



United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

**DEC 17 2019**

Case No. R-2020-00002

NSA Case No: 102994 (R-1)

John Greenewald  
The Black Vault  
27305 W Live Oak Rd  
Suite 1203  
Castaic, CA 91384

Dear Mr. Greenewald:

I refer to your November 21, 2017, request to the National Security Agency for the release of certain material under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552). Of the relevant documents retrieved in response to your request, one was considered to be of primary interest to the Department of State and was referred to us for appropriate action.

After careful review, we have determined that it may be released in part. Information was exempt from release pursuant to the following exemption:

- 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3), which concerns matters specifically exempted from release by statute. In this instance, Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S.C. 3605) and 50 U.S.C. § 403-l(i)(1) (currently at 50 U.S.C. § 3024(i)(1) (National Security Act of 1947).

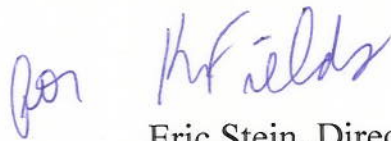
If you are not satisfied with the National Security Agency's determination on pages 1, 2 and 4 of the document, you have the right to appeal to NSA/CSS Freedom of Information Act Appeal Authority. The appeal must be postmarked no later than 90 calendar days after the date of the initial denial. Decisions are appealed after the 90 days will not be addressed. The appeal request shall be in writing to the NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority (P132), National Security Agency, 9800 Savage Road STE 6932, Ft. George G. Meade, MD 20755-6932. Requests may also be submitted via fax at 443-479-3612 or email at [FOIARSC@nsa.gov](mailto:FOIARSC@nsa.gov). The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularly, the grounds under which the

requester believes release of information is required. The NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority will endeavor to respond to the appeal within 20 working days after receipt, absent unusual circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with Department of State's determination on page 3 of the document, you may administratively appeal by writing to: Appeals Officer, Appeals Review Panel, Office of Information Programs and Services, U.S. Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LA, Room 5420 (HST), 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520, or faxed to (202) 485-1718. Appeals must be postmarked within 90 calendar days of the date of this initial agency decision letter. Please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly state why you disagree with the determination set forth in this response.

Additionally, if you are not satisfied with DOS's determination in response to your request, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to inquire about the FOIA Mediation Services they offer. The contact information is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, email address: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone: (202) 741-5770; toll free number: 1-877-684-6448; fax: (202) 741-5769.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "for Eric Stein".

Eric Stein, Director  
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:  
As stated.

This document is made available through the declassification efforts  
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

# The Black Vault

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**(U) US-Australia relations**

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**View from Canberra**

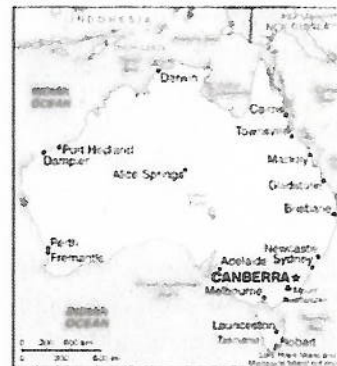
(U) Since the 1970s, Australia's relationship with the United States has supplanted that of the UK. The US is now Australia's major strategic partner and its second largest trading partner (accounting for AUD30.06 billion in 2004, or 11.6 per cent of total Australian merchandise trade). The two countries also share a common cultural background (both having a British colonial heritage) and strong investment ties.

The United States is Australia's closest military ally, a relationship underpinned by the long-standing Australia, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) Treaty. Despite its 'self-reliance' stance, Australia continues to place significant emphasis on the understanding that the US would provide very substantial military support should Australia come under direct attack. In such a scenario, the ADF is likely to make extensive use of US capabilities including heavy-lift air assets, carrier-borne aviation, intelligence gathering and logistics support.

The election of Kevin Rudd ushered in an initial period of cooler bilateral relations before president George W Bush left office in January 2009. This resulted from Rudd's decision to withdraw some 600 Australian combat troops from Iraq in mid-2008.

Relations between Rudd and President Barack Obama are cordial, and Rudd has stressed that he has never sought a total break from the US. Certain military support units will remain in Iraq, namely the Security Detachment protecting Australian diplomats in Baghdad, a naval frigate (currently HMAS Anzac) protecting oil platforms in the Persian Gulf, as well as several Hercules and Orion aircraft that also service Australia's operations in Afghanistan.

Further, Rudd has repeatedly stressed that his administration remains fully committed to keeping a troop presence in Afghanistan "for the long haul".



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Australia, along with other close allies such as the United Kingdom, enjoys increasingly open access to sensitive US military technology. This access is considered important for the ADF, which recognises that in order to maintain a capability edge and high level of interoperability and commonality, where appropriate with US forces, it must endeavour to keep pace with US technological advances in selected areas. The US has expressed its desire that the ADF should be as compatible with its US counterparts as possible to enable effective coalition joint operations.

## View from Washington DC

(U) The US alliance with Australia dates from 1951 with the signing of the Australia-New Zealand-US (ANZUS) agreement, which served as a defence security pact for the Pacific region. The treaty, together with the rapid commitment of Australian troops to the Korean War, enhanced Australia's standing as an ally independent of the UK and gave the US an important foothold in the struggle against communism in the Pacific. ANZUS did not guarantee military support for Australia or New Zealand from the US, but provided for consultation in the event of an attack on any of the three countries. Although the three-way alliance collapsed in 1986, when New Zealand banned US ships from its ports on the grounds that they were carrying nuclear weapons or were nuclear-powered, the alliance with the US has continued to be the foundation of Australian defence policy. Australia invoked the ANZUS treaty after 11 September 2001, declaring that attacking the US was tantamount to attacking Australia and contributed special forces to military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Australia committed military forces as part of the US-led coalitions that removed the Taliban from power in Afghanistan in 2001 and to Iraq in 2003, and in mid-2009 had around 1,000 military personnel in Iraq, with withdrawal of forces initially slated for the end of July 2009. As prime minister John Howard, through staunch support for the Bush administration's war on terrorism, forged a politically and personally close relationship with then president George W Bush and the ties between the two countries were further strengthened when the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement came into force in 2005. However, despite these bonds, Australia's geopolitical position is the cause of some potential uncertainty as it looks to enhance its relationship with regional powers, and in particular China, while maintaining the value of its bilateral relationship with Washington.

The divergence in Australian and US attitudes towards China has caused tensions in the past. Despite its close alliance with the US, Australia is considerably less perturbed than Washington about China's emergence as a major international power. Australia sees China's economic growth as bringing major opportunities for its own economy. Australian exports to China have doubled since 2000 and China is Australia's third largest trading partner. Further evidence of Australia's desire to enhance friendly relations with China was shown by an agreement in April 2006 for China to buy 10,000 tonnes of Australian uranium per year to aid its nuclear energy programme. In 2005 Australia signed a deal to sell natural gas worth USD25 billion to China. Australia did not endorse the 2005 US proposal that the EU retain an arms embargo against China. Such Canberra-Beijing co-operation is likely to continue, particularly given the November 2007 election of Kevin Rudd, a former ambassador to China who is fluent in Mandarin, to the office of prime minister.

Australia's growing economic relationship with China does not mesh well with the US position, with Beijing set to come into increasing competition with the US, particularly regarding energy consumption. Although Australia's position is sustainable during peacetime, the institutionalised links between the US and Australia mean that, ultimately, Canberra would be forced to side with Washington should Sino-US disputes develop. Nevertheless, the US fears that Australia is getting too close to China and that its economic interests are counter to Washington's geostrategic interests.

Notwithstanding differences over China, Australia remains one of the closest military allies of the US. The importance of the relationship to both sides was confirmed in September 2007 when the Bush administration and the Howard government agreed an Australian "waiver" under US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). If approved by the US Congress, the waiver will enable the Australian government and businesses to access many US defence technologies without going through the onerous and often unsuccessful approval processes to which they are currently subject. The ITAR waiver will also be beneficial to US defence manufacturers, who will be subject to fewer restrictions in terms of exports to Australia, which currently spends more than USD1 billion annually on US defence equipment.

The accession of President Barack Obama has brought the two countries closer together, with Obama's policies on climate change and the global economy more naturally in line with the Rudd administration. More specifically, Obama has indicated that he would welcome an extension, or an increase, of the mandate of Australia's troops serving in Afghanistan. Australia currently has 1,100 troops stationed there. Opinion polls in Australia suggest that a clear majority of voters are against sending any more troops to Afghanistan, suggesting that important policy differences remain.

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In the short term, the WikiLeaks issue may cause Canberra to be wary of any bilateral cooperation that appears overly acquiescent to the United States. With Australian public opinion supporting Julian Assange and WikiLeaks, the Australian Government's initial strong condemnation of Assange has drawn criticism from the public, governing coalition partners, and the media for abandoning an Australian citizen to satisfy the United States. Nonetheless, the bilateral relationship and ongoing cooperation will remain strong in the long run.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Groundswell of support for Assange

Initial public ambivalence over WikiLeaks has evolved into a groundswell of support. A reliable December 9 poll showed that 75 percent of Australians oppose attempts to extradite Assange.<sup>4</sup> On December 13, the editors and news directors of almost every major Australian media organization took the unusual step of addressing an open letter to the Prime Minister in defense of Assange and WikiLeaks.<sup>5</sup>

Assange's arrest and the perceived U.S. hostility toward him, such as alleged calls by some U.S. public figures for his assassination,<sup>6 7 8 9</sup> have fed public outrage and skepticism that he is being treated fairly. Meanwhile, critics accuse the government of abandoning one of Australia's own in order to appease the United States. Ever since Australia's Fairfax Media allegedly gained exclusive access to all of Embassy Canberra's cables some time in early December,<sup>10 11</sup> domestic media outlets have been serving the government a daily helping of embarrassment.

### Controversy hurts ruling Labor Party

A December 8-9 poll revealed an 8-percent fall in support for the Labor Party, its largest drop this year and the first time it polled behind the opposition since August elections. Morgan Poll attributed the drop to the WikiLeaks controversy (see chart, below).<sup>12</sup> The media's selective focus on the alleged cables' most controversial revelations gives an impression of recent Labor prime ministers and ministers as disingenuous to the public and ingratiating toward the United States.<sup>13 14</sup>

More important, the government's initial handling of the WikiLeaks affair reinforced the public's impression. Prior to the deluge of reporting on Australia-specific cables, Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Attorney General Robert McClelland condemned Assange's acts as illegal and suggested the government was cooperating with the United States to pursue potential legal and law enforcement action.<sup>15</sup> Assange struck back, lambasting Gillard's "disgraceful pandering" and the government's betrayal and abandonment.<sup>16 17</sup> As the public soured on the government's initial reaction, Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd tried to walk back Gillard's comments, blaming the leaks primarily on insecure U.S. communication systems instead of Assange.<sup>18 19 20</sup>

The controversy may deepen rifts within Gillard's fragile governing coalition.<sup>24</sup> Labor relies on the support of the Greens party and three independents to maintain its parliamentary majority, and Greens party leader Bob Brown and two of the independents have sharply criticized Gillard's failure to defend Assange's rights.<sup>25 26 27</sup> Members of the left faction of Gillard's own party have echoed such criticisms.<sup>28 29</sup> The opposition also has been exploiting WikiLeaks revelations to attack her government.

### David Hicks Redux

Many compare Julian Assange to David Hicks, an Australian citizen who spent five years in U.S. custody as a terror suspect at Guantanamo Bay. Members of former Prime Minister John Howard's party acknowledged that Howard's silence on the Hicks case hurt his 2007 reelection bid.<sup>21</sup> Assange himself highlighted the comparison to Hicks, suggesting that his government's abandonment of him would be the source of its own downfall.<sup>22</sup> Australian public support for Assange has coalesced much faster than it ever did for Hicks.

### Implications for bilateral relations

In the short term, the surge of Australian nationalism will make Canberra wary of appearing too eager to please Washington. Reporting of high-level Australian officials' alleged skepticism over the efficacy of Australia's efforts in Afghanistan probably has eroded public support for Australia's role there.<sup>31 32 33</sup> Furthermore, U.S. refusal to share potentially compromised cables with the Australian Government reportedly has added insult to injury in Canberra.<sup>34 35</sup>

The embarrassment caused by the leaks may make Australian officials more reluctant to share frank views in the future, with one Foreign Ministry official declaring he "would never speak to [the U.S. Embassy] again." <sup>36 37</sup> (b)(3) (National Security Act of 1947)

In the long term, the bilateral relationship will remain strong, underpinned by common interests and ongoing cooperation.<sup>39</sup> Even during the Howard government's support for the unpopular U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Australians overwhelmingly approved of the U.S.-Australia alliance and strong bilateral relations.<sup>40</sup>

**PM TAKES STRONG STAND AHEAD OF NATO LISBON SUMMIT: "WE**

**"WILL NOT ABANDON AFGHANISTAN." NOVEMBER 2010**

Australia hopes the NATO Summit in Lisbon will allow ISAF allies to "get on the same page" and coordinate our messaging for the coming months. Prime Minister Gillard countered a negative media dynamic within Australia by making strong statements on Australia's commitment to Afghanistan in Parliament. Australia worries that NATO allies understand "reinvesting" forces as provinces are transitioned in different ways, and hopes the Summit will clarify what is meant by the term. Gillard's decision to attend the conference shows that she is gaining confidence on the international stage and increasingly sees Afghanistan as "her issue." [2]

**AUSTRALIA WILL CO-SPONSOR JULY ADDITIONS TO UNSCR 1267 SANCTIONS. JULY 2010**

Australia will co-sponsor USG's proposal to add an individual and an organization to the UNSCR 1267 sanctions list. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) officials said Australia needs timely notifications of USG unilateral sanctions so that it can most effectively use the new regulatory powers of its soon-to-be-passed Autonomous Sanctions Bill of 2010. We have provided DFAT July 9 with clarification on the status of Hakkat ul-Jihad (HUJI) and Hakkat ul-Jihad in Bangladesh (HUJI-B). [3]

**References**

1. Australia: WikiLeaks Issue Hurts U.S. Image and Labor Government (<http://inrweb.state.sgov.gov/IA/m101216b.htm>)
2. (State Cable: 10CANBERRA801 (<http://ncd.state.sgov.gov/cable/reference/10CANBERRA801>) PM TAKES STRONG STAND AHEAD OF NATO LISBON SUMMIT: "WE WILL NOT ABANDON AFGHANISTAN" )
3. (State Cable: 10CANBERRA505 (<http://ncd.state.sgov.gov/cable/reference/10CANBERRA505>) AUSTRALIA WILL CO-SPONSOR JULY ADDITIONS TO UNSCR 1267 SANCTIONS )

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