Departmental Seminar

TITLE

In Times of Real Trouble: The United States and Australia’s Defence Plans Between the Two World Wars

SPEAKER

Mr Tan Chye Guan

Day, Date, Time, Venue

Wednesday, 19 September 2007, 3 pm
HY/PS Lounge, AS1-0401

Abstract

The widely-held belief that Australia had no significant relations with the United States (US) before Pearl Harbour is in need of serious revision. Documents published since the mid-1970s reveal much confidential communication between Washington and the apparently unimportant Dominion from 1935. Nonetheless, most of these sources were not used in subsequent studies on Australian strategic thinking. Such records offer great insight into just who shaped Australia’s defence policies, how little these policymakers trusted British assurances and how much they knew about President Franklin Roosevelt’s actual intentions toward Japan “in times of real trouble”. This presentation will discuss the resulting need for fresh concepts and more reliable premises in the study of Australia’s inter-war defence plans.

About the Speaker

The presenter graduated from NUS in 2004 and is currently pursuing an M.A. in History at NUS. He prefers studying long- misunderstood Grand Strategy, especially cases where the question of just what that strategy was remains elusive.

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