

The ANZUS Alliance

[The following is a reprint of a Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs document, *GIST*, dated April 1987. *GIST* is a quick reference aid on U.S. foreign relations, but is not to be considered a comprehensive policy statement.]

Background: The ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, U.S.) Treaty Alliance was formed in 1951 at the initiative of Australia and New Zealand. The three signatories pledged to "maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist attack." Each recognized that an armed attack in the Pacific area on any of them posed a danger to the peace and safety of the other two, and each agreed "to meet the common danger in accordance with its respective constitutional processes."

Alliance Benefits: ANZUS has played a vital role in helping to assure peace and stability in the Southwest Pacific region. Access to allied ports by U.S. naval vessels, including nuclear-capable and nuclear-powered warships, has made an important contribution to the flexibility and effectiveness of U.S. naval forces in the Pacific. Globally, ANZUS is part of the Western alliance system that has been so effective in promoting arms control and, through deterrence, lessening the risk of conflict.

ANZUS also provides a framework for additional cooperation including military exercises, unit exchanges, joint training, standardization and interoperability of equipment and weapons systems, intelligence and personnel exchanges, and regular high-level political exchanges.

Risks of Alliance: Critics of ANZUS in both Australia and New Zealand have charged that participating in the alliance makes their countries more vulnerable to nuclear attack. The perceived risks of cooperation, however, are less than those that would arise from erosion of the common commitment to deter aggression.

Views of Australia and New Zealand: The Australian Government regards cooperation with the U.S., including important joint defense facilities located in Australia, as worthwhile in order to enhance deterrence, make nuclear war less likely, and increase prospects for verifiable arms control.

In contrast, as of July, 1984, New Zealand's Labor Government adopted a policy that precludes visits by nuclear-capable and nuclear-powered U.S. ships in order to protest "things nuclear." The New Zealand Government contended that the country's location--far from potential adversaries--rendered any nuclear defense unnecessary and therefore unwarranted.

U.S. Position: The U.S. is pro-ANZUS, not pro-nuclear. We share New Zealand's concern about the risk of nuclear war and have emphasized our deep desire to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. The New Zealand port ban policy undermines the very security arrangements designed to prevent war, and harms, rather than helps, our efforts to achieve arms control goals.

New Zealand's denial of port access resulted from the U.S. "neither confirm, nor deny" policy governing the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board our visiting nuclear capable ships. New Zealand's policies on port and air access effectively precluded visits by threatening to compromise our universally applied policy. That policy is considered essential to avoid providing potential adversaries with critical intelligence about our most militarily capable ships. Moreover, more than 40 percent of our naval combatants are nuclear-powered, and that proportion is

growing. New Zealand's policies thus prevented practical alliance cooperation under ANZUS and precluded U.S. implementation of defense commitments to New Zealand.

On August 11, 1986, after extensive efforts to resolve the port access issue were unsuccessful, the U.S. announced that it was suspending its security obligations to New Zealand under ANZUS. The U.S. could not give credence to the argument that alliance status is compatible with highly selective security cooperation.

ANZUS Today: The legal framework of ANZUS remains intact. After suspension of U.S. security obligations, the New Zealand Government reaffirmed the importance it attaches to further development of political, economic, and social ties among the ANZUS partners, especially with Australia. New Zealand also asserted that it is prepared to meet regional and ANZUS security responsibilities through conventional defense.

Australia expressed its hopes that New Zealand would change policies to permit full operation again of ANZUS. Since August, the U.S. has taken a low-key approach toward a more limited relationship with New Zealand, based on reciprocity and treatment of New Zealand as a non-allied friend. Sharply curtailed defense and security cooperation with New Zealand continues, but New Zealand has lost the special access and influence normally accorded an ally.

Under ANZUS, our strong and dynamic security relationship with Australia continues. The U.S. and Australia look forward to the time when New Zealand's port access policies will make it possible to resume a normal allied defense relationship, and they have sought to keep the ANZUS structure intact for eventual return to trilateral defense cooperation.