

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Based on this conducted research that utilized the conceptual framework of Asymmetrical Alliance by James D. Morrow, findings have shown three main reasons behind why Australia and the US countries maintained their military defense alliance despite having huge differences in their capabilities of power and political standing. The first reason talks about the division of roles between these two countries in the alliance based on their relative powers which makes the US as the major and Australia as the minor power. Through these roles, Australia as the minor power tends to lean towards the US who is the major power and holds onto its presence in the Asia-Pacific region because of the guarantee of power the US holds in its economic and military power.

The second main reason is due to the existence of shared threat perceptions that were able to urge the two countries to work together and hence, strengthening the alliance as they fight against common enemies like Japan, USSR, GWOT, and China. Here, we can see how the majority of these threats like the USSR, GWOT, and China were originally US conflicts that evolved into a perception of threat for Australia along the way on account of the US' role as the major power of the alliance that is able to influence Australia's policy decisions. Lastly, the third reason is related to the trade commitments executed by both countries as the major-minor power in terms of autonomy and security. Throughout the conduction of this research, we are able to see how Australia as

the minor power continues to depend on the US for an increased security in terms of military enhancements and defense cooperations even though it is done at the exchange of losing its autonomy little by little over the past few decades in order to accommodate the US' interests as the major power of the alliance.

To summarize, this research aims to seek the answer to the research question of: Why have Australia and the US kept maintaining their military defense alliance despite the asymmetrical structure in their political standing and capabilities of power? Further explained through the in-depth analysis and findings in the third chapter, the Australia–US military defense alliance was able to last through 8 decades due to the asymmetric nature of the alliance, the fulfillment of both countries' interests, and the benefits that the two countries were able to gain from it, which also proves the hypothesis statement of this research. The system of this asymmetric structure works through the division of roles between a major-minor power and how they maintain their roles together, shared threat perceptions that successfully strengthened their relationships even more at the purpose of a common enemy, and also how each of them benefits through the alliance based on their respective roles.

If I were to add my personal opinion on behalf of my role as the author of this research thesis, I would like to include two aspects into the concept of Asymmetrical Alliance. The first aspect is about how a shared perception of threat does not have to threaten the security of both the major and minor power at the same time but how it could suffice as a threat for both even if the major power is the only one threatened by it. This can be observed through the conditions of

Australia's involvement in US-led invasions during GWOT and their drastic change of attitude against China over the past few years which scholars and even Australian officials have deemed to be unrelated to Australia's core interests and only because Australia wanted to gain the US' trust. This aspect also relates to my second aspect of how the autonomy-security tradeoff, especially in terms of the minor power's autonomy, is a dynamic process. Instances of a decreased autonomy for the minor power in regards to the Australia–US military defense alliance happens whenever a conflict or a shared threat perception exists, like the fight against the Japanese during the Second World War, the intention behind the ANZUS Treaty, Australia's involvement in GWOT, and China's rise. However, during the absence of these threats, the minor power's autonomy is not decreased as much as if they were in the middle of those conflicts where the major power tends to hold the influence.

Once again as the author of this research thesis, I understand that there are certain limitations that involves the limitation of data provided in this thesis, especially in regards to the dynamics of both countries for the past 80 years. Hence, this author would like to call for further research from respective scholars and expertise regarding the asymmetric nature of the Australia–US military defense alliance. All in all, I hope that this thesis is able to contribute in widening the field of research in regards to the topic of asymmetrical alliances and the dynamics of its state members. Additionally, I would like to welcome future readers who are interested in exploring this topic as I also hope this thesis could be useful to them as a reference to their research.

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