

Comment by Michael C H Jones

As I sit in sunny Gragnola in Northern Tuscany, Italy EU, I find myself almost disinterested in the winter of Sydney and the pettiness of federal and state politics in Australia. That is not to say that the wordiness of Amsterdam, Berlin or Rome has been any different - as I have always believed and said over nearly fifty years "politics attracts people with character defects" and especially in these times "serving the country or community" is the explanation of the scoundrel.

But the alleged comments of Australian Ambassador to China, Geoff Raby - alleged because who can believe paper clips/journalists these days - must bring a response.

Rudd's personality has always been a problem, however judge the man by the substance and not the shadow of his actions. Was the Australian Defence White Paper so wrong? Is Rudd's championing of it so adverse to the trends of history and China's forthcoming role globally - economic power translates into political power which is inevitably backed by military power.

The role of business is to generate profits and not to act as some sort of social safety net - that is the responsibility of government. The protection of Australian interests is the function of governments. In this role they must always understand that business people are the easiest to be bought and sold whether by the British and Americans and now the Chinese. To pretend that business can be separated from politics is childish in the extreme. The Chinese Communist Party through the PRC Government has organised and is pursuing a global onslaught in all human activities - why shouldn't it follow the previous UK and US models.

Rudd was lorded because he spoke Chinese - wrongly. But does that make his support for Human Rights in China and elsewhere wrong? Similarly because someone is unable to speak Chinese is not a total impediment to forming some worthwhile views on what is happening whether domestically in China or globally regarding their participation in international institutions.

Also why would the current accelerating Australia-China trade situation make the former dependent on the latter? It could be argued that Australia has the upper hand in this economic/political relationship? Our membership of the G20 is not an accident - as I have argued over the last 5 years Australia is already a second level Great Power - we are the resources pit and aircraft carrier of Indauspac. The only problem is the mentality of the Australian people, business men and ambassadors included.

In my discussions over the last 6 weeks in Europe Australia is already recognised as such.