



Media Roundup Issue 61 (03/03/18 – 09/03/18)

1. Seven myths about China

03/03/2018

Paul Monk

The Australian

We are on the cusp of serious debates about the implications for Australia and the whole Asia-Pacific world of the vast increase in Chinese wealth and power this century, not least with the repudiation of political reforms by Xi Jinping and his assumption of indefinite and all but absolute power.

For those debates to be conducted intelligently and productively, it is vital that we think about China in a clear-headed manner.

Unfortunately, the field is cluttered with myths about China, sedulously propagated by the Chinese Communist Party, which hamper debate. Here are seven that need dismantling to clear the field.

Myth 1: China is simply resuming its “natural” position as the world’s greatest power after an anomalous 200-year “blip” of Western industrial and technological primacy.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/seven-myths-about-china/news-story/2f700598f0e69b44155688268dbdbd92>

2. Unis could bide their time and escape the long arm of Beijing

03/03/2018

John Fitzgerald

The Australian

Concern over Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election has triggered alarm in the US about the vulnerability of liberal democracies to meddling by foreign dictatorships.

The concern goes beyond Russia. Anxiety over China's influence operations in the US has begun to focus on educational institutions, particularly Beijing-sponsored Confucius Institutes on American college campuses.

In January this year, Florida senator Marco Rubio urged universities in his state to close down Confucius Institutes. Last month, FBI director Christopher Wray endorsed Rubio's call, telling a Senate intelligence committee inquiry that his agency was keeping a watchful eye on Confucius Institutes as one of "many tools" that Beijing deploys in taking advantage of America's open society.

Australia is not America and no university here has come close to closing down its Confucius Institute. Should we be worried?

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/unis-could-bide-their-time-and-escape-the-long-arm-of-beijing/news-story/202b5b9462af59a9f38f57aee13b7b8>

3. Forget China's red dragon, fear the green renewable one

03/03/2018

Crispin Hull

The Sydney Morning Herald

As China's President, Xi Jinping, came closer this week to becoming the next emperor of China for life, Western leaders wringed their hands and worried about China's military power, cyber-power and soft power. Meanwhile, they are naively surrendering, without a scintilla of opposition, primacy in the one field that made the British and then the American empires world dominant: energy.

It's quite weird that the United States, with Australia clutching its coat-tails, is all worked up about China spreading its communist, illiberal, ideological dogma to all parts of the world, suspecting a communist plot for China to dominate the world. And worked up about expansion of military presence into the South China Sea and soft power into the heartland of US and Australian cities.

Yet, at the same time, the US's blind ideological adherence to the coal, gas and oil industries, and to climate-change denial, is handing to China on a plate world dominance in the one thing than really matters when it comes to building an empire in the industrial and post-industrial world: energy.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/forget-chinas-red-dragon-fear-the-green-renewable-one-20180302-h0ww5w.html>

4. Security warnings over Huawei in 5G network

04/03/2018

David Wroe

The Sydney Morning Herald

Security experts and former officials have warned about the long-term risks to Australia posed by the juggernaut status of Chinese firm Huawei as it looks to build 5G mobile networks that will dramatically expand web connections to everyday life.

Fairfax Media understands there are significant concerns in Canberra about the Chinese giant having too much control over the world's 5G network, which will provide mobile speeds at least 10 times faster than current networks to feed data-hungry future technologies such as driverless cars, robotics and virtual reality.

Fairfax Media understands the Turnbull government is in discussions with a range of other countries about the security concerns with 5G. But any decision to attempt to exclude Huawei would put the government in the difficult position of having to dictate commercial choices to Australian telco carriers.

One former security official who asked not to be named told Fairfax Media concerns revolved around, not just technical risks to core infrastructure, but also the dangers of Huawei having a global monopoly in such a strategically important industry.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/security-warnings-over-huawei-in-5g-network-20180302-p4z2je.html>

5. Australia-China relationship on a 'bit of a knife edge'

05/03/2018

John Kehoe

Australian Financial Review

Australia's growing reliance on selling services to China leaves the economy exposed to geopolitical frictions, as business and national security professionals clash over how to respond to Beijing's rising assertiveness.

Analysis by consulting firm PwC estimates the economy would lose \$2.3 billion and 20,000 jobs if Beijing ordered students and tourists to shun Australia for one year, under a "imagine the unimaginable" scenario in retaliation against government criticisms of China.

Tensions between Canberra and Beijing remain elevated after the government pushed legislation last year to stamp out perceived Chinese interference in Australia's democratic political institutions.

Other disagreements centre on Chinese spying, militarisation of the South China Sea, China's coercion of smaller regional neighbours and, potentially, Huawei's involvement in helping build super-fast 5G wireless networks in Australia.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/brand/business-summit/australiachina-relationship-on-a-bit-of-a-knife-edge-20180304-h0wz5u>

6. Even without '457' visa, Chinese, Indians continue flocking to Australian unis

05/03/2018

Study International

Last year, the Turnbull government axed the popular Temporary Work visa, known as the "457 visa", in a bid to stem the flow of foreign talent and give priority to Australian workers instead.

The result? The number of international students transitioning to the 457 visa was slashed by half compared to the previous year's, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

Yet, despite the tougher requirements in the new visa scheme to replace the 457's and the squeeze in the local job market, Australian universities are still seeing a surge in international enrollments.

Read more: <https://www.studyinternational.com/news/457-visa-international-student/>

7. Beijing's welcome mat for overseas Chinese

06/03/2018

Jieh-Yung Lo

The Interpreter

China has opened new doors for overseas Chinese through changes to its visa program. Beijing's latest policy announcement allows foreign citizens with Chinese heritage to apply for a special multiple-entry visa granting a residency period of up to five years. This extends the existing policy under which individuals with Chinese heritage could receive a one-year visa granting a maximum residency period of three years.

All foreign citizens with Chinese heritage are eligible to apply, regardless of how many generations of their family have lived outside China. The move is consistent with Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech delivered at the 19th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) National Congress in October 2017, which centred on the theme of national rejuvenation.

In contrast to his predecessors, Xi believes overseas Chinese communities have a role in his vision for a more prosperous and innovative China that occupies a central position in world politics. He declared:

We will maintain extensive contacts with overseas Chinese nationals, returned Chinese and their relatives and unite them so that they can join our endeavours to revitalise the Chinese nation.

China intends to roll out the welcome mat for overseas Chinese to "return home". Why? Because the CCP desires the skills, connections, and knowledge of the outside world.

Read more: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/beijing-s-welcome-mat-overseas-chinese>

8. Australia's new maritime deal fueled by fears of regional disorder amid China's rise

06/03/2018

David Wroe

The Sydney Morning Herald

Australia's landmark maritime treaty with East Timor is expected to make major concessions to the tiny nation to demonstrate Canberra's commitment to the law of the sea, amid rising concerns over China bucking the rules in pursuit of its own territorial claims.

After 15 years in which successive Australian governments have implacably stuck to their claim over most of the natural gas-rich seas, Australia is understood to be eyeing a more strategic picture in 2018 in which a shared commitment to rules is the best hope of heading off tensions.

But in a separate complication, the agreement — which is understood to deliver at least 70 per cent of expected gas revenues to East Timor in a virtual reversal from Canberra's earlier positions — could also prompt Indonesia to reconsider its own maritime boundaries with Australia.

China has both publicly and privately used Australia's protracted dispute over its maritime boundary with East Timor to accuse Canberra of hypocrisy when it raises its concerns over Beijing's behaviour in the South China Sea.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australia-s-new-maritime-deal-fuelled-by-fears-of-regional-disorder-amid-china-s-rise-20180306-p4z342.html>

9. China spends \$12bn more to extend its international influence

07/03/2018

Rowan Callick

The Australian

China is massively boosting its diplomatic resources as it seeks to become a leading power, announcing in its draft 2018 budget a 15.6 per cent surge in spending on foreign affairs, to \$12 billion.

Premier Li Keqiang said in his state-of-the-nation address on Monday that “China’s diplomatic agenda has further advanced on every front”.

In the four previous years, China almost doubled its foreign-affairs spending — while last year, the White House cut US spending on international programs by 30 per cent over 2016.

Bloomberg reported last month that the Chinese government is enhancing the authority of its Foreign Ministry, including giving ambassadors more direct control over the appointment and operations of all embassy staff.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/china-spends-12bn-more-to-extend-its-international-influence/news-story/807734f896562b0c11dd319dac767c94>

10. China-Australia: from soft power, greater understanding

07/03/2018

Bo Seo

The Australian

“There are too many kangaroos in Australia.”

Anywhere in Australia, the statement would be nothing out of the ordinary. But spoken by a student here, at Tsinghua University’s bustling campus in Beijing, the words take on a transporting quality. They take me to a place that feels not quite like home.

I am sitting in on Wang Jinghui’s class, Exploring Australia. Since the course doubles as English language practice for most of its 120 enrollees, Wang usually declines to speak first. She opens each class with student presentations on a common theme.

Today, the theme is the Australian environment, and we begin with the kangaroos.

When the last of the presenters concludes, Wang steers the discussion. What starts as a basic informational discussion of Australian fauna and flora transforms into something altogether more complex.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/opinion/chinaaustralia-from-soft-power-greater-understanding/news-story/9c98bbcc4c26c022806d32a9b7a318a1>

11. Risks to international student market: Austrade

07/03/2018

Sian Powell

The Australian

Australia must carefully manage potential risks to the international student market, Austrade chief executive Stephanie Fahey has warned, because unforeseen factors have the ability to damage the higher education sector.

Referring to the mainstream newspaper industry, which has seen hundreds of titles worldwide close with the advent of the internet, Dr Fahey said it was incumbent on Australian universities to consider potential threats to the lucrative inflow of international students.

"I think we need to be vigilant and not take the international student flow for granted", she said.

"Things can happen. We need to focus on maintaining social licence in Australia so that the community continues to receive and welcome international students. We know that sometimes international students get swept up in concerns in the community around too much immigration. Even though most international students go home, they still get swept up in the community's response to having 'the other' in Australia."

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/risks-to-international-student-market-austrade/news-story/adfe42ce4b8673a5d8074266db17d3d1>

12. Former spy chief Dennis Richardson says China overstepped in Australia

07/03/2018

Angus Grigg & Lisa Murray

Australian Financial Review

The Turnbull government should exercise its freedom of navigation rights in the South China Sea, according to the former head of the Defence Department, who said the rhetoric towards China had become "overblown", but Beijing needed to accept this after it "overstepped" by interfering in Australia's domestic affairs.

Dennis Richardson, who retired from Defence last May after a career which also saw him head the country's top spy agency, urged Canberra to sail within 12 nautical miles of China's man-made islands in the disputed territory of the South China Sea.

"I believe we should be conducting freedom of navigation exercises through territorial sea claimed by China, generated by man-made features," he said.

"They [China] have a right to be in the South China Sea, but they don't have a right to create man-made features and seek to assert territorial waters from those."

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/brand/business-summit/former-spy-chief-dennis-richardson-says-china-overstepped-in-australia-20180307-h0x5va>

13. China gift triggers more Australian quake aid for PNG

08/03/2018

Ben Packham

The Australian

Australia has ramped up support for Papua New Guinea earthquake victims after an initial \$200,000 contribution was dwarfed by a \$500,000 donation by Chinese interests.

Amid continuing aftershocks and a rising death toll now estimated at 122, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop yesterday announced an additional \$1 million commitment to supporting women and children in the disaster zone.

Three Australian Army Chinook helicopters will also join the relief effort, ferrying supplies to victims of the 7.5-magnitude earthquake in PNG's rugged Highlands. The additional support follows \$200,000 commitment of humanitarian supplies, including tarpaulins, bed mats and water containers, pledged six days after the February 26 disaster.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/china-gift-triggers-more-australian-quake-aid-for-png/news-story/fae096c44f8314c14e78e385475c1663>

14. Australia's first daigou hub opens doors

08/03/2018

**Australian Associated Press
The Australian**

Australia's first purpose-built retail hub for China's growing army of "daigou" shoppers has opened, creating a one-stop shop for the personal shoppers to get hands-on with local brands while talking direct to their millions of followers overseas.

The daigou hub in Sydney's Chinatown has been created by ASX-listed AuMake to serve as a retail and social network hub with a changing collection from AuMake's 500 Aussie partner brands.

AuMake chairman Keong Chan said that, following changing shopping habits in China, the hub was built to allow buyers to watch as daigou and suppliers meet and discuss products and deals before placing their orders.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/australias-first-daigou-hub-opens-doors/news-story/d4fb355e53b2e08e46ca9358c5ab0595>

15. China mocks Australia over 'Indo-Pacific' concept it says will 'dissipate'

08/03/2018

**Bill Birtles
ABC Online**

China's Foreign Minister has mocked the Australian and US preference of describing the region as the 'Indo-Pacific' instead of 'Asia-Pacific' as an "attention-grabbing idea" that will "dissipate like ocean foam".

Speaking at an annual media conference in Beijing, Wang Yi also criticised the recently revived regional grouping known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), involving Australia, India, Japan and the US.

Senior foreign affairs officials from the four countries met late last year to revive talks between the four democracies on the basis of "shared values and principles", in a move widely viewed as responding to China's growing assertiveness.

More recently, the Quad leaders were reported to be considering a new global infrastructure scheme to rival Beijing's Belt and Road plan.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-08/china-mocks-australia-over-indo-pacific-concept/9529548>

16. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop won't provoke in the South China Sea

09/03/2018

Lisa Murray

Australian Financial Review

The Australian government is resisting calls for targeted sail-through operations in the South China Sea amid concern in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) it would unnecessarily ratchet up tensions in the region.

Former Defence chief Dennis Richardson called on the Turnbull government to take a stronger stand against excessive Chinese territorial claims by sailing within 12 nautical miles of Beijing's man-made islands in the disputed waters.

However, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said on Thursday Australia already had a significant presence in the area.

"These are our most important trading routes so of course we exercise freedom of navigation and freedom of over-flight," she told Sky News.

"What we won't do is unilaterally provoke an increase in tensions in the South China Sea" by sailing too close to the islands, she said. "There are a number of claimants, there are a number of disputed territories and there are negotiations under way."

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/news/politics/world/foreign-minister-julie-bishop-wont-provoke-in-the-south-china-sea-20180308-h0x7nr#ixzz59CjoGask>

17. Paul Keating praises Donald Trump's policy on China

09/03/2018

Brad Norington

Associate Editor

Paul Keating has thrown his support behind Donald Trump, saying the three US presidents before him squandered their opportunities to fully engage with China and accept its growing influence in the Asia-Pacific.

The former Labor prime minister praised Mr Trump today for “surprisingly” adopting the right policy on China — notwithstanding conflict over his decision to impose tariffs on steel imports mainly targeted at Beijing.

Mr Keating said the President had shied away from a more traditional US policy of seeking strategic dominance, and instead showed himself to be pragmatic about China's rise.

“So perhaps strange, but true,” he said. “President Donald Trump is following that formula. He says, ‘Let's have a better relationship with China. You've got to keep them honest on steel and tariffs, but let's have a better overall relationship.’”

Read more (Paywall) : <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/paul-keating-praises-donald-trumps-policy-on-china/news-story/8c38516c893249e826e8c6330d879ab9>