

Comment by Michael C H Jones

Be careful what you wish for is an old saying.

However the Chamber has for nearly seven years been promoting Australia's relations with the European Union, or more precisely the EU's involvement in our Indauspac maritime economic region.

When we first uploaded on this website Indauspac - Strategy and Indauspac - Watch, and divided the maritime region into nine zones, there were many questions concerning the designations of China - East Asia, India - West Asia, and particularly Antarctica. Obviously ACCCI was mirroring the three great oceans that surround our shores - Pacific, Indian and Southern and indirectly emphasising the maritime claims and responsibilities that Australia has made. But what intrigued a lot of readers was our inclusion of the EU and Russia - Eurasia. This was and is a statement about what we anticipate for the future. That Russia is European but controls a great slab of the North Asian landmass to the Pacific Ocean. That ultimately there will be some form of integration of Russia into global trade - this has now happened with their membership of the WTO - and that specifically there will be an economic union of sorts with the EU. More importantly for Australia that the EU/Russia would return in force to Asia. This will not be in the old colonial sense but via new economic partnerships.

This detailed article is a further sign that the EU is on the move economically and that Australia should be using all its diplomacy and resources to influence the outcomes. Amongst others the Australia-European Union Partnership Framework Agreement of 2008 indicates the foundation that has already be laid. It should be studied carefully and maximum advantage taken of its provisions.

Media release by the Hon Stephen Smith, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs announcing the launching of the Australia-European Union Partnership Framework is available at: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s163_08.html. The text of the Framework is available at: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s163_eu_aust_partnership.html.

In this context there are a number of links on this ACCCI website that highlight the profound structural changes now being debated within the EU of which the view of past UK Prime Minister Tony Blair is but one.

No author cited, "EU Needs an Elected Leader: Blair", *The Times*, 10 June 2011. Available at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/eu-needs-an-elected-leader-blair/story-e6frg6so-1226072609969>.

Moreover the Commonwealth through CHOGM with its membership and rules changes has also become a vehicle for Europe in the Indian and Pacific oceans..

Jeffrey Gettleman, "Kenya Concedes Invasion Part of Long-Term Strategy", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 October 2011. Available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/kenya->

[concedes-invasion-part-of-longterm-strategy-20111027-1mm12.html](http://www.accci.com.au/JonesCommentonKenya.pdf). See commentary by Michael C H Jones at: <http://www.accci.com.au/JonesCommentonKenya.pdf>.

The EU recognises the central importance of ASEAN as a unified economic entity, and within ASEAN the Indonesian nation of some seven thousand islands. Arguably the most intractable issues facing the East Asia Summit concern the South China Sea and the claims of China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines. For Australia geo-politically there is no more important country than Indonesia - not even China. Again Chamber has commented previously.

Liu Weidong, "East Asia Summit Agenda" *China Daily*, 16 November 2011. Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2011-11/16/content_14101950.htm. See also commentary by Michael C H Jones at: <http://www.accci.com.au/JonesCommentonEAS.pdf>

Damien Kingsbury, "A Better Understanding of Indonesia Will Forge Closer Ties", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 January 2012. Available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/a-better-understanding-of-indonesia-will-forge-closer-ties-20120130-1qp7f.html>. See also the commentary by Michael C H Jones at: <http://www.accci.com.au/JonesCommentonIndonesia.pdf>.

More than just talk ACCCI has been very active.

Domestically in China we have pursued a new Key Cities Strategy since late 2005, the Yangtze Five, and have made a request for Secretariat funding to the NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell - in our Speeches section.

Since 2003 in the EU Chamber has had meetings in Berlin, Paris, Rome and Madrid amongst other regional cities advocating a greater presence of the EU in ASEAN and Asia generally as well as a Closer Economic Relations with Russia. Russia as a member of the EAS is another vehicle to assist the EU re-entry to Asia in force. Despite all the negativity and past actions there is a need to take President Putin at his word, or perhaps to recognise that his legacy is in his own hands, concerning his ideas on Democracy in his country and therefore the impact that would have on both Europe and Asia.

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, "Democracy and the Quality of Government", Government of the Russian Federation. 6 February 2012. Available at: <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18006/>

A powerful EU economic and judicial presence in Asia would help balance the overwhelming military power of the USA and perhaps reassure China, India and ASEAN. It is in Australia's interests for this possibility to be encouraged.