8 December 2017

**Australian Media coverage of the PRC**

This week, amidst allegations against Senator Sam Dastyari, and the government announcing proposed amendments to Australia’s treason, espionage and foreign influence laws, diplomatic tensions have heightened between Australia and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The response by PRC government officials and state media has been very critical of this move, taking particular aim at the Australian media.

In a [statement](http://au.china-embassy.org/eng/sgjs/sghd/t1516965.htm) released on 5 December, the Embassy of the PRC in Australia condemned the “anti-China hysteria and paranoid [sic]”. The spokesperson castigated the Australian media for its “cold war mentality and ideological bias” surrounding recent reportage of Chinese international students and Chinese-Australian communities. Second, they were critical of politicians who towed this same line, compromising “mutual trust” between the two countries. Finally, the statement insisted on “mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs”, reflecting well-touted diplomatic rhetoric, reiterated frequently by senior officials, including [Premier Li Keqiang](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1328507.shtml) and [Foreign Minister Wang Yi](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1429650.shtml).

In a [statement](http://news.xinhuanet.com/overseas/2017-12/05/c_1122063077.htm) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing reiterated its belief in “mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs”, before encouraging Australia “to abandon its prejudices and treat China in an objective and fair manner”.

Whilst many Australian news outlets have reported on these diplomatic statements, Chinese state media has lambasted the Australian media for generating a new wave of panic. PRC state tabloid, the Global Times (环球时报), provided a [secondary portrayal](http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2017-12/11429218.html) of Australian reportage of the Chinese Embassy’s statement, once again criticising the paranoia and hysteria surrounding “spies” and “infiltration”.

In an incendiary [cartoon](http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2017-12/11425534.html), the Global Times criticised Australia for its alleged two-faced relations with China — on one hand generating paranoia regarding Chinese hacking and compromised cybersecurity, and on the other, relying heavily on trade with the PRC. The cartoon also portrayed a fickle-minded Australia, that would choose to side with the United States rather than engage more genuinely with the PRC.

China Daily released an [editorial](http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201712/05/WS5a27704ea3107865316d4525.html) on Wednesday, urging Malcolm Turnbull not bow to “anti-China bias”, admitting that “the two countries do have differences, not least in their political systems, but that should not create undue friction”. Additionally, Sina News (新浪新闻中心) [reported](http://news.sina.com.cn/c/nd/2017-12-06/doc-ifypnqvn0706221.shtml) on the Embassy’s statement with a larger contextual coverage, highlighting the accusations against Dastyari; Turnbull’s dinner with Liu Xiaodong, a Chinese businessman and political donor; Australia’s Foreign Policy White Paper; and Ambassador Cheng Jingye’s previous statements characterising Australia’s media as “sensationalist”.

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