

Comment by Michael C H Jones

The East Asia Summit is the key regional security entity for Australia's economic prosperity. The 2012 meeting will be held in November in Cambodia.

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/asean/eas/index.html>

The major geo-strategic issues remain North Korea's nuclear capacities, Taiwan's status, and ownership of the South China Sea. China is central for all.

Arguably the most important for global economic stability is the Taiwan Straits dialogue between the PRC and the Taiwan/ROC.

Beijing has a strategy to 'Hong-Kongise' Taiwan, "flooding the island with its capital and establishing a network with leaders at every level" via the June 2010 Economic Co-operation Framework Agreement (ECFA). Its a bit like a prototype for the rest of the world.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_Cooperation_Framework_Agreement

Taiwan seeks to slip the embrace of the panda by greater participation in the WTO, and FTAs with the EU, Japan, South Korea and ASEAN and perhaps Australasia.

Yet events move quickly whether in the G20 and APEC, or via the BRICS and SCO, or in the future with a China inspired Trilateral Trade Pact with Japan and South Korea - the PRC already has a FTA with ASEAN.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/china/national-news/2012/06/11/344004/Trilateral-trade.htm>

China is already the largest trade partner of most countries in the Western Pacific.

This reality, and projections into the future decades of the 21st Century, is what makes all governments in the region apprehensive as to China's ambitions. Those of the US are known, for better or worse.

American leadership politically is paramount and this is where President Obama in the 2012 election year has dropped the ball like his predecessor George Bush Jr in the years 2000/08. The American promise for democracy and human rights as encompassed in global norms and rule of law international institutions has slowly been trashed since the events of September 2001 - 9/11. If courage is grace under pressure then the American people have proved themselves morally deficient. The Australian people are not much better. The ICC - International Criminal Court - is regularly castigated for its lack of success over the last decade but what faith can it hope to engender among the peoples of the world in the light of US actions and particularly in West Asia. During the Vietnam War forty years ago there use to be a daily/weekly body counts. How would the body count in Syria compare with the body count in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq? Shelling or drones, what is the difference in the deaths of civilians including women and children?

The difference is that governments in America and Australia hold ourselves out to be superior in morality to the dictators elsewhere. Superior to the Chinese and their Communist Party, Russia and its President Putin, superior to all those human rights deniers in North Korea, Burma and Iran. But when those leaders adopt our policies of indiscriminate killing and maiming, our media is outraged. Read carefully former US Judge Andrew P. Napolitano's comments, particularly:

Can you imagine the outcry if Cuba or China launched drones at their dissidents in Florida or California and used Obama's behavior in Pakistan as a justification? How long will it be before even the semblance of our Constitution is gone?"

http://www.eurasiareview.com/09062012-obamas-murder-by-drone-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

The Chinese government is currently facing massive social discontents, it's ruling Communist Party is not unified and it's PLA no longer reliable. Read the ACCCI Monitors.

This has immense implications for Taiwan. Certainly if China were to follow US precedents. Democratic governance, human rights obligations and rule of law certainties are also in flux.

Nevertheless we have no alternative but to argue the case for these values and attitudes not only internationally but also domestically in China. Once upon a time in the 1920s the CPC was a faction of the KMT. Today the KMT on the mainland is a faction of the CPC. The CPC was purged in Shanghai and elsewhere from 1927 - is that the destiny of Taiwanese businessmen, entrepreneurial members of the CPC under the Three Represents. The 1992 agreement was for One China with each side determining what that meant. From that date Chamber adopted the policy of the mutual recognition of the CPC and KMT as a mechanism for the peaceful reunification of China - that meant a gradual move towards free elections with the two historic parties of modern China in democratic contest. Deng Xiaoping said Tiananmen Square gave the CPC a "twenty year breathing space" but Hu Jintao failed to take the opportunity and frittered the time away. Now the clock is ticking loudly. Escalating economic integration between Taiwan and the PRC brings unbearable pressures among vested interests. It is a little like retiring Australian China Ambassadors, some of whom become business consultants and advocates for China and others Australian intelligence heads and US Alliance supporters. I do not see the outcome in future years as being peaceful, it is rather a question of the degree of turmoil across China including Taiwan and the Hong Kong SAR, and the impact on the Asia Pacific.