

Media Roundup Issue 69 (28/04/18 – 04/05/18)

1. Australia-China relations need a reset, and Malcolm Turnbull has to lead the way

29/04/2018

James Laurenceson

South China Morning Post

Australia-China relations need a reset. But this is unlikely as long as the Australian prime minister himself remains a stumbling block.

This month, Geoff Raby, a former Australian ambassador to China, said that things haven't been this bad since 1989, when the Chinese government crushed student-led protests in Beijing.

Responding to such claims, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was only prepared to concede there's "a degree of tension in the relationship".

Read more: <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2143690/australia-china-relations-need-reset-and-malcolm-turnbull>

2. China: magic weapons and "plausible deniability"

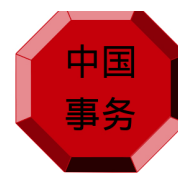
30/04/2018

Graeme Smith

The Interpreter

Xi Jinping's radical overhaul of the Chinese bureaucracy is not, as Xinhua would have you believe, just about streamlining government administration and reducing "red tape". A host of state agencies that once stood between the public and the Chinese Communist Party have been done away with.

Government bodies, including the Religious Affairs Bureau, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the State Council's Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs, have been absorbed by the UFWD. While the "nameplate" of these offices will likely be maintained for foreign consumption, the move demonstrates the importance Xi places on the party's nearly century-old United Front strategy.



Read more: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/plausible-deniability-and-united-front-work-department>

3. Chinese influence to top Macron's talks in Australia

30/04/2018

Ben Packham

The Australian

The rise of China in the Pacific will be a key item on the agenda when French President Emmanuel Macron makes his first bilateral visit to Australia this week.

Mr Macron will arrive in Sydney tomorrow for a three-day visit, focusing on defence ties, climate change and economic issues.

Mr Macron will use his Australian trip to “enhance the strategic partnership” between the two countries, and find “common -solutions” to security and environmental tensions in the region, according to the Elysee Palace.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/chinese-influence-to-top-macrons-talks-in-australia/news-story/ae6504cc07d88ec287e7a929338a47fb>

4. Cold winds if the fifth China-Oz icy age

30/04/2018

Graeme Dobell

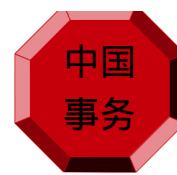
The Strategist

As China and Australia are demonstrating, icy periods between nations are difficult and challenging. Even dangerous.

Yet along with the perils of thrills and spills, chills are illuminating.

The icy age disrupts the usual rhythms. Protocol ices and normal transactions slow. Australian ministers aren't getting invites to visit China and the annual Australia Week business expo in China 'looks certain to be abandoned'.

The reality of the push, pull and power plays is revealed.



Read more: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/cold-winds-fifth-china-oz-icy-age/>

5. Australia's China relationship being bungled – former envoy

01/05/2018

Katharine Murphy
The Guardian

Australia's security establishment has sidelined the department of foreign affairs on the China relationship and driven a more hawkish line, creating turmoil, according to a former Australian ambassador to Beijing.

Geoff Raby contends in a post on the Pearls and Irritations blog that a deteriorating relationship between Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop is part of the reason the Canberra-Beijing relationship is off the rails.

Read more: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/01/australias-china-relationship-being-bungled-former-envoy>

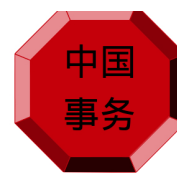
6. China warns tourists about security risks in Australia

01/05/2018

Michael Smith
Australian Financial Review

China has highlighted security risks for its citizens visiting Australia, the United States and nine other countries in a travel warning which will worry tourism operators becoming increasingly dependent on booming Chinese visitor numbers.

China's Foreign Ministry issued the travel advice on a social media account ahead of the current long weekend in China, which is a popular time for families to travel overseas. In a series of posts over several days, it issued security warnings for Australia, the US, South Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, South Africa, Congo, Thailand, Egypt and East Timor.



Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/news/politics/world/china-warns-tourists-about-security-risks-in-australia-20180501-h0zi9u>

7. Malabar 2018: India deals a blow to Australia and 'the Quad'

01/05/2018

Emanuele Scimia

Asia Times

The shadow of China looms large in India's decision to exclude Australia from an upcoming multilateral naval exercise. Canberra confirmed last Thursday that its navy would not be part of Malabar 2018, which will be held off Guam between June 7 and 15.

So this year's Malabar drills will maintain a trilateral format, involving the naval forces of India, the United States and Japan. This means the project of a Quadrilateral (Quad) alliance/dialogue among New Delhi, Washington, Tokyo and Canberra to face Beijing's military expansion in the Indo-Pacific region will likely be mothballed.

Read more: <http://www.atimes.com/malabar-2018-india-deals-a-blow-to-australia-and-the-quad/>

8. Why China no longer trusts Australia

01/05/2018

Malcolm Farr

News.com.au

Our relations with China are under increasing strain and a former Australian ambassador to Beijing has given a brutal explanation of the tension.

He blames mistrust at the top of the Turnbull Government and an aggressive campaign by "the intelligence establishment" for the breakdown in our relationship with China.

Geoff Raby, our envoy to Beijing from 2007 to 2011, believes the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has "politicised itself" and critics of its actions are dismissed as pro-China "panda huggers".



Read more: <http://www.news.com.au/finance/work/leaders/why-china-no-longer-trusts-australia/news-story/2110141c468bb6ea866052283c6de119>

9. Chinese-backed airport project in Solomon Islands not a threat to Australia, official says

01/05/2018

Lauren Beldi and Sam Seke

ABC News

A Solomon Islands official has hit back at reports that a proposed Chinese-backed development project could challenge Australia's strategic dominance in the region.

The Australian newspaper reported yesterday that senior Solomon Islands officials had approached Chinese investors to build a "tourism hub" — which would include an airport — on the southeast coast of the country's main island Guadalcanal.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-02/chinese-backed-airport-in-solomon-islands-nothing-to-fear/9718260>

10. Chinese student influx driven by facts, not friction

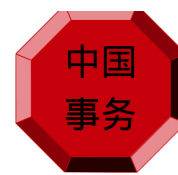
02/05/2018

Zhang Yufei

The Australian

Chinese families planning to send a son or daughter to study in Australia have mainly dismissed concerns about student safety and political friction between the two countries.

Instead, families interviewed this week as they visited a Beijing education consultancy listed the positives of studying in Australia.



Despite two official safety warnings from Chinese authorities, Chinese students studying in Australian universities hit a record high this year with the number of students starting courses rising 22 per cent compared with last year.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/chinese-student-influx-driven-by-facts-not-friction/news-story/f82071ad474075ab479e76801857c041>

11. 'China is becoming seriously concerned by Australia's negative attitude towards it' -- and it could put the entire economy at risk

02/05/2018

Sarah Kimmorley

Business Insider Australia

Recent media articles and comments by Australian politicians are starting to rub the Chinese the wrong way.

Just ask David Thomas, founder and President of the Australia China SME Association. On a recent business trip to China, Thomas was acutely aware of a change in the way his Chinese counterparts spoke about Australia.

"China is becoming seriously concerned by Australia's negative attitude towards it, he said.

"I have just completed a one week business visit to China and have never before heard such negative comments about Australia's politicians, media and government."

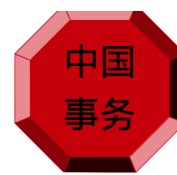
Read more: <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/china-is-becoming-seriously-concerned-by-australias-negative-attitude-towards-it-and-it-could-put-the-entire-economy-at-risk-2018-5>

12. France, Australia call on China to observe rules

02/05/2018

Trevor Marshallsea

The Washington Post



Each week China Matters collates news items about the Australia-China relationship

French President Emmanuel Macron and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Wednesday issued a reminder to China to respect a “rules-based” order in the South Pacific amid concerns about Beijing’s growing influence in the region.

Macron’s comments came during a three-day visit to Australia, during which the two nations signed a range of agreements, including a pact to strengthen defence ties.

Read more(Paywall): https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/macron-cooperation-is-powerful-message-as-nationalism-looms/2018/05/01/81f69200-4db8-11e8-85c1-9326c4511033_story.html?utm_term=.854799642f2e

13. A chilling story about Chinese pressure in Australia shows how far Beijing will reach to silence critics

02/05/2018

Tara Francis Chan

Business Insider Australia

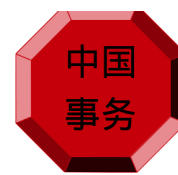
Forget Russia.

Attempts by China’s Communist Party to influence international politics and societies are increasingly causing alarm worldwide.

In Australia alone, a book critical of China’s influence attempts struggled to get a publisher, the federal government drafted a bill making foreign interference and political donations illegal, and a former adviser to the prime minister even spoke on the matter with the US House Armed Services Committee.

While some of China’s covert actions have been difficult to pinpoint publicly, Maree Ma, the general manager of Australia’s Vision Times Media, recently described how the Chinese government is successfully interfering with the operations of Australian media companies.

Read more: <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/chinese-influence-in-australia-media-2018-5?r=US&IR=T>



14. Waning trust between Australia and China may have dire consequences, experts warn

03/05/2018

Gavin Fernando

News.com.au

Waning trust between Australia and China may have serious consequences if we don't find a way to engage on the issue, an expert panel has warned.

A group of Chinese-Australian experts hosted by the Lowy Institute Tuesday night examined the impact of Australia's foreign influence debate, after Malcolm Turnbull announced Canberra would introduce legislation to combat foreign intervention in Australian politics.

Maree Ma, the General Manager of Vision Times, the largest independent Chinese-language media organisation in Australia, said the Chinese Communist Party has already proven it's prepared to take action against Australia over the issue.

Read more: <http://www.news.com.au/finance/work/leaders/waning-trust-between-australia-and-china-may-have-dire-consequences-experts-warn/news-story/ffae8a7f63f1b894dbf7f3327451bd54>

15. Shanghai AFL game a ready-made business networking event

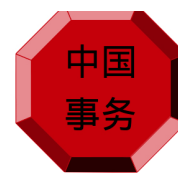
03/05/2018

Andrew Hunter

The Australian

The second AFL match to be played in China is a ray of sunshine that can start the much-needed thaw in Australia-China relations.

The interview by Chinese Ambassador Cheng Jingye which appeared on the front page of The Australian on April 19 — exactly one month before the game in Shanghai (are there any pure coincidences in high-level diplomacy?) — is an open invitation to Australia. It is time to focus on the opportunity, rather than the challenges.



Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/shanghai-afl-game-a-readymade-business-networking-event/news-story/695e7d5ffed26893d059e2bb20bc189e>

16. Labor to counter China in Pacific, Richard Marles says

04/05/2018

John Kehoe

Australian Financial Review

The Labor opposition has signalled it will try to counter China in the Pacific by injecting Australia more assertively into partnerships with small neighbouring island countries that China is attempting to woo.

Labor defence spokesman Richard Marles argued the Turnbull government had undermined national security by failing to lead Pacific island countries and allowing China to fill a strategic "gap" in Australia's neighbourhood.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/news/politics/national/labor-to-counter-china-in-pacific-richard-marles-says-20180503-h0zkxf>

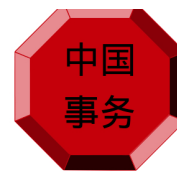
17. Call for US to have navy base in Perth

04/05/2018

NZ Herald

United States navy warships should be based in Perth in order to combat China's growing presence in the Indo-Pacific, a new report has warned. The expert document comes a week after China's military issued challenges to three Australian warships sailing through the South China Sea to Vietnam earlier this month.

The Countering China's Militarisation Of The Indo-Pacific report, by Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, calls on Australia and its allies to "spotlight and push back" against China's power projection in the region if they want it to remain "free and open".



Read more:

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12044614

18. China 'deploys missiles' in South China Sea, US, Australia warn of consequence

04/05/2018

ABC News

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has warned Beijing against militarising the South China Sea following reports that China has installed missile systems in the Spratley Islands for the first time.

US news network CNBC reported yesterday that China had installed anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems on three outposts in the South China Sea, citing sources with direct knowledge of US intelligence.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-04/us-warns-china-after-new-missiles-placed-in-south-china-sea/9726208>