

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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In recent months Chamber has undertaken a great deal of preparatory work for Peoples Diplomacy and Public Policy Submissions during 2016. The 2014/15 emphasis has remained essentially on China's external relations, or Return to global power; the role of the US and response of Australia; whilst the implications of Russia's realignments have also been considered as has India's re-emergence under PM Narendra Modi - particularly in the ASEAN region as this link indicates.

Terrorism and Climate Change are the immediate international issues and will remain so, probably for decades despite whatever global governance decisions at the various international fora. ACCCI is not in a position to undertake any action on these issues except to contribute to the Chinese and Australian discussion in our own circles of influence.

Nevertheless with regard to terrorism our Submissions on Australia in the Asian Century and Multiculturalism have tried to bring a more realistic and sober viewpoint to Australia's national interests. Clearly the collapse of Asian language teaching in our High Schools and Universities is tragic - you can not do investment business without knowing and understanding the countries in which your company proposes to operate. Similarly cutting off the funding for IS and other fundamentalist religious groups, not only Moslem, is essential and that obviously includes the cultural sources.

The Western hypocrisy is delicious. Volunteering for the Israeli armed forces is OK but not for any of the rebel groups in Syria. Free Enterprise US drones bombing civilians including hospitals is collaterale damage, but indiscriminate slaughter by Islamic fundamentalist groups is the devils work. Bad Guy West Asians in Syria must be eliminated but not Good Guy West Asians in Saudi Arabia who must be sold billions in armaments. This is despite the global knowledge that the Wahabist Schools and Salfist groups are based and financed in Saudi Arabia.

The well known strong arm tactics of the Chinese and Russians will probably be required to at least check the spread of Islamist ideologies which I doubt can gain short term footholes in those two countries, yet repression by itself is unlikely to be sufficient. Multiculturalism is the only permanent long term solution, and given the internal political desension in Europe and arguably decline in their Human Rights values, Australia may have to look to the more humanitarian traits in the cultures of India, South Africa and nearer home Indonesia. Sounds absurd doesn't it?

A harmonious world definitely should be the objective, and all our new PM Turnbull narratives must so proclaim. However in the meantime Australia might rehearse and practice "balance of power" diplomacy, and that means public policies to support a united ASEAN, an unrestricted Japan and Returning China and India, with the renewed spice of US-Russian rivalry. Bottom line is either no foreign bases in Australia, or sell each of them a port, rail facility and farm/mineral deposit, and preferably as in Djibouti in close proximity - perhaps a new Australian Special Economic Zone of military installations. The Northern Territory Government has lots of land available!!