TRANSCRIPT
The Asia Chessboard Podcast

“The Chessboard Down Under: Talking the U.S.-Australia Alliance with Patrick Buchan”

RECORDING DATE
Tuesday, December 17, 2019

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Andrew Schwartz: Welcome to the Asia Chessboard, the podcast that examines geopolitical dynamics in Asia and takes an inside look at the making of grand strategy. I'm Andrew Schwartz at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Ben Rimland: Mike is joined in this episode by Patrick Buchan, Director of the US Alliances Project and fellow for Indo-Pacific Security at CSIS. Pat's also a former official with the Australian Department of Defense, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the US Office of the Secretary of Defense. After discussing Pat's unique background as an Australian seconded to the US government, Mike and Pat moved towards discussing one of America's oldest Indo-Pacific allies, Australia. What are the origins of Australian grand strategy? How does Australia's role as a Five Eyes ally impact its ability to affect American planning and strategy? Finally, Mike and Pat evaluate Australia's recent efforts to network with other “spokes” in the US-led hub-and-spokes network in the Indo-Pacific.

Michael Green: Welcome back to the Asia Chessboard. I'm Michael Green from CSIS and Georgetown. On this podcast, we're looking often at US grand strategy in the Indo-Pacific region, but we're taking some shows to step back and look at the strategies of other major powers, players, allies, and adversaries, including how those influence US strategy. And today, we're turning our attention to Australia. The US and Australia have a long and close security partnership and deep strategic trust beginning over 100 years ago at the Battle of Hamel when National Guard units from Illinois served in World War I for the first time under a non-American general, General Monash of Australia, through the Battle of the Coral Sea that stopped the Japanese advance on Australia at the beginning of World War II, to Vietnam, to Iraq and Afghanistan. We have with Australia, one of the closest security and defense partnerships we've ever had in our history, including of course, Australia's participation in the Five Eyes arrangement for intelligence sharing and Australian officers embedded in US units around the world.

Michael Green: Australia also has a very important influence on the American strategic debate. A lot of decision making about entry into Vietnam in the mid-sixties was shaped by Prime Minister Menzies and the Australian government at the time. The American decisions when I was in government during the Bush administration on regional architecture, institution building, the US-Japan Australia trilateral security dialogue, were ideas that emanated in Canberra. So we want to understand debate in Australia, how that affects our thinking and we couldn't have a better guest to help us with that than Pat Buchan. Pat's a fellow here at CSIS. He's the director of the US Alliance's project. He's worked in Defense and National Security Policy in the Australian government and the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office in the Defense Department, but he's also been embedded in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the United States where he had responsibility for the National Defense Strategy and big picture planning.
Michael Green: Pat, why don't we start off by having you tell us a little bit about how you got into this national security business. Maybe a bit of different story from some of the Americans we've had, but how'd you get here?

Pat Buchan: Yeah, thanks Mike and thanks for having me on. It's great to be on the Asia Chessboard. My journey into how I got into our business was essentially, growing up in Australia during the period of the closing days of the Cold War, I was always fascinated by what was happening through the news, classic kid who'd play a lot of risk and got interested in grand strategy, but I was always a kid that was very interested in what was happening around me outside of Australia's borders and particularly in the big issues on the United States, the closing days of the Cold War and of course, the rise of China. I come from that Australian generation where Australia really started to emmesh itself in Asia, AIPAC in 1996 and those pushes in. When I got to university, it was all about Australia's growth into Asia. That's how I came into this business. That was a natural progression for me.

Michael Green: What was your major in university?

Pat Buchan: Political science.

Michael Green: Political science, and did you study international relations and languages and strategy or was it more of a theoretical or methodological approach? What's the focus?

Pat Buchan: Yeah. For me, it was very much a sort of grand strategy, but I focused very much primarily on Southeast Asia and that reflects the generation I come from where it was really about the Australia-Indonesia ties. Of course, I studied Australia-Indonesia relations. I wrote my thesis on that and when I arrived at the defense department, I was promptly put onto the Iraq desk. That's the way government goes.

Michael Green: Help us understand the essence of the strategic problem for Australia. What animates the strategic debates, what are the insecurities, how far back do they go, what's the core thinking in Australian views of geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region?

Pat Buchan: I think it's an interesting question, isn't it? Because in many ways, I think Australia's the great historical anomaly in the world. This is a country that only 225 years ago, experienced European migration. Of course, Australia's indigenous population had been there a long time, but European migration occurs in 1788. It finds itself this European outpost at the bottom of Asia. And very much primarily from its earliest days of European settlement driving Australian thinking was, what we call a reliance on a great and powerful friend. Initially, from let's say from 1788 all the way to about 1942, that great and
powerful friend is Britain, and Australia seeks to play the junior alliance role to the British, and when and where Britain’s needed.

Pat Buchan: We see that through the Sudan, through the Bull War, through the First World War, through the opening phase of the Second World War, Australia goes to serve alongside Britain for its own interests. It’s not sort of licking the boots of the British, if you will. It is in our hardheaded interest because it fears abandonment in its region, a long way from Britain. We see from 1942 onwards, Prime Minister Curtin makes a famous speech appealing to the United States after the fall of Singapore, after the reality of the limited British engagement that it could do in Asia and the fact that the United States now was the paramount power in Asia to protect against Imperial Japanese-

Michael Green: What’s the famous Curtin line from his [inaudible] speech?

Pat Buchan: Prime Minister Curtin gives a famous speech where he says, "Australia turns its gaze towards America away from Great Britain." He phrases it in a way in which he says, we’re not sort of discarding Britain, but we now look to the United States. And in fact, you see that Australia in 1940 opens his first overseas embassy right here in Washington DC. Australia could already see from that period looking to engage the United States in its region. But of course the United States is in this great period of isolation throughout the 20s and 30s, so the key was how do you contain Japanese Imperial expansion? How do you entrench the British? But obviously after the fall of Singapore, there was only one option that was the United States. Of course, Pearl Harbor has happened, it’s now about how can we get the United States involved.

Michael Green: And of course, it’s reciprocated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt who writes early in the war a letter to Churchill pointing out that the top priority in the Pacific is to stop Australia from being cut off, The Battle of the Coral Sea. Because strategically and geo-politically, the US recognized that Australia was going to be the springboard and indeed was the springboard for the Island campaign and the defeat of Japan. How much of this turning to the great power is values-based?

Pat Buchan: That's a great question, isn't it Mike? And I think one of the things I often find with hardheaded political scientists, they look at the metrics of power, don’t they? They look at the economy, military capability, demography, but they fundamentally overlook the power of values. And I think one of the things you do find between the United States and Australia, both as immigrant societies, as migrant nations built on the promise that you could turn up with nothing and within a generation you can have something and you can contribute back. That values-based proposition is something that has been a hallmark of the alliance, the rule of law, defensive democracy, seeking not to impose your will on others. And throughout, from the First world war all the way through, both of those
countries have shared that, and it is something I think that hard heads often overlook.

Michael Green: I asked because Australia shifted from Britain to America in 1942 and there are some, it's a minority view in Australia, there are some who argue that there will have to be a China choice. That down the road because of China's growing economic power, Australia is going to have to shift to Chinese hegemonic system. Does that have any logic to it? Does it have any political or popular following in Australia?

Pat Buchan: Yeah, again, we're getting back to the hardheaded argument versus the values-based argument. Look, Professor Hugh White, who I know you know well Mike, that was a famous thesis, the China choice that he put forward in 2012, 2013. Effectively, the China choice argument that he put forward was three grand propositions. One, the United States can resist China's rise. Two, it could provide a concert of powers if you will, accept China, and then create a partnership to share if you will in the region. Or three, it could retrench, it could step back and say to China, okay fine. You are now the regional hegemon we are retreating back to San Diego and getting behind the Pacific. This argument you're seeing in Australia at the moment about China's rise, it's been around for a long time.

Pat Buchan: Right? This fear that you are going to face, what I call a T-intersection, where you can turn left to the sign to Beijing or turn right to the sign to Washington. I think it's a little bit infantile. Look, the reality is Australia's economy is deeply intertwined with China. China became Australia's largest trade partner a long time ago, overtaking Japan. Of course, the United States remains the largest foreign direct investor in Australia.

Michael Green: And that's key and people often miss that.

Pat Buchan: And that's key and people do often miss that. That's exactly right. But in terms of the export market it is overwhelmingly China. I think it's what, 26% of total trade now. So, I think that the Australian approach is to continue this high wire act. I think the nuance to the debate, Mike, about this so-called China choice is the Xi factor. In the last sort of five or six years, this more robust, this more, I don't want to use the term expansionist, but this more adventurous China is the way I'll put it.

Pat Buchan: Is that a factor of president Xi's personality or are we seeing a fundamental shift in Chinese national security and foreign policy behavior. And I don't think that argument's been had yet. I think the key missing element though in terms of the so-called China choice for Australia, I don't think Australia and Australian national security policy makers can come up with any so-called China choice until the United States puts a marker down about what its relationship is with
China and I personally don't believe the United States is there yet. I don't think the United States has a China strategy. I think it's a very piecemeal approach.

Michael Green: You were in the Pentagon when the national defense strategy was being written, wasn't that a China strategy?

Pat Buchan: I think it was a China defense strategy.

Michael Green: But not a national strategy. With all instruments of power.

Pat Buchan: There is no national instruments of power China strategy. It is very piecemeal. I think the Pentagon certainly has a view on China.

Michael Green: The missing piece for an ally like Australia then is not the defense piece, which is pretty clear and recognizable to Australian Defense Forces. It's the larger grand strategy. The national security strategy didn't do it. The Vice President Pence speeches on China didn't do it. I assume it is a failing to resonate in Canberra because it lacks what's been important for Australian strategy for decades, institutions, free trade and that kind of investment in architecture. Would that be a fair assessment of the Australian private critique of the administration's lack of a China policy?

Pat Buchan: Look, I mean we can write all the strategies we want and I'm not dismissing the national defense strategy, I'm not dismissing the national security strategy. I think there were reasonable thought processes, but the key is the follow through. What are you doing about it? Now, we saw the skinny trade deal with China. Again, there is this almost schizophrenic approach from Washington at the moment towards China. I don't think the United States knows whether it wants to compete with China, cooperate with China or compete and cooperate with China. So, we're in the schizophrenic impression. I don't think it's going to be clear for three or five years as to what the United States grand approach to China is.

Michael Green: If you're an ally, Australia or Japan for that matter, you don't want to be blowing the whistle and going over the top and taking the other side’s machine gun fire if all of a sudden the US is going to say never mind, but on the other hand, you don't want to have to worry that if they come at you, the US won't be there. The Lowy Institute in Sydney has interesting polling. Support for the Alliance, even under the controversial Trump presidency, is pretty high in Australia in the 70s and has been consistently and polls show that Australians are generally confident that the United States will come to Australia's defense. That hasn't really declined in recent years. But at the same time, these polls show growing doubts about whether Australia might get pulled into a US-China conflict and about overall American staying power in Asia. That seems like the polling captures the dilemma Australians face with the US right now.
Michael Green: On the other hand, you look at the Australian white paper in 2017, and Prime Minister Turnbull speeches that year in Singapore. Pretty critical on China, emphasizing the rules-based order in Asia. I mean making it clear what’s at stake with China. It seems like overall looking at the polls, prime minister’s speeches, white papers, Australia is not defecting from the US, it’s investing more in the US but there’s some real questions about whether the US might pull Australia into a fight it doesn’t want with China or on the other hand, whether the US is going to stay invested in the region. How do you deal with the US like that? And it’s not the first time of course, you had the Vietnam War, you had, as you mentioned, the ’30s, and early in 1941 Australia opened an embassy, it’s kind of a fickle big power. How do you manage that if you’re Australia, how do you shape American strategy?

Pat Buchan: I think there is no greater operator in this town than the Australians behind the scenes.

Michael Green: I agree with that. It used to be the British.

Pat Buchan: Used to be the British.

Michael Green: I think they've lost something with the Brexit problem. Maybe they'll get their mojo back.

Pat Buchan: Right, they've been otherwise occupied, obviously the last three years. And also, I think that reflects the shift of strategic weight away from Europe, out of the Middle East as well, and into the region for which the British obviously sort of post-Suez, haven't had a deep expertise or a deep interest in. Back to your question on how do Australians view the United States currently. Firstly, the Australian people are very well informed of the issues. They are very well informed on the Alliance and they're very well informed that China is picking up the check currently for Australia's 27 years of consistent growth, unparalleled in the G20. What's driving that is obviously China's rise. And by the way, the participation of women in the workforce, you've doubled the size of the workforce and China's come on-line. How do you message people when costs are high but wages are up?

Pat Buchan: Home ownership is up. How do you say to people, well, it's pretty easy in the cold war when you can say, well, the Soviets are bad, they don't share our values, but that's okay because we don't trade with them anyway. And all the way with LBJ with the United States. That's an easy proposition. Right now you've got the problem, is Australians do understand that China is their largest trade partner. Yet at the same time, the United States is their number one security partner. I'm not convinced that the Australian people are yet convinced that in the long-term the United States is going to stay the course in the region. I'm also not convinced that the Australian people take the view that the policies
enacted under this administration and the rhetoric out of this administration are now not the US norm. I don't think they are-

Michael Green: Well, the rhetoric is not the norm.

Pat Buchan: The rhetoric is-

Michael Green: I think even Donald Trump supporters would acknowledge that.

Pat Buchan: But the messaging. I think many of us here in Washington understand we can differentiate between campaign politics, rhetoric, and what the undercurrent on Capitol Hill and throughout the national security bureaucracy and the strong support for alliances, the strong support for the rules-based order. I think many of us understand that that is a deeply held notion. But I don't think many people in Australia who hear this rhetoric, they do question US commitment, they do question. They look at the metrics about China's rise. They do look at the behavior of Xi's China. They do see the foreign interference, which has made a lot of news here in Washington.

Michael Green: Foreign interference in Australian politics.

Pat Buchan: That's right, in Australian politics in the university sector. Many Australians do question what is the level of long-term US commitment?

Michael Green: But they also have to have fundamental questions, and the polls seem to show this, about whether China would, if it became the hegemonic power in Asia, sustain the kind of open rules-based order and values that Australians have come to expect. Right? So, if you're Australia or if you're in Canberra making policy in DFAT or the prime minister's office, there's no merit, is there, in hedging against the US, you need the US to be there as much as you can get. And it seems to me, where do you go? You do more of Japan, you do more with other players in the region. And the Australia-Japan relationship is growing in leaps and bounds, over the last 20 years.

Pat Buchan: Absolutely Mike. I think that anyone in Canberra or anyone in the foreign policy establishment you take, if you said after the United States, who is your most closest and consequential partner, or if I can use the small “a” ally, both would answer Australia and Japan. There's no question of that. I'm not withstanding the issues we saw with the submarines and so on. I think Australia-

Michael Green: And this is when Japan, under Prime Minister Abe with Prime Minister Tony Abbott, was at the highest levels talking about providing Japanese submarines exports, the Sōryū, to replace the Collins-class subs in Australia, which was a logical choice in many ways. But in the end the French got the deal, although we'll see what happens.
Pat Buchan: Yeah, that's right. But we saw that, and I think many people were very concerned that wow, that all this effort that we've put into this burgeoning cooperation and trilateral cooperation obviously with the United States as well, might be at risk. But I think both sides, both Australia and Japan, should absolutely be congratulated for taking the lessons learnt from that, and moving forward for the sake of the diplomatic and political relationship you're seeing.

Michael Green: So, you're in Australia, you are not 100% confident about the US trajectory right now, but you're not so worried that you jump ship. You invest heavily in your relationship with the president in Washington, the embassy, strong relationship with the Congress and with think tanks in Washington, the incredibly tight and embedded and Five Eye's relationship between the militaries and the intelligence communities. But you hedge a little bit in terms of playing more with Japan and then you have to stand up to China. How does Australia stand up to China? China cutoff Australian, or essentially using mercantilist tools, stopped the import of Australian coal for a while to protest decisions on banning Huawei. Australia has been pretty tough. The only country to publicly and explicitly ban Huawei other than the US, Japan and other countries have done it quietly. Australia has taken, for middle power facing 1.4 billion Chinese, taken some pretty tough stances on Huawei, on Xinjiang and other things, and been punished for it. How do you sustain that?

Pat Buchan: Well, the first thing I think you're getting back to the values argument, aren't you?

Michael Green: Yeah.

Pat Buchan: This is first and foremost values, you know, my view is sovereignty never goes. If you give away sovereignty, then you're gone. Economics comes and goes, money goes up, money goes down. If you start giving away your sovereignty and your values, then you're gone. Then you are down the river. Now that all said, what else do you do to push back on China? Well, one, you keep the United States engaged and involved. Two, you diversify your relationships, not just within the Indo-Pacific between the United States, Australia and Japan, but you start to diversify. Indonesia coming on-line. Australia's relationship with Indonesia in the last 20 years has been an absolute story of strength, hard work from both sides.

Michael Green: 20 years is significant because of the East Timor crisis, right?

Pat Buchan: That's right. The East Timor crisis at the end of 1999. The relationship was in an extremely bad way. 20 years later? It's an extraordinary one. As countries like Indonesia assume greater roles in the region, Australia has really taken a smarter approach both bilaterally, and then deepening its engagement Mike into the multilateral structure. Things like ADMM and SCR and so forth.
Australia has really diversified its relationships, not just bilaterally, but also multilaterally. And additionally, you've seen the United States, I think also recognize that the hubs-and-spokes model, that is the bilateral treaty alliances and cooperative partnerships that have developed after the second war, I think there is a realization Washington that that is starting to not have the ability to deliver that it once did.

Michael Green: It's an untapped opportunity and hence the consensus in Canberra and Tokyo and Washington. that we should begin looking beyond these bilateral security treaties, The US-Japan Alliance, ANZUS, US-ROK, these are bilateral mutual security treaties. Networking them, creating something that moves a little closer to, although ultimately does not become a collective security arrangement, which is appropriate, because the alliances were formed in the early '50s in very close reference to each other. The US peace treaty with Japan and security treaty would not have been possible without a US ANZUS Treaty.

Pat Buchan: That's right.

Michael Green: Because Australia and New Zealand wouldn't have done a peace treaty with Japan otherwise. They've always been linked and in some ways the framework's always been linked and I think capitals are starting to look at how to network. What you're describing is an Australian grand strategy that does not assume a China choice at the end of the day. That doesn't assume that we're shifting to a bipolar US-China order or shifting from American to Chinese hegemony.

Michael Green: It's a strategy that reflects the eclectic nature of power in the region. You have areas of American hegemony, areas of rising Chinese power. But you also have growing middle power and major power multipolarity with Japan, you mentioned Indonesia, India, Australia. It's diversifying the playbook and ultimately it seems to me to restore and maintain and reinforce the rules-based order that Britain provided, that the US provided. Australian having to do a more eclectic strategy, but it's still fundamentally, it seems to me about the US-Japan Alliance. That multilateral piece requires Japan. I mean it was Japan and Australia that kept TPP-11 alive without the US. And it's Japan and Australia that are working in the WTO context when frankly the US is often absent. What about the military relationship? The US and Australia relationship is so tight. One person, we both know well, Senior in Australian Defense when I was in the white house, and asked, how's it going with the US he said, "Oh, we're doing everything but nuclear."

Michael Green: It's an incredibly broad and dense relationship because of what we were doing together in Iraq and Afghanistan and CENTCOM, the Middle East. Now the big challenges are in the Western Pacific or the Indo-Pacific, and this is an Alliance that in terms of military cooperation was probably deeper at the CENTCOM level than we were arguably than we were at the PACOM or INDOPACOM level. What do we need to be doing on the defense side in terms of interoperability,
roles and missions, and command structures, things like that. And I know you've got a study group on this and a series of roundtables at CSIS, you're deep on it, we can't spend an hour, but what are the top line takeaways?

Pat Buchan: You're spot on. When I went into the system, sort of 2004, 2005 as a new young desk officer in Canberra, the relationship had atrophied largely at the PACOM level and was very much, as you said, at the CENTCOM level. We've seen obviously a big shift away from that. And that's a good thing. Interoperability-wise, I think you seeing an extraordinary amount of work being done outside of Australia's traditional avenues for interoperability, what's called ABCA, Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States. You seeing Australia and Japan work closely, you're seeing Australian and Japan for the first time doing bilateral air exercises together, recently in Japan. Where Australia is looking to go is the sort of plug and play concept, air warfare destroyers, et cetera, where it's working far more closely, not just with the United States in terms of their air and maritime domain, but particularly with countries like Japan.

Pat Buchan: And I'd like to see that diversify just outside of that trilateral as well and things like India coming on-line. I think with India's new F-21 project that offers something far more for countries like Australia, for middle powers, for a strategy of continuing to diversify its relationships absent of the US, and by the way, I think that's in the US interest. If it's middle power allies can work closely together, it takes a little bit of the burden off the United States. But I think it comes down to how far are countries like South Korea, like Australia, like Japan, willing to go in terms of not only interoperability, but in terms of operations, steady state operations in the region, without antagonizing China. And I don't think we've seen anything yet that could push China into really pushing back against the US allies like Australia, like Japan. So, there's still a lot of reluctance around about what does the red line look like?

Michael Green: So, Australian force posture and force structure allows air, naval, ground components to plug right in with the US and any coalition at very short notice, which is really important in the CENTCOM and INDOPACOM areas of responsibility. Sometimes, from time to time, anyway, over the past seven decades of our Alliance, there have been debates in Australia that Australia needs to be a little less focused on plugging into coalitions and more focused on its own hemispheric or continental defense. Are those voices still there or is there still a consensus behind, or is it a false choice? Can you do both?

Pat Buchan: Yeah. Mike, I think you're referring to what was called the defense of Australia concept, which came in after the Vietnam War. That's where Australia decided, okay, there's an air-sea gap. We are going to, post the Guam Doctrine in the United States that sort of indicated it was starting to retreat a little bit from the region. Australia took an approach, well, okay fine we're going to get behind our large moat that surrounds us and that the strategic in-depth will be our greatest asset. Obviously post-9/11 you did see Australia move away from that,
start re-engaging in the region, start re-engaging in the Middle East, particularly militarily. But that concept remains very much the core of a defense assumption. But defense of Australia in terms of what we’re referring to from 35 years ago doesn’t exist anymore and it can’t in a globalized world, it can’t in an integrated region. But in terms of where you see things like super hornet, growler, F-35, you’re seeing Australia’s large defense purchases still remaining very much aimed at that interoperability, that plug and play into the Pacific command and so forth.

Michael Green: It's really remarkable when you think about it. How little discussion or debate there is in Washington about Australia. I mean people in this country and in our government largely take it for granted because been so close as allies, every major conflict since the First World War we've been there together. Australia's strategy has been about going in at the pointy end of the spear, which means taking more risk earlier, but as a result, having more say. I saw that in the white house with both Afghanistan and Iraq. Australian forces were F-18's special operators, right at the most dangerous pointy end of the spear, right at the earliest phases. Not on the same scale as some other countries in terms of numbers, but with enormously more influence in the debate because Australia was willing to take that risk early on.

Pat Buchan: Well, it's also planners, Mike. What I think Australia does really well as a close ally is the ability to put its planning staff right into senior US level headquarters, into the Pentagon, and that level of influence they get to implement as a middle power I think is something that many other countries would very much like to emulate and that's what's the extraordinary part.

Michael Green: And it's a blessing for the US, it's a blessing for I would argue Australia and the region. The consequence of it, though, is that you have very little public or even elite debate or discussion about Australian strategy or strategy for the Alliance. And having you at CSIS corrects that, and Andrew Scheer before you, and this podcast hopefully helps to correct it a little bit. Ultimately, alliances rest on public support. There is strong support for the alliances in both countries, but there's some hard choices and tradeoffs coming up for the US and Australia going forward and I think we're going to need a little more public, congressional, elite, university and public discourse about what direction this alliance goes because it's been so effective to date and is going to be so critical going forward.

Pat Buchan: Yeah, look, I would end on a note there. You do talk about obviously here in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, the US alliance remains far larger in the public consciousness and in the elite consciousness than it does looking the other way. But a really interesting poll in the New York Times, a little under two years ago, where it listed among Republican voters and Democratic voters, who are the US top 10 allies. It was really interesting to see among Republicans, Australia came in at number one, among Democrats number four and then combined, at number one or two alongside Canada. If you had to run that poll
25 years ago, I'm sure Australia would have made the top 10, but it is extraordinary the decisions we've made and the weight of history shifting, that you've seen Australia rise in terms of the public consciousness here and among the elite opinion, particularly because of the choices Australia's made post-9/11.

Pat Buchan: Its level of engagement has been very consistent, very smart, very shrewd. And as you say, at the pointy end of the spear. My view is, how does Australia continue that, particularly when it comes down to what we started the conversation with, the China choice.

Michael Green: And we're going to need more discussions like this, but for now, thank you.

Pat Buchan: Thanks Mike. Great to be on.

Speaker 1: A note for our listeners: the Asia Chessboard will, after this episode, go on a short winter break. Be sure to tune-in January 13th for our return. The whole team here wishes you a Happy and Healthy New Year and Happy Holidays.