

AUSTRALIAN POLICY TOWARD THE  
WEST NEW GUINEA DISPUTE,  
1945-1962

A Thesis

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by

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## PREFACE

This study of Australian policy toward the West New Guinea dispute crystallized out of a more general interest in a number of interrelated international phenomena, including colonialism, decolonization and anti-colonialism. It was a suggestion of Professor Robert R. Robbins which originally directed my attention to the interesting convergence of these phenomena, first in Australia's role in Papua and the Trust Territory of New Guinea (now the Territory of Papua-New Guinea), then in Australian policy toward West New Guinea, a colonial dependency of the Netherlands in the Netherlands East Indies claimed as Irian Barat or West Irian by Indonesia after its independence.\* With this specific focus, the larger topic of Australian foreign policy became an engaging subject of inquiry as well.

The dispute over West New Guinea conveniently imposes an historical scope as it had its origins in developments during 1946 and its termination in a settlement negotiated during 1962. These historical contours, moreover, coincide with the crystallization of an independent Australian foreign policy in the experience of World War II and with the conduct of that foreign policy in a formative phase.

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\*Throughout this study, although it is written after the territory formally acquired the name Irian Barat, the name West New Guinea will be used except in references to Netherlands policy or Indonesian policy where the political connotations of the designations "Netherlands New Guinea" or "West Irian" seem to make their use appropriate.

Yet Australian interest in New Guinea predates the emergence of an independent foreign policy; in fact it predates the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia. Accordingly this study begins by tracing the origins of Australian interest in New Guinea before considering the circumstances out of which the dispute emerged and the evolution of policy toward the dispute.

Only a small, although significant, part of what I owe to Professor Robbins has been noted. He has supported all of my efforts with instruction, encouragement, and wise counsel. Professor Robert B. Stewart, Dean of the Fletcher School during my initial period as a graduate student, has taken a sustained interest in this study. I am grateful for that interest and for his support. I would also like to acknowledge the benefits of my study and research in Australia during 1964 and 1965 which was made possible by a Fulbright grant. The Department of International Relations at the Australian National University provided an especially stimulating environment in which to pursue the study of Australian foreign policy. All of the members of the faculty, particularly Dr. T. B. Millar, the other students, and the staff as well could not have done more for me. Many others in Australia, for example Dr. Herbert Feith, assisted by providing resource materials and insights for my study. Some of these gave their assistance with the understanding that they or their contributions would not be specifically cited and I have kept that understanding.

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