Comment by Michael C H Jones

The ACCCI Public Affairs and Media Committee was formally established in July 1996 under the leadership of the newly elected second Vice President Marilyn Walker, previously Chair of the Cultural and Sporting Committee following the decade work of the late Bo Liu OAM. This Committee initially played an ancillary role to the two frontline ACCCI Policy Committees - Trade and Investment and Commercial and Industry. However with China's admission as a member country of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) in late 2001, the balance of Chamber Committees began to change - this was accelerated when Marilyn assumed the position of Senior Vice President in 2002 and the election of Helen Qiao to ACCCI General Secretary with Lin Kun as ACCCI Chief Representative - Beijing. and John Wang moving to ACCCI China Liaison Committee Chairman.

As has been stated in other sections of the ACCCI Website, Chamber began the process of moving away from a purely bilateral trade and investment focus on Australia China Relations during the late 1990s to consider broader questions of Economic Policy including cultural 'soft power', and subsequently in the early/mid 2000 to a global perspective of China's Economic Relations and their significance for Australia, which in turn lead to the current Indauspac Maritime analyses. This was accelerated by our experience during my visits/speeches to various economic bodies including CCP institutions throughout over 50 Chinese cities, some of which are on this website.

The issues of corruption, freedom of/access to information, rule of law and democratic institutions became more clearly linked to China as a 'good global citizen' and the behaviour of the USA in it's role as the global 'hegemon'. Hence the inevitable challenge of global governance could not be ignored and specifically what were the global norms to be followed in the myriad of new international institutions such as APEC, G20, EAS etc. Would China be allowed to contribute to the evolution of these norms or would the USA and its web of allies merely impose western values and attitudes on China. What was Australia's part in this contest or new Great Game of Global Economic Relations - if any? Putting it very crudely was Australia to have a relatively independent and sophisticated approach to China's Rise under Kevin Rudd and Malcolm Turnbull or a dated toady and basically treasonous collaboration with what used to be called by President Dwight Eisenhower as the 'US military-industrial complex' or more recently the Cold War ideology driven Neo-Cons and Tea Party intellectual Luddites.

One aspect became clear - US Policy under President George Bush 2001-2008 in terms of global leadership was a disaster. China could not be lectured about Human Rights and Rule of Law given the ramifications of Iraq and Afghanistan amongst a range of other misdeeds. Similarly with the Australian John Howard Government regarding the AWB corruption fiasco, David Hicks imprisonment, and the refugees Pacific Solution.

In this respect Chamber's Public Affairs and Media Committee began to develop the concept of the 'Right to Interfere' in the internal affairs of countries through Peoples Diplomacy. There were many strains to this thinking - the Nuremberg Principles of the World War 11 trials in the late 1940s, the US Civil Rights and South African Anti-Apartheid Movements with New Left concentration on values and attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s, the Open Door Policies of Deng Xiaoping (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deng_Xiaoping), Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang amongst others during the 1980s and Jiang Zemin (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Zemin), Li Pen and Zhu Rongji (again amongst others) post Tiananmen Square during the 1990s, and the UN Responsibility to Protect thinking (http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/about-rtop) of the last decade finally enforced in Libya. It was an understanding that Political and Economic Government Policies do not always gel with Social and Cultural Civil Society trends. This in turn raises the question of purely

domestic oriented 'Nation Building' in a globalised world - is it possible in future decades for even the major 'regional' nations such as the PRC and USA let alone smaller countries in Africa and South America? Chamber would argue that the evolution of the EU and ASEAN is the answer in the negative.

In Western US 'dominated' free trade countries there is the challenge of feral Corporate 'irresponsibility' based on property ownership/rights in all areas as witnessed by a series of economic and political crises of which the GFC is only the last. In the PRC and would be imitators the problem is the One-Party State and its need to control the heights of power whether political, economic, social and cultural. Freedom of Information is limited in both systems in different ways thereby transgressing 'rule of law' possibilities and shielding corrupt practices at all levels of society. Truly democratic institutions are not workable in these situations.

In Australia, virtually a derivative society to the US, news/information is the property of companies such as News Corporation or Fox Television - you get what fits into the riding instructions of editors from time to time. In China the Party sets the guidelines and monitors outputs. Change comes through a hard peoples fight/struggle in both systems as Julian Assange/WikiLeaks is discovering, but at least he is not in gaol - yet.

Chamber from it's founding in September 1976 has always remained a pro-active organisation - one condition of company membership is participation by the Board/MD in an ACCCI Special Project, some of which are briefly outlined in the appropriate section of the ACCCI Website. There are very significant individuals and organisations in China and Australia that understand.