

Comment by Michael C H Jones  
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This is not a comment about the forthcoming Australian Federal Election, nor an opinion piece on the merits and futures for Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott. What it is about concerns the 'transnationalisation' of political parties resulting from the integrations of Economics Relations and how these trends are playing out across the world.

In past Comments I have alluded to the increasing fusion of political parties in Australia and the US - it has become almost the Conservative Republicans and the Labor Democrats. The Libertarians in the Liberal Party of Australia felt at sea under the John Howard 12 year leadership and are decidedly uneasy with that of Tony Abbott. For 20 years there has been an increasing surge of US Christian fundamentalist and Tea Party literature through Right-of-Centre organisations in Australia. The US-Australia FTA cemented economically these trends as have the various high profile and lesser known private annual dialogues. This in turn has driven the Left-of-Centre ALP Right-wing with their historical love-affairs with all things American to strengthen connections between the Labor Party and the Democratic Party, especially under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Former PM John Howard and former Deputy PM and Leader of the Opposition Kim Beasley, currently Australian Ambassador in Washington, remain key players in the strengthening relationships - so strong as to be almost merging in some instances. This story in today's SMH is just the tip of the ice-berg but is indicative of the closeness of the Labor Democrats with integration of election campaign strategists and on-the-ground functionaries.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/rudd-flies-in-team-obama-20130730-2qxet.html>

Traditional Labor members of the Socialist Left and Trade Union Movement have lost the battle of resistance, not just with the demise of PM Julia Gillard, but in the intellectual ideological arguments about Property Relations and the creation/distribution of wealth. The signing of a PRC-Australia FTA after about seven years of so far fruitless negotiations would not resolve this dilemma. Indeed whereas the US FTA re-enforced Anglo-sphere cultural similarities, a PRC FTA would unleash divisive tendencies in Australia's multiculturalism - China is simply overwhelming in its size and present dynamic.

The Great Game of Global Economic Relations, about which Chamber has Think Tanked and Peoples Diplomacised over the last decade, has realigned global economic and political power relationships. The Chinese have from about the mid 1990s systematically expanded the reach and influence of the SCO which now stretches across the entire Asian region from Turkey to Pacific Russia. The BRICS have a key 'State Sovereignty' role and bloc in the G20. APEC and the EAS provide windows for both the PRC and USA. On the other hand, America has been slow to enter the Great Game officially, perhaps because they imagined that they controlled the heights of the post WW11 global economy through the World Bank, IMF, WTO etc, but now are extending NAFTA to the TPP with a new Latin American bloc called the Pacific Alliance, and begun negotiations for a massive "half-world" USA-EU economic integration.

Where does Australia stand in all this? Does it really matter whether we have a Joe Bowen or Chris Hockey as Australian Treasurer - do either of them really have a 'handle' on what is transpiring economically and hence politically and socially across the under 40's world? Technologies and higher education standards have changed everything such that it is unlikely that either Rudd's or Abbott's American hotshots in campaign techniques will do anything more than get one of them elected

Prime Minister of Australia later this year.

Displaced millions across the world means the boats will continue heading for Australia's northwest, similar to migration patterns into Europe and elsewhere. The political resolution of the challenge lies on the frontiers of Afghanistan and Iran, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and in the future on the shores of East Africa. Manus Island and Nauru are likely to be simply over-run with refugees. However the economic uplifting of West Asia and East Africa, Australia's Indauspac Maritime Region, akin to China's "rise" over the last 35 years since 1978, means massive urbanisation and all the problems associated with such an incredible phenomenon - and most likely impossible without a Communist Party of China? However one central result will be even greater pressure on Climate Change.

"The greatest moral challenge of our times", or whatever the words were, is not going away. A carbon tax is perhaps preferable to an ETS in getting fast results. But will the big emitter nations introduce them - unlikely. So Australia, for short term domestic election reasons, ties itself to Europe. But what happens if and when Europe gets more serious if not properly serious about the issues of Climate Change. How will the US campaign hotshots massage the message in 2013 or 2016 or 2019? What would an Abbott Era/Decade mean for "crap"?

As always the final answers lie with the Economic Powers - essentially the USA in NAFTA with the outrigger unions of the US-EU, and the US-TPP (including the PA and the ANZ CER); and the PRC with its SCO and BRICS and trade associations with Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, West Asia and increasingly throughout Africa and South America.. The indeterminable economic forces of India, Indonesia in ASEAN, and Brazil in Mercosur are at the margins of this history, as perhaps are a re-rising Japan in the Pacific in the short term, and in the longer term Turkey if it could magically stabilise its West Asian Region including Egypt? Perhaps the USA-PRC G2 should cut a Mao-Nixon deal - China withdraws support from North Korea if the US withdraws support from Israel, and thus bring 'harmony' to both regions !!

But again how would the Rudd and Abbott US campaign hotshots sell these policies to Australians? How would they tell voters that governments no longer control 'governance' virtually anywhere. How would they orchestrate the message of international trends which seem uncontrollable? What would they say about Global Corporations "too big to fail"? Who will raise the questions of Property Relations and wealth creation/productivity and distribution/opportunity? How does Democracy function with just 'spin' and in the absence of genuine FOI?