

Media Roundup Issue 13 (25/03/17 – 31/03/17)

1. UTS professor Feng Chongyi told he is suspected of threatening state security

26/03/2017

**Amy McNeilage, Matt Wade, Kirsty Needham
Sydney Morning Herald**

Former Australian foreign minister Bob Carr says he is making representations in Beijing and Canberra about the case of Sydney academic Feng Chongyi.

Dr Feng, an associate professor of China Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney, was prevented from boarding a plane at Guangzhou airport on Friday morning and again on Saturday night.

Two Chinese lawyers who are in contact with Dr Feng say he was advised verbally by security police that he was under suspicion of threatening state security.

He had not been shown any documentation before being stopped from leaving China, they said.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/prominent-uts-professor-chongyi-feng-prevented-from-leaving-china-20170325-gv6jxy.html>

2. How China's media saw Li Keqiang's Australian visit

27/03/17

**Jackson Kwok
The Interpreter**

On Sunday Chinese Premier Li Keqiang concluded his five-day visit to Australia having signed a slew of bilateral agreements. Li Keqiang last visited Australia in 2009, a year described by former ambassador to China Geoff Raby as 'our collective *annus horribilis*'.

Eight years ago, few could have predicted that in his next visit down under, Li would be championing global free trade and open markets as the remedy to American protectionism. Yet Chinese state media coverage of the premier's visit aimed to communicate exactly that.

Read More:

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/how-china-s-media-saw-li-keqiang-s-australian-visit>

3. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's rhetoric on China is striking

27/03/17

Tom Switzer

Sydney Morning Herald

Relations between Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop have become very much warmer in the 18 months since they conspired to topple Tony Abbott. But you'd be forgiven for thinking they took a sudden turn for the worse this month when the Foreign Minister fundamentally contradicted Turnbull's world view.

Speaking in Singapore on March 13, Bishop did not just call on the US to enhance its security presence in Asia in the face of a rising China, she also warned Beijing would never reach its full potential unless it embraces democracy.

This analysis would be of little importance, though cause for regret, in a think tank or a university. But it is striking to find it current at such a senior level in the Australian government.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/foreign-minister-julie-bishops-rhetoric-on-china-is-striking-20170324-gv63uc.html>

4. China doesn't hold the economic leverage over Australia that most people think

27/03/17

Rory Medcalf

Australian Financial Review

The just-concluded visit by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang is a reminder that Australia will face frequent future choices about how we relate to China. Sometimes it will be in our interests to agree. Other times, interests will clash.

Premier Li's promise of ever-closer economic ties is enticing. But, piquantly, it comes when China is abusing such links to harm another country – South Korea. This involves crude economic pressure, ceasing tourism package tours and launching snap "inspections" against Lotte retail stores in China. The aim is to make Seoul stop hosting American missile defences as protection against North Korea. So far, South Korea is holding firm.

The lesson? Australian sovereignty will rely on our capacity to cope with attempts by China to use the economic relationship to distort our political and security decision-making.

The good news is that the character of our economic ties means there are limits to the pressure China can apply without imposing sizeable costs on itself.

Read More (Paywall):

<http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/china-doesnt-hold-the-economic-leverage-over-australia-that-most-people-think-20170326-gv6ldu>

5. China has turned its charm on Australia, but it won't last forever

28/03/17

Peter Hartcher

Sydney Morning Herald

Australia was told to bend over and brace for a kicking from China last week.

Julie Bishop had given a speech urging Beijing to adopt a more liberal and democratic system, at home and abroad.

While the region's governments were in a "holding pattern" to see whether Trump's America would recommit to upholding the regional rules-based order,

China should shape up: "While non-democracies such as China can thrive when participating in the present system, an essential pillar of our preferred order is democratic community."

Bishop suggested China join it.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/china-has-turned-its-charm-on-australia-but-it-wont-last-forever-20170327-gv7ddu.html>

6. China must resist the temptations of global powerplay

28/03/17

Stephen Roach

Australian Financial Review

Another growth scare has come and gone for the Chinese economy. This, of course, is very much at odds with Western conventional wisdom, which has long expected a hard landing in China. Once again, the Western perspective missed the Chinese context – a resilient system that places a high premium on stability.

Premier Li Keqiang said it all in his final comments at the recent China Development Forum. I have attended this gathering for 17 consecutive years and have learnt to read between the lines of premier-speak. Most of the time, senior Chinese leaders stay on message with rather boring statements about accomplishments, targets, and reforms.

This year was different. Initially, Li seemed subdued in his ponderous responses to questions from an audience of global luminaries that focused on weighty issues such as trade frictions, globalisation, digitisation, and automation. But he came alive in his closing remarks – offering an unprompted declaration about the Chinese economy's underlying strength: "There will be no hard landing," he exclaimed.

Read More:

<http://www.afr.com/news/world/asia/china-must-resist-the-temptations-of-global-powerplay-20170328-gv8072>

7. China extradition deal collapses as Malcolm Turnbull pulls plug under pressure from Labor, backbenchers

28/03/17

**James Massola, Tom McIlroy & Fergus Hunter
Sydney Morning Herald**

A Turnbull government plan to quietly ratify the China-Australia extradition treaty has collapsed, with mounting opposition from the Coalition backbench and Labor's decision to oppose the treaty causing the government to withdraw it from Parliament.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten rang Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Tuesday morning at 8.40am to inform him Labor's shadow cabinet had decided on Monday night it would not support ratification of the extradition treaty.

At 8.50am, Mr Turnbull rang Mr Shorten and told him he would pull the treaty, a humiliating backdown for the Prime Minister that comes just days after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Australia.

The decision has forced the Turnbull government into damage control, with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop confirming the government had pulled the treaty for now and that she would pursue an agreement from the ALP over the deal in the future.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/foolishness-to-mess-with-china-extradition-deal-deputy-prime-minister-barnaby-joyce-20170327-gv7ru6.html>

8. China steps up university influence effort

29/03/17

**Primrose Riordan
The Australian**

The Chinese Communist Party had escalated its campaign to influence Australian universities at the same time as University of Technology Sydney academic Chongyi Feng was being interrogated in China.

As recently as last week, in the days before Dr Feng was interviewed by Chinese officials, the head of a Chinese government department aimed at influencing Chinese people living abroad toured Australian universities.

The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office director, Qiu Yuanping, toured Australia, meeting with University of Sydney leaders, and UTS donor Huang Xiangmo.

Read More (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/china-steps-up-university-influenc-e-effort/news-story/5d09f3cc5d36e4d7295ae1d85543a023>

9. China extradition treaty: how did the Turnbull government get it so wrong?

29/03/17

James Massola

Sydney Morning Herald

At 8.40am on Tuesday, just minutes after Julie Bishop had publicly backed a China extradition treaty and walked into a meeting of the leadership group, Bill Shorten rang Malcolm Turnbull.

The opposition would not back ratification of the treaty; China would not be added as "an extradition country" under the Extradition Act.

Ten minutes later, Mr Turnbull called Mr Shorten back. Without Labor, the treaty could not be ratified. Instead, he would pull it from Parliament.

Two phone calls and 10 minutes decided it.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/china-extradition-treaty-how-did-the-turnbull-government-get-it-so-wrong-20170328-gv80de.html>

10. Julie Bishop in emergency China talks

29/03/17

**Simon Benson
The Australian**

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop was yesterday forced to hold urgent discussions with China's ambassador to Australia over fears that the government's decision to withdraw ratification of a 2007 extradition treaty could have ramifications for relations with the nation's largest trading partner.

It is believed ambassador Cheng Jingye told Ms Bishop in a meeting at Parliament House that Beijing was "disappointed" at the decision to walk away from ratifying the treaty as China had upheld its end of the deal for the transfer of prisoners since 2008.

Justice Minister Michael Keenan, who is believed to have also attended the meeting, sought assurances from Mr Cheng that joint law-enforcement operations between the two countries would not be affected.

Read More (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/julie-bishop-in-emergency-china-talks/news-story/0eee2dade426ec8d65bde7a921945a0c>

11. China can now deploy warplanes in South China Sea any time, US think tank says

29/03/17

**David Brunnstrom
Australian Financial Review**

China appears to have largely completed major construction of military infrastructure on artificial islands it has built in the South China Sea and can now deploy combat planes and other military hardware there at any time, a US think tank said on Monday. Last week, Premier Li Keqiang denied militarising the area.

The Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), part of Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said the work on Fiery Cross, Subi and

Mischief Reefs in the Spratly Islands included naval, air, radar and defensive facilities.

The report comes less than a week after China's second-most powerful leader denied Beijing was militarising islands it has claimed in the Sea.

Read More:

<http://www.afr.com/news/politics/world/china-can-now-deploy-warplanes-in-south-china-sea-any-time-us-think-tank-says-20170328-gv8lfi>

12. Labor to be guided by Julia Gillard's Asian Century White Paper if it wins office

29/03/17

**Primrose Riordan
The Australian**

Labor foreign affairs spokeswoman has urged Australia to find ways to embrace China's Belt Road Initiative.

In a speech to a meeting of Australia's 113 ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls-general, Senator Wong said Labor would be guided by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard's Asian Century White Paper if the party gains office at the next election.

The Australian recently revealed that while China was keen to officially link Australia's \$5 billion Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility with the Chinese infrastructure program known as Belt Road Initiative, Australia was not keen to formalise the linkage.

Read More:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/labor-to-be-guided-by-julia-gillards-asian-century-white-paper-if-it-wins-office/news-story/b36021b7ccfb-d2aa25eebfd5255287d7>

13. China confirms UTS Professor Chongyi Feng blocked from flying on national security grounds

31/03/17

Kirsty Needham

Sydney Morning Herald

Beijing: China has confirmed publicly for the first time that University of Technology Sydney associate professor Chongyi Feng is being investigated on national security grounds.

Professor Feng was twice prevented from boarding planes in Guangzhou to return to his work in Sydney last week, after being placed on a no-fly list by Chinese security agencies. He has been questioned daily by security police since, according to his lawyers.

Read More:

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-confirms-uts-professor-chongyi-feng-blocked-from-flying-on-national-security-grounds-20170330-gvafkt.html>

14. We cannot turn our backs on China's new world

31/03/17

David Uren

The Australian

China is a difficult global partner; it is not democratic and, under President Xi Jinping, it increasingly is autocratic in the exercise of state power. China is a nuclear force and a potential adversary, a reality taken into account in Australia's military planning. The Chinese security forces' barring of Chinese academic Chongyi Feng returning to Australia, where he has lived for two decades, was an unwelcome reminder of China's disregard for what Australians consider as a human right to freedom of movement.



But China is also the world's second largest economy and by far the most important economic partner that Australia has had since it cut the umbilical cord with Britain after World War II – and we need to respond to that reality.

Read More:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/david-uren-economics/we-cannot-turn-our-backs-on-chinas-new-world/news-story/cb007ae219268be6657a052efea53d76>