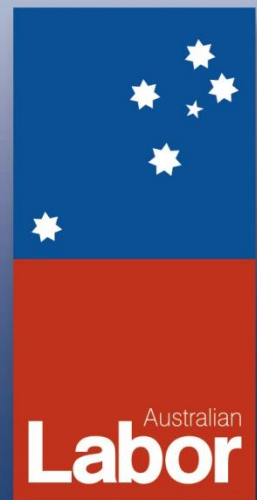


Advancing Australia's Interests Internationally



Julia Gillard and Labor
Let's move Australia forward



Advancing Australia's Interests Internationally

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ELECTION 2010

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Overview

Labor came to office with a clear, overarching foreign policy objective. This was to see Australia shaping regional developments and playing a much more active and responsible role on the international stage. During the last three years, the Government has set about achieving this objective.

Our foreign policy has been guided by Labor's three foreign policy pillars – our Alliance with the United States, our support for the United Nations and multilateral institutions, and our strong engagement in the Asia Pacific region.

We are determined to ensure that Australia's foreign policy advances our nation's enduring political, strategic and economic interests.

Our foreign policy is a central element of a comprehensive national security strategy.

It reflects the fact that this is the Asia Pacific Century, and that global strategic, economic and political weight is shifting to our region.

It reflects the fact that Australia is a significant and considerable nation.

It reflects the fact that Australia has regional priorities and global interests.

Australia brings to the world stage unique attributes, a unique view and a unique contribution from our part of the world.

With a gross domestic product of around 1.3 trillion Australian dollars, Australia is the fourth largest economy in Asia after Japan, China and India. We are the 13th largest economy in the world, reflected by our membership of the G20. The International Monetary Fund forecasts that we will have the 6th highest Gross Domestic Product per capita in 2010, up from 11th last year.

We are recognised as a nation that is committed to making a contribution to regional and global challenges. There is a strong Labor tradition of engagement in multilateral diplomacy and of building the institutions needed to ensure that the international community can deal with new and emerging challenges.

Australia ranks in the top dozen countries in defence expenditure, and is the 12th largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget. Around 3500 Australian uniformed personnel currently serve in United Nations, United Nations-mandated and other multilateral operations around the world.

Australia is also a major contributor of development assistance. Last year, we contributed \$3.8 billion in foreign aid. We are delivering on our commitment to increase Australia's level of development assistance to 0.5% of Gross National Income by 2015-16.

Australia's foreign policy should reflect our democratic values, our respect for rule of law, our tolerance and our deep-seated belief in others getting a fair go. We should treat other nations and their citizens with civility, dignity and respect.

We are a significant and a considerable nation and as a consequence we have a responsibility to conduct ourselves as one.

Federal Labor is determined that Australia should make a difference as a good international citizen.

What the Labor Government has achieved so far

The Federal Labor Government has a proud record of foreign policy achievements. We have:

- implemented our election commitment to withdraw Australian combat forces from Iraq;
- seen the creation of the G20 Summit as the premier forum for international economic cooperation;
- strengthened the relationship with Indonesia through annual leaders-level meetings and annual Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers meetings;
- elevated our relationship with India to that of a strategic partnership;
- restored Australia's relationship with the Pacific and successfully chaired the Pacific Islands Forum;
- commenced and significantly contributed to the important regional discussion about what regional architecture will best serve our region's interests as global economic, strategic and security weight shifts to the Asia Pacific region;
- increased our international development assistance and are on track to meet our commitment of 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015;
- established the Australia-European Union Partnership Framework as the modern basis of Australia's engagement with Europe;
- joined the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), correcting a longstanding historical anomaly;
- restored Australia's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation credentials through establishing jointly with Japan the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament;
- secured the hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth in October 2011.

We have strengthened our relationships with key bilateral partners and re-engaged with regional and global institutions that affect Australia's interests.

Advancing Australia's interests through strengthening and deepening our bilateral relationships

Federal Labor's commitment to Australia's Alliance with the United States

Federal Labor believes that Australia's Alliance with the United States remains the bedrock of Australia's defence security and strategic arrangements.

The United States will continue to be the single most powerful and important strategic actor in our region for the foreseeable future, both in its own right and through its network of Alliances and security relationships, of which Australia's Alliance with the United States is one.

The United States continues to underwrite prosperity and stability in the Asia Pacific as it has for the past fifty years.

Since 2007, the Labor Government has enhanced our bilateral relationship with the United States leading to new agreements in defence cooperation, civil-military cooperation, and counter-terrorism.

We have strengthened our Alliance through our increased cooperation with the United States in Afghanistan.

We have managed all this while also implementing an election commitment to withdraw combat forces from Iraq.

Federal Labor has worked hard to enhance Australia's bilateral relationships with the countries of the Asia Pacific region.

Japan

For many years, Japan has been Australia's closest friend and our strongest partner in Asia.

Federal Labor has developed a comprehensive partnership that encompasses strategic, security and economic cooperation; as well as people-to-people collaboration on a wide range of activities.

Our partnership stands on the twin pillars of long-standing economic links, and growing security and defence cooperation. At the heart of our relationship are shared values, intersecting interests and common approaches to regional and international challenges.

The complementary nature of Australia's and Japan's economies has helped the relationship flourish. For more than 40 years, Japan has been Australia's key export market and a reliable and stable customer for Australian goods and services.

Japanese investment, which has played such a vital role in the development of many of Australia's export industries, continues to underpin Australia's prosperity.

As our economic relationship has evolved, so too have our defence and security ties.

We have a framework for security cooperation second only to that which Japan shares with the United States.

Together, our three nations have increased our trilateral security cooperation through the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and the Security and Defence Cooperation Forum.

The Australia-Japan Joint Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations, the so-called 2+2 meeting, reflects our longstanding shared security interests.

We are the first major developed economy to enter into Free Trade Agreement negotiations with Japan.

Our recent efforts together on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010, have shown that we can achieve a great deal by working together.

Both nations have agreed to manage our differences over whaling so that it does not impact on the rest of our strong and deep relationship based on shared interests.

China

The Australia-China relationship is now one of Australia's most important and high profile bilateral relationships.

China is our largest two-way trading partner, and last year became our largest export market. Both countries are committed to a comprehensive, high-quality, balanced and mutually beneficial bilateral free trade agreement, which we are working to conclude.

Our dialogue has expanded in priority areas of regional security, trade, climate change, environment and development assistance. We worked together in the G20, responding to the Global Financial Crisis.

This year, the Federal Labor Government jointly established with China a one-and-a-half track dialogue – the Australia China Forum – which will consider the entirety of our comprehensive bilateral relationship.

Labor is clear-eyed, not starry-eyed, in our assessment of China and our approach to the bilateral relationship.

A productive relationship with China, based on mutual interest and mutual respect, is unambiguously in Australia's national interest.

We both recognise that we have different histories, different societies and different systems, as well as some differences of view. Labor is committed to a mature relationship with China where any differences can be managed constructively.

India

India, the world's largest democracy, has emerged in recent years as a significant global power, both politically and economically.

Australia sees in India a country that combines a remarkable pace of domestic development with an active and constructive role on the regional and world stage. In his first speech as Foreign Minister in December 2007, Minister Smith said that Australia needed to look west and do much more with India. We have made significant progress in the past two years.

India has been Australia's fastest-growing trading partner, with two-way trade growing more than 10 per cent to over \$20 billion in 2009.

In November last year, Australia and India lifted the status of our bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership, reflecting the strong convergence of interests and values that we share. This Strategic Partnership includes co-operation on trade and investment, regional and global security issues, education, science, research and development, climate change, and resources and energy.

The Australia-India Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, importantly, enhances the links between our defence, foreign policy and national security institutions.

In May 2010, we completed a joint Free Trade Agreement feasibility study. It makes a strong case for a comprehensive FTA.

Recognising the importance of India's rise for Australia's national interests, Federal Labor has placed India firmly in the front rank of Australia's international partnerships.

Indonesia

Closer to home, the Government has strengthened Australia's relationship with Indonesia.

Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim community among its many faiths, is now also the world's third-largest democracy, after India and the United States.

Under the leadership of President Yudhoyono, democracy has become entrenched in Indonesia and strong economic growth has helped raise living standards and foster stability.

Indonesia is increasingly playing a leadership role in regional and global affairs.

Federal Labor ensured that Australia worked together closely with Indonesia in the G20 on a global response to the financial crisis.

We cooperate closely in the WTO and, in our own region, our two countries are pushing for closer economic integration. Australia and Indonesia have completed a feasibility study for an Australia-Indonesia Free Trade Agreement, paving the way for negotiations.

This year Australia hosted a successful visit by Indonesia's President Yudhoyono. We agreed that our political leaders will now meet annually in Australia or Indonesia, and we will institute an annual meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers as well as a high-level dialogue of business, political and community figures.

This record shows that our bilateral relationship is in excellent shape, but there is no room for complacency. Both our countries need to do more to raise the appreciation of each other among our peoples to the level that exists between our governments.

Advancing Australia's interests in our region and beyond it

Federal Labor has a strong tradition of contribution to regional and global affairs. The Labor Government has been active in re-engaging in regional and global institutions to advance Australia's interests.

The Asia Pacific region

The Asia Pacific region is developing rapidly. Global economic and strategic weight is moving towards the region.

It is in Australia's interest to be actively engaged in the institutions that will help to shape the future of this region. Building on historic commitment to APEC, we continue to make a major contribution to the policy agenda for the region's institutions.

In APEC, we have helped to tackle both "at the border" trade barriers, such as tariffs, and "behind the border" challenges. This will help spur greater trade and greater economic integration in the region, and will support Australia's ongoing prosperity.

The Labor Government has pursued a comprehensive partnership with ASEAN, which supports the economic integration and growth of the ASEAN countries through promotion of trade and investment, transport development and sustainable use of natural resources. Australia and ASEAN have agreed to hold their first Leaders' Summit in October this year in Hanoi.

The Labor Government has been active in the East Asia Summit. We have led initiatives to build better coordination in response to natural disasters across the region. The development of stronger arrangements to ensure smooth and speedy responses to disasters is a key challenge for the region.

We have also been at the forefront of the conversation about the future shape of our region's institutions. There is widespread recognition that none of the groupings in our current architecture is comprehensive in membership, scope or purpose. India is not a part of APEC. The United States is not part of the East Asia Summit. We have advanced the view that all of the region's leaders should be able to discuss both strategic and security matters, and economic and prosperity issues in a single forum.

Following two years of discussion, the region is now at a point where there is a broad recognition that current arrangements can be improved. Federal Labor very much welcomed the recent decision of ASEAN Foreign Ministers to recommend to their Leaders that the United States and Russia be invited to join the East Asia Summit.

Pacific Islands Forum

Federal Labor has reversed the years of neglect of the Pacific by the Coalition. We have restored strong relationships with countries like Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

In 2009, for the first time since 1994, Australia hosted the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting. On hosting that meeting, Australia became chair of the Forum for the next twelve months.

Federal Labor has taken forward a comprehensive agenda with our Pacific island neighbours.

Our efforts have been welcomed by the region and have ensured that difficult issues like the political situation in Fiji have been met by the region with a unified stance.

We have led efforts to provide more coordinated and effective development assistance to help these nations tackle the challenges they face, including health, education and dealing with the effects of climate change.

We have signed 11 Pacific Partnerships for Development that commit Australia and Pacific Island countries to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and increase the beneficial impact of Australia's development assistance.

Indian Ocean region

Despite the fact countries of the Indian Ocean region are of vital strategic importance to Australia, they have in the recent past been substantially underappreciated. The Federal Labor Government has substantially increased our engagement with the Indian Ocean region.

In April this year, Australia attended the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Ministerial Meeting as an observer for the first time.

Australia has also been endorsed as the Vice Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) for 2011 and 2012, with India as Chair. Australia will then chair this forum in 2013-2014.

These are important developments that highlight our commitment to the Indian Ocean region and our engagement with it.

Other regional organisations

Australia is joining the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). This organisation brings together 16 Asian nations and the ASEAN Secretariat along with 27 European Union nations and the European Commission. Australia applied for membership under the Howard Government in 1996 and in 1998 but was unsuccessful on both occasions. Regrettably, no further efforts were made for a decade to get Australia into this important regional organisation to deepen and broaden our engagement with both Asia and Europe. This longstanding historical anomaly has now been corrected. Australia will take up its membership at the ASEM Leaders' Summit in Brussels in October.

Federal Labor has also worked to increase Australia's engagement with a range of regional institutions including some beyond our immediate region. These include the Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Caribbean community (CARICOM), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

We have done so because, in their different ways, these bodies address issues whose implications extend beyond their regions and ultimately affect Australia's interests.

Global Interests

The diverse national interests we pursue means that we have to engage with nations around the world. We have invested great effort in building our relations with a wide range of nations in the strong belief that there are mutual benefits in these relationships and that in a joined-up world, shared interests are not always defined by geography.

Federal Labor has added new depth to our relations with the nations of Europe. It is a relationship built on strong personal ties but which also recognises the benefits of closer cooperation in global affairs.

Federal Labor has developed strong relations with the countries of the Middle East. We have reinvigorated our relationships with the countries of Latin America – too long neglected by the former Coalition Government, which failed to recognise the economic and political importance of the region. Federal Labor has injected new dynamism into our relationship with Africa.

Advancing Australia's Interests through strong engagement with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions

The modern world is more interconnected than at any other time in history. Australia's future is linked to what happens in other nations.

To tackle terrorism, we need international cooperation. To secure a stable economic future, we need international cooperation. To meet challenges like climate change and irregular migration, we need international cooperation.

Federal Labor is committed to ensuring that Australia has a voice in the global debates that affect the future of Australians.

United Nations

An essential foreign policy undertaking by the Federal Labor has been to reinvigorate Australia's engagement with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. This engagement can be traced back to Labor Prime Minister Curtin's decision to commit Australia to post-war international economic co-operation in 1942 and to the United Nations system in 1945.

Australia's long-term national economic and security interests depend on having strong, effective multilateral institutions, norms and rules.

Today, the world faces increasingly complex global challenges, such as international development, climate change, food security, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis. These are global challenges that no one country can address on its own.

The increasingly complex and transnational nature of these challenges means that an effective multilateral system is in Australia's national interest now more than ever, and that active engagement with that system is crucial for Australia.

Engagement with the United Nations is vital because of its role in setting global standards on a wide range of issues, from human rights to the use of force in settling international disputes. The United Nations plays a key role in maintaining peace and security through conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, and arms control negotiations.

As a measure of our commitment to the United Nations, Australia is standing for election to the United Nations Security Council for the 2013-14 term. As a member of the Security Council, we can help shape global responses to important international developments in ways that serve our national interests, promote our values and virtues, and support peace and security.

If we want effective multilateral institutions that deliver for us and our region, then we have a responsibility to contribute from time to time.

Australia is also active in a broad range of multilateral forums beyond the United Nations.

G20

We worked effectively with others to consolidate the G20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

As the world grappled with the consequences of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and 2009, it was far from certain that the G20 would emerge as the premier forum for economic co-operation. The Federal Labor Government worked assiduously to ensure that Australia would take its seat at the table with G20 leaders.

The G20 reflects the realities of the new global economic order. It represents the most important shift in global governance in decades. For Australia, it is the most important new Leaders' institution since APEC. The G20 successfully addressed the Global Financial Crisis, acting in a coordinated and immediate way to stabilise the financial sector and build confidence globally.

The Commonwealth

We remain an active member of the Commonwealth and look forward to hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Perth next year.

We are committed to using the Perth meeting to strengthen the Commonwealth in its core values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Under Labor, Australia along with Japan, commissioned the International Commission for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), which played a significant role in the success of the May 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference.

The Gillard Labor Government will continue working to sustain positive momentum on non-proliferation and disarmament. We will:

- continue to urge entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT);
- support negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and, pending that, a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes;
- continue to advocate strengthening the safeguards and verification regime, in particular through the adoption of the Additional Protocol, which is a condition of supply for Australian uranium;
- support international efforts to reinforce full compliance with the NPT's non-proliferation obligations, in particular by Iran and North Korea.

Future Challenges

Looking to the future, the Gillard Labor Government is determined to pursue Australia's national interests in a world that is increasingly interconnected.

We will continue to add strength to our alliance with the United States. Our relationship with the United States is steeped in history, but it is also modern and evolving. We will continue to build on our close defence cooperation with the United States, including with our key partners such as Japan.

We will also pursue greater cooperation with the United States in areas including clean energy and education. And we will continue to work closely with the United States in responding to shared regional and global challenges. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder in Afghanistan.

The Gillard Labor Government will build on the momentum established over the past three years to add even more depth to relationships with our key regional partners.

We will continue close cooperation with New Zealand and the nations of the Pacific.

We will develop both the bilateral and regional cooperation that we have with our closest Asian neighbours to the north, Indonesia and East Timor, and the other countries of South East Asia with whom we have deep and enduring economic, security and personal ties.

We have long-standing links with China, Japan and Korea. The Gillard Labor Government will continue the work of shaping these relationships into the future – adding more depth to our comprehensive bilateral, regional and global cooperation with Japan; expanding our relationship with the Republic of Korea into new areas; and ensuring that our relationship with China continues to develop in a strongly positive direction.

Federal Labor has put India at the forefront of our international partnerships. We will continue to take the relationship forward so that it can realise its full potential.

We will continue to pursue Australia's national interest by ensuring that we have a strong base of relations with key partners around the globe – in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

In our own region, we will play an active role in shaping the evolution of the regional architecture. It is in our interest to be actively engaged both in the institutions that we have and the discussion about their future development.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will continue Australia's proud record of leading global efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We will continue to stand at the forefront of efforts to have Iran meet its international obligations in relation to its nuclear program, one of the most serious security challenges facing the international community today.

We will continue to apply pressure to countries such as North Korea, Zimbabwe and Burma where they fail to meet their obligations.

We will continue to work closely with neighbours in the Pacific towards our shared objective of an early return to democracy in Fiji.

In 2011, we will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Perth. In recent CHOGM meetings, we have taken on key leadership roles in advancing the Commonwealth's agenda in areas such as climate change. We are committed to using the Perth meeting to take forward issues of importance to Commonwealth members, including opportunities to strengthen the organisation.

We are committed to putting in place a fully operational Australian Civilian Corps by early 2011, so that Australia can rapidly deploy civilian specialists into countries experiencing or emerging from natural disasters or conflict.

We will stand for election to the UN Security Council in October 2012 because Australia can and should make a contribution to international peace and security.

We will deliver on our commitment to increase official development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015-16.

The Coalition's Record

The former Coalition Government failed to develop a clear framework for Australia's foreign policy. Instead, it lurched from one ad hoc decision to another. It failed to invest the time, energy and initiative needed to be taken seriously in the international arena.

The former Coalition Government led Australia into an unjustified and counterproductive war in Iraq, which was a distraction from the real hotbed of terrorism in Afghanistan.

The former Coalition Government took our relationships with Pacific island states backwards and failed to engage productively with the Pacific Islands Forum. It did not host the meeting once during its time in power – a terrible neglect given the importance of the Pacific islands to Australia, and our importance to our Pacific neighbours.

The former Coalition Government failed to recognise the significance of the changes underway in the Asia Pacific region. It was content to accept the status quo, rather than to chart a course for the future. As this region changes and geo-strategic balances shift, we need avenues to protect Australia's national interests and project these in regional processes.

The Coalition turned its back on multilateralism and the United Nations and failed to understand that there are a number of global challenges, foremost among them climate change and nuclear non-proliferation, that cannot be solved by any nation acting alone.

Tony Abbott has spoken about his attachment to an "Anglosphere" and endorsed the former Coalition Government's approach of running a "neighbourhood watch" system in our region – an allusion to the former Coalition Government's approach of acting as a "Deputy Sheriff" to the United States in our region.

As Shadow Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop has shown that, if she becomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs, she would represent a risk.

Julie Bishop has announced a \$300 million budget cut to Australia's program of development assistance. This seriously calls into question the Coalition's commitment to meet Australia's obligations as a good international citizen.

Julie Bishop criticised the Government for granting a visa to a Chinese activist against objections expressed by the Chinese Government. This seriously calls into question the Coalition's capacity to make decisions that are in Australia's national interest, unswayed by pressure from others.

Julie Bishop also made the claim that Australian agencies forged passports, in breach of a long-standing convention of not publicly commenting on intelligence matters.

Australians cannot risk the Coalition with Australia's important international relationships or our international reputation.