



## Media Roundup Issue 57 (10/02/18 – 16/02/18)

### 1. Why Australia is cautious about the Belt and Road

**09/02/2018**

**Ma Xuejing**

**China Daily**

Australia has been vacillating over strengthening its ties with China, seemingly unsure of whether that will somehow compromise its security or bring welcome economic benefits. Yet while there is nothing to suggest China is a threat to Australia, they do have complementary economic structures and Canberra's plans to develop northern Australia and Australia's infrastructure could make great progress through cooperation with China's Belt and Road Initiative (the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road).

However, Canberra's suspicions about China's intentions mean it views the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as tools for China to expand its geopolitical power in the Pacific Rim through trade. And it fears that participation in the Belt and Road Initiative might harm its alliance with the United States.

Since US President Donald Trump took office in 2017, the US has sought to enhance its position of power worldwide, not least by strengthening its Asia-Pacific alliance network, which includes Australia, as a means to project its power and contain China's influence. The US and Australia, based on similar ideologies and culture, have formed close US-Australia relations, which has prompted Canberra to keep pace with Washington in its stance toward China.

*Read more:*

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201802/09/WS5a7cdb8a3106e7dcc13baa0.html>

### 2. Harry Harris new US ambassador to Australia

**10/02/2018**

**Cameron Stewart**

**The Australian**

Donald Trump has formally endorsed the head of US Pacific Command, Admiral Harry Harris, as the next US ambassador to Australia.

The move is likely to anger Beijing, given Admiral Harris's hawkish views on China, but it will be seen as a coup by the Turnbull government to have such a well qualified and senior former US military officer in the role at a time of growing strategic uncertainty in the region.

It also comes amid reports that the US Marine Corps will expand the number of marines serving in Darwin on a rotational basis. US military officials have told *The Wall Street Journal* in Darwin that the number of US marines there, currently 1250 on six-month rotations, will rise by an unspecified amount in March.

It comes as the Pentagon is considering a plan to send heavily armed, versatile Marine Corps Expeditionary Units to East Asia, curtailing some deployments in the Middle East as it repositions forces in response to growing Chinese influence, US military officials said.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/harry-harris-new-us-ambassador-to-australia/news-story/57b6f8f4c393a882a7d6668b2dac65d7>

### 3. New world order: momentum is shifting in favour of dictators

**10/02/2018**

**Alan Dupont**

**The Australian**

Are Russia and China deliberately undermining democracies in order to replace the Western-led liberal international order with their own authoritarian model? This is the central claim by the recently released US defence strategy, the most important in a generation. And it's a belief that is driving the Turnbull government's tougher response to foreign interference.

In a thinly veiled reference to China and Russia, Defence Minister Marise Payne has accused both countries of undermining the postwar global order using proxies, covert and paramilitary operations, economic coercion, cyber-attacks, misinformation and media manipulation.

Examples are not hard to find. Allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US elections have dominated international news, culminating in the appointment of former FBI director Robert Mueller to lead a Department of Justice investigation with wide-ranging powers. France and Germany have joined the US in criticising Russia for meddling in their elections and domestic affairs, while Chinese interference has been a hotly debated issue in Australia over the past year.

*Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/new-world-order-momentum-is-shifting-in-favour-of-dictators/news-story/686ba7f530f14ed9e3facde90297d648>*

#### 4. Kevin Rudd accuses Turnbull government of 'anti-Chinese jihad'

**12/02/2018**  
**Paul Karp**  
**The Guardian**

[Kevin Rudd](#) has accused the Turnbull government of “neo-McCarthyism” over its foreign interference package, which aims to crack down on China’s influence in Australia.

Speaking at the National Press Club on Monday, the former Labor prime minister said he disagreed with China on human rights questions but [Malcolm Turnbull](#) had caused patriotic Chinese-Australians “unnecessary anxiety”.

Rudd’s comments follow Labor’s increasing hostility to the government’s proposed register of lobbyists for foreign interests, which has been [subject to a widespread backlash](#) due to fears that even benign contributions to public debate will be included.

*Read more: [https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/feb/12/kevin-rudd-accuses-turnbull-government-of-anti-chinese-jihad?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/feb/12/kevin-rudd-accuses-turnbull-government-of-anti-chinese-jihad?CMP=share_btn_tw)*

## 5. China uses race to unite and divide

**13/02/2018**

**Peter Hartcher**

**The Age**

Admiral Harry Harris, announced on Friday as Donald Trump's choice to be US ambassador to Australia, is hailed by all as a great choice. All but the Chinese government, that is.

The head of the US Pacific Command is a four-star admiral, the highest rank possible in the American Navy in peacetime. If he's confirmed by the US Senate, he would become the first four-star to take up residence in Australia since General Douglas MacArthur.

Harris has an outstanding 40-year service record, a history of forthrightness, and a declared affection for Australia. He has bipartisan admiration on Washington's Capitol Hill and on Australia's Capital Hill alike.

So what's Beijing's problem with him? It's twofold. First is that he was outspoken in opposing China's territory-grabbing and island-building in the South China Sea.

*Read more: <https://www.theage.com.au/world/asia/china-uses-race-to-unite-and-divide-20180212-p4z00c.html>*

## 6. Brits to assert right of navigation in claimed sovereign waters off China

**13/02/2018**

**Greg Sheridan**

**The Australian**

A British warship will next month sail from Australia through the South China Sea, almost all of which is claimed as sovereign waters by China, for the explicit purpose of demonstrating that the sea is international waters and to assert freedom-of-navigation rights, British Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson says.

HMS Sutherland, an anti-submarine frigate similar to ones Britain hopes to sell Australia, arrives in Australia later this week.

“She’ll be sailing through the South China Sea (on the way home) and making it clear our navy has a right to do that,” Mr Williamson told *The Australian* in an exclusive interview.

Mr Williamson would not say whether HMS Sutherland would sail within 12 nautical miles of a disputed territory or artificial island built by the Chinese, as US ships do, but said: “We absolutely support the US approach on this, we very much support what the US has been doing.”

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/brits-to-assert-right-of-navigation-in-claimed-sovereign-waters-off-china/news-story/1d0f900e894c3c4d98111554f58f826d>

## 7. Infrastructure crackdown not aimed at China: FIRB chairman

**14/02/2018**

**Andrew White**

**The Australian**

Canberra’s top investment official has moved to allay Chinese concerns by saying Australia’s security crackdown on critical infrastructure should not be interpreted as a move against the emerging superpower’s geopolitical might.

Foreign Investment Review Board chairman David Irvine said Australia ran a “deliberately non-discriminatory” policy when assessing overseas purchases, and new conditions on agricultural land and critical infrastructure would apply equally to investors from all regions.

In his first comments since the government announced the crackdown two weeks ago, Mr Irvine said the new restrictions, including the right to veto electricity infrastructure deals on “national security” grounds, were not intended to discriminate against any one country but to deal with growing cyber threats to more than 100 critical electricity, water and port assets. “I don’t believe our attitude towards investment from China has changed,” Mr Irvine told *The Australian* in an interview.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mergers-acquisitions/infrastructure-crackdown-not-aimed-at-china-firb-chairman/news-story/d70131f73eb9c8ae488064dcb8cb9179>

## 8. Don't bait China, Carr tells US envoy Harris

**14/02/2018**

**Troy Bramston  
The Australian**

Former foreign minister Bob Carr has cautiously welcomed the nomination of Admiral Harry Harris as US ambassador to Australia but noted that diplomacy was fundamentally different to being a military commander and that no US ally wants to see increased tensions with China.

Mr Carr, who heads the Australia-China Relations Institute at University of Technology Sydney, added that most Australians were appalled by Donald Trump's presidency and it would be unwise for Australia to join US freedom-of-navigation operations in the South China Sea.

"Any US ambassador can count on a warm welcome by Australians, even when we are united in having profound reservations about his commander-in-chief," Mr Carr told *The Australian*. "He is going to spend a lot of time in Australia interpreting the policies of the most distasteful presidency Australians have ever contemplated.

"His main challenge is to absorb the fact that this alliance, which attracts instinctive support from Australians, is not just a military link. Australians want to see it about more than just us serving up army battalions and RAAF pilots whenever asked.

*Read more (Paywall):* <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/dont-bait-china-carr-tells-us-envoy-harris/news-story/5b66a175509b8dfa38ad648d02723a2b>

## 9. In maiden speech, Jim Molan warns of China war risk, calls for Defence boost

**14/02/2018**

**David Wroe  
The Sydney Morning Herald**

Australia needs to increase its military self-reliance so that it can approach China from “a position of strength” and prepare for the possibility that the rising power could go to war with the United States, new Liberal senator Jim Molan has said.

The retired army major-general used his maiden speech to the Senate on Wednesday to stake out his position as a defence hawk, calling for long-term investment in military readiness and linked his call specifically to China’s challenge to a US that is in “relative decline” in defence terms.

And he took a swipe against other US allies in Europe and Asia - apparently singling out Japan and South Korea - for under-investing in their militaries.

*Read more:* <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/in-maiden-speech-jim-molan-warns-of-china-war-risk-calls-for-defence-boost-20180214-p4z0cq.html>

## 10. Chinese students warned over Australia safety

**15/02/2018**

**Jamie Smyth and Tom Hancock**  
**Financial Times**

Beijing has issued a safety warning to Chinese students in Australia, heightening fears in Canberra of economic retaliation after a spike in political tensions between the countries.

China’s Ministry of Education on Wednesday warned of “a number of cases of violations of the personal safety of Chinese students studying in various parts of Australia, and of their property’s safety. Please all students studying in Australia maintain vigilance”.

The official advisory follows an attack on a Chinese student in October and concerns from the Chinese embassy in Australia about new laws targeting foreign influence, as well as an uptick in anti-Chinese sentiment in the media.

James Leibold, associate professor at La Trobe University, said the warning was Beijing’s way of reminding Australia that it can curb one of the country’s most lucrative export sectors if Canberra does not fall into line.

*Read more (Paywall):* <https://www.ft.com/content/e1f92b40-11f9-11e8-8cb6-b9ccc4c4dbbb>