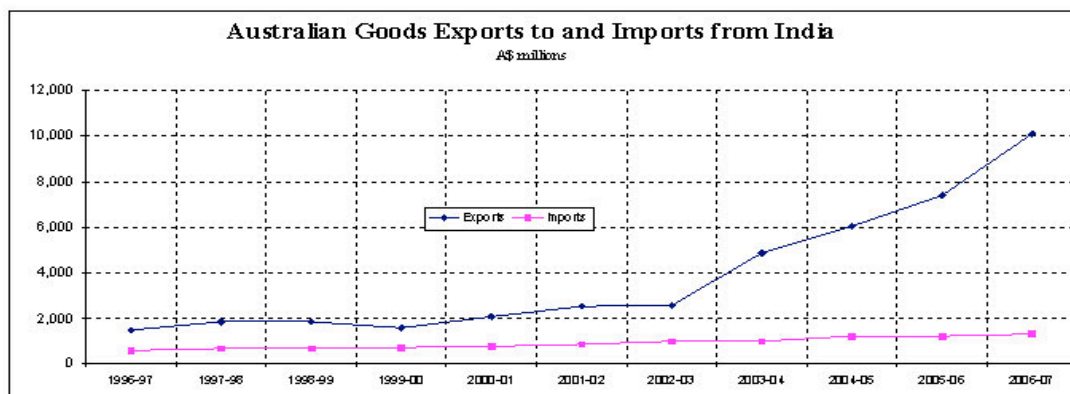
Given Rudd's hard-line approach towards India on the nuclear and uranium issues, it is unlikely that intensive security and strategic ties will develop between the two. Commentators in the past believed that 'Australia and India have limited bilateral security interests in common' (Bonnor 2001, p.13). Bonnor further observed that 'Neither country is central to the other's strategic planning, yet both are influential in regions about which the other wants a deeper understanding' (Bonnor 2001, p. 17). India's continuing perception of Australia is 'something of a pale shadow of the US' (Dodd 2007). The onus of engagement lies on both parties. Gordon commented that 'Australia has mostly been the suitor and Indian the reluctant bride' (Gordon 2007, p. 46). But India must realise that it also needs to court Australia and present its case to Canberra through diplomatic and other means. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukerjee's visit to Canberra in June 2008 was a step in the right direction. New Delhi needs to be patient with Canberra until a final outcome of the US deal emerges. Similarly, it is no good for Canberra to make hasty announcements one way or the other on the issue. Although this is a most significant and difficult bilateral matter at the moment, the two nations have many other issues on which cooperation can be pursued both

bilaterally and multilaterally.

Despite Rudd's and Labor Party's hard-line approach to India on the nuclear and uranium issues, India has not given up on Australia and is trying to engage Canberra diplomatically through ministerial visits. By June 2008 India already dispatched seven ministers including Mukerjee with the aim of strengthening ties with Australia. Although of course a prime ministerial visit to Australia is long overdue since Rajiv Gandhi's visit in 1986.

Economic and Trade

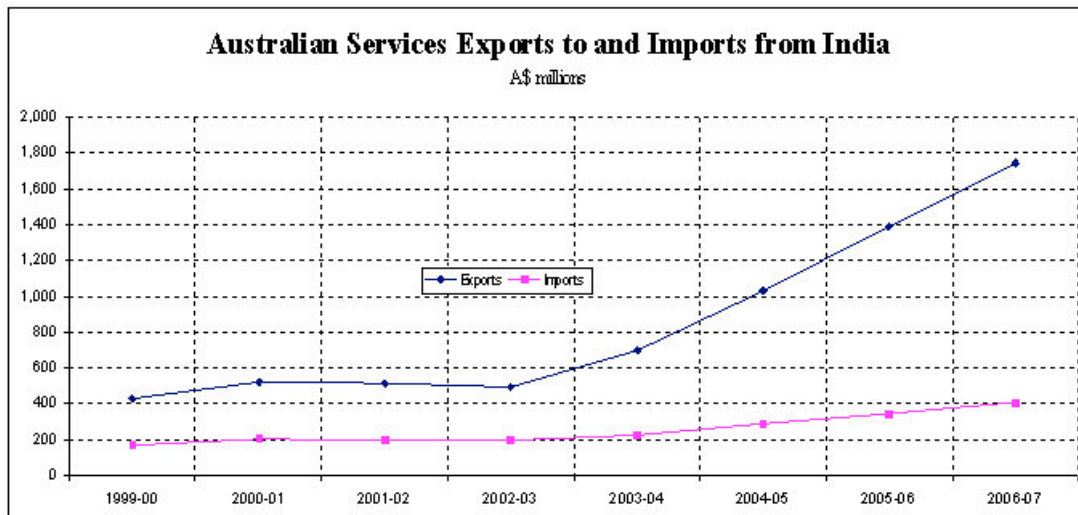
Australia began to take greater notice of India after the Indian economy began to grow substantially and eventually became the second largest growing economy in the world, following China. India's economic growth presented an opportunity for Australia's suppliers to sell their products in the expanding and liberalised Indian market. This has led to rapid growth in Australia-India trade in the last five years, growing even faster than trade with China. Australia's main merchandise exports to India are coking coal and gold. In early 2008 DFAT reported that India was Australia's sixth largest goods export market and eight largest services market (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008, p.1). However, bilateral trade remains hugely in favour of Australia as the graph below shows. India has not made it an issue, as the Indian economy is on the upswing and its total global trade is in India's favour.



Source: ABS

Source: DFAT (2008, p. 9)

The above pattern is unlikely to change as demand for Australian goods (primary products) will further rise, given the projected growth of India and imports from India will remain highly limited. Bilateral trade in services tells the same story as the merchandise area.



Source: DFAT (2008, p. 11)

Growth in this sector is due primarily to education-related travel services originating from the large increase in Indian students studying in Australia. In 2007 alone, more than 65,000 students enrolled in various educational institutions throughout Australia. India's service exports consist of IT, software and business process outsourcing (BPO). Although India has strengths in exporting BPO services, opportunities remain limited due to sensitivities in Australia of job losses and the security of information involved (Gordon 2007, p. 54).

To further strengthen their bilateral economic relationship India and Australia are now considering moving towards a Free Trade Agreement for which joint study of its feasibility is already underway and is scheduled to be completed by early 2009.

Conclusion: Australia's Asia and Regional Institutions

Australia's definition of Asia in the past was too frequently limited to Northeast and Southeast Asia and focused on the Pacific side of Asia, not on the Indian Ocean side. For

example, Paul Keating's book published in 2000 had little discussion on India (2000). The former prime minister made it clear that he wanted India to be excluded from the APEC. The famous 1989 Garnaut Report *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy* mainly dealt with northeast Asian states (Garnaut 1989). The 1997 *White Paper on Foreign Trade Policy* as outlined by then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer had no mention of India in it (Downer 1997).

This changed by the time of the 2003 White Paper. While launching *Advancing the National Interest* Foreign Minister Downer in his speech made several references to India. He said 'Japan, Korea and China remain vitally important, as do the emerging giant of India and the recovering region of South East Asia.'

India is not quite on the centre stage of the new Labor government's Asia diplomacy, but Rudd while launching his vision of a Asia Pacific Community did include India along with the US, China, Japan and Indonesia. His foreign minister Stephen Smith seems to be India-inclined. During his meetings with the visiting External Affairs Minister from India, Smith strongly supported India's bid to join APEC after the moratorium on its expansion expired in 2010 and he also supported India's bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

From the Indian side, External Affairs Minister Mukerjee in return has supported the inclusion of Australia as an observer in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a status already enjoyed by countries such as Japan and China.

Overall, since 2005 there has been steady progress in the bilateral relationship, despite disagreements over India's stance on the NPT. For Australia, India is still on the periphery of its Asia vision and for India Australia is not high on its diplomatic agenda, although there seems to be some shift reflected in half a dozen senior Indian ministers visiting Canberra in the first six months in 2008. Nevertheless, after six decades of neglect on both sides, the Australia-India relationship may be poised to embrace more than cricket.

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