

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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If ever there is an example for Australia of Global Economic Relations at work the Fijian military coup of April 2009, and the resultant Chinese and now Indian diplomacy in the South West Pacific Island nations, is such. The rivalries of over a century ago between British, French, German and US interests has re-emerged with the traditional post World War 2 leadership of Australia and New Zealand challenged by Asian countries including China, Indonesia and India.

The future was recognisable way back in at least the mid 1970s when TNT, then an Australian multinational and strong company supporter of ACCCI, joined the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and indirectly inspired the concept/establishment of Indauspac which is a perspective of Australia as the continental aircraft carrier in the Greater Indian/Pacific Oceans.

Subsequently questions arose in the 1980s concerning Australia's role in the Southern Ocean and claim to 42% of Antarctica. This in part was the catalyst for the two seminars organised in Sydney in the early 1990s by the Southern Alliance Round Table (SART) wherein business, academia and government representatives from six southern hemisphere countries (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Chile and Argentina) discussed China's and India's future economic and political roles in the oceans region.

ACCCI has initiated many Special Projects especially since our restructure during 1995/96 commencing with the Chamber's Peoples' Diplomacy advocacy, initially throughout almost two hundred cities in China (the Key Cities Strategy 1986/2008) and subsequently on Governance issues post 2009. These Special Projects further the Indauspac Strategy and Watch commentary on the ACCCI website and includes our range of Monitors on China's regional and global ambitions re Xi's China Dream - SCO, BRICS, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, Silk Road and Maritime etc.

In Australia we have been concerned with the work/inquiries of the Productivity Commission, COAG, DFAT and related federal and state bodies. Regionally, with the extension of the ANZ CER to the South Pacific Island nations re residency/work rights in Australia - in recent years visits have been organised to Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji with discussions/plans for Samoa and others. The objective/reasoning has a security implication within the context of the development of a Three Oceans Policy.

Last month Chamber made a Submission on Multiculturalism to the NSW State Government which has implications for our relations with the Muslim countries of Indonesia and Malaysia in ASEAN. Both countries have been active with Muslim communities particularly in Fiji in the South West Pacific.

In the modern early 21st century world country relations are asymmetric, both cooperative economically in terms of trade and investment and rivals on questions of security and governance.