

OBSERVATIONS 10

THEORY AND PRACTICE: THINKING AND DOING CONCERNING THE G2

Over a near lifetime of social activism you often reflect on the different thinking patterns of various sectors of society, domestic and international. For example, and I agree it is a gross exaggeration, academics seek as much information as possible - say 90%, politicians because of time factors often make horrendous decisions based on virtually no valid information - say 10%, whilst business people gather as much information as possible within the constraints of the market - say 50%. Often the results are due to capabilities - the thinking skills due to the training of academics are usually infinitely superior to those of politicians and perhaps most business people. However the evaluation of each is fundamentally different re quality/quantity of publications, success of policies/winning elections and profits/growth of companies, such that in an international relations context there may well be no connection in the outcomes from the three strains of activity, especially when the present limited forms of global governance are weak and dispersed.

From my own perspective I have zigzagged over 50 years between politics and business, corporate and sole trader business and both extra-parliamentary and parliamentary politics, with always a close eye via personal contact and reading with academics from a great range of disciplines. The key challenge has always been: How to Implement your Ideas, given the two assumptions? Ideas pose no threat to anyone provided they remain on paper, it's their attempted implementation by whoever that brings the confrontations between countries and individuals. Or as I regularly, and no doubt boringly, said to my now approaching forty year old son: Show me a man who has never made a mistake and I will show you a man who has never made a decision; Show me a man who has never looked a fool and I will show you a man who has never done anything.

Decision making is a learned process, it does not come naturally or without considerable pain. Mistakes and foolishness are just part of the journey. Yet the beginning and the end can be the same or quite different. My beginning was in 1963/64 when doing my English Honours for the old Leaving Certificate in NSW/Sydney, I came across a poem by Alexander Pope or a line which I have forgotten - perhaps someone can remind me - that I plagiarised into my battlecry during the Vietnam Years of the 1960s re: Give me the liberty to think, argue and act according to conscience above all other liberties. Yes it has strong religious connotations - Christian - and I dedicated it to my wife Janice on her sudden death in 2000. We were both staunch Protestants and upholders of the Nuremberg Principles and the two Human Rights Covenants resulting from the Second World War.

So the Tiananmen deaths in Beijing during June 1989 were a great emotional and intellectual challenge. Decisions had to be made in the context of an orchestrated attempt to weaken China if not break it up into regional "new" nations re North Mandarin, South Cantonese, Turkistan and Tibet and so on. Would an imploding China make the region/world safer or more dangerous/unstable remembering our experiences with the Americans in Korea and Vietnam and Mao's Cultural Revolution. Mao and Nixon may have been authoritarians in their own respective ways but the policies they pioneered in 1971, and which Deng and Carter implemented in 1979, had to be continued for a peaceful and

more prosperous world, certainly for the common man. The realities of a communist, united and open to the world China needed our support no matter how distasteful the governance. In the short term History has proved us correct in that decision. I just wish some academics would analyse what many well known current politicians/journalists/business people were saying in 1989/93 as against now?

Since Tiananmen, which most younger under 30/40 Chinese have never heard about, or think a minor civil disturbance, and the house-arrest of former Premier and CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, and subsequently the jailing of 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo, an instigator of Charter 08, a movement has slowly emerged updating Human Rights, what I call new Human Rights. Zhao's insistence that the Chinese people had a Right to Know, highlighted in his prison writings especially Prisoner of the State, Liu's promotion of Human Rights and Democratic Forms in China, the books of Australian Geoffrey Robertson QC and former Australian Foreign Minister Garth Evans with many others around the world have laid the groundwork for an individual as well as state Right to Protect not only in Libya or Syria but also in the USA and PRC. Someone once said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". American drones patrolling the world are a threat to global justice and Rule of Law. China's CPC State Government's denial of the Right to Different Opinions is a threat to the domestic harmony and peace of that civilisation and therefore to the world.

No longer is the politics/diplomacy of the globe the sole prerogative of Nation States and their ruling exclusive and/or fundamentalist clubs. The global citizen through NGO/People's Diplomacy has emerged as a significant player especially in an era of "privatisation" of domestic government assets and the ideology of free enterprise/free trade, the global corporation now threatens the property relations of the international commons whether gens, internet, seas and airspace etc

If there are new Human Rights; a Right of Information, surely Free Speech is based on the Right to Know?, and the Right to Protect threatened minorities based on at least the Second Human Rights Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, then also the Right to Action/Interfere/challenge State Sovereignty/Immunity is a new global guarantee to all citizens of the world irrespective of whether or not they have the capacity at present to exercise it. International anarchy I hear many vested interests scream, well that has been the cry of rogues since time immemorial.

However, it is valid to ask how these new Human Rights are to be exercised and what the new World Order resulting from their implementation is likely to look like. More important what are the steps - Deng's one stone at a time - to get there?

A favourite Chinese saying of mine, courtesy of several university professors on Hainan Island/Province in March 1989, goes: As you judge the strength of the horse by the length of the distance, so you judge the character of the man by the difficulty of the task. Zhao and Liu had difficult tasks but the trees they planted and watered are now bearing fruits which this next generation must test taste. Which stone to step upon, and never fear a dunking.

The new World Order, something that Kissinger fails to understand in his most recent book called World Order, is that international affairs is increasingly "individual" and not "state" based - Relations between states is being challenged/overwhelmed by Relations between people - just think of the problems faced by the Chinese Communist Party in handling millions of Chinese travelling internationally and domestically as tourists, business people and students/academics. The ideas keep pouring in, good and bad. Or the American people relating to their traditions of Constitutional governance when the rest of the peoples of the world demand the same individual rights and freedoms. What the G2 does in terms of policy and actions impacts both the states and peoples of the world and it is unlikely that the old imperialisms whether territorial, financial or cultural, will suffice to keep a lid on the incremental rise of forms of global governance.

So where does the Chamber fit into these evolutions of individual Rights and a weakening State Sovereignty if not borderless World Order?

In previous Observations and internal executive committee emails since the GFC in 2008 I have raised these ideas for discussion, it has been a step by step process. In recent times I have honed the arguments into four broad categories which as yet I have not thought through to write about at length, but the bones are there/visible for all to contemplate in terms of future policy/actions.

1) Human Rights - When governments are privatising everything, who protects the rights of prisoners domestically or in PNG? Corporations now run schools, health clinics, employment agencies, media outlets and so on, once the basics of government welfare protections after the Second World War. Similarly with Political and Civil Rights, when US Presidential Elections cost in excess of 9 billion dollars - corporate money - who protects the public/individual citizen?

2) Democratic Forms - When political parties have become so dominant in the "democratic process" what place the individual? For example the Chinese CPC has allegedly about 100 million members representing the Jiang Zemin "Three Represents" theory of the late 1990s re peasants, workers and businessmen. How does this work by consensus? Surely factions have emerged over recent years and how are these to be peacefully resolved? Participatory and Representative democracy are unlikely to work given China's cultural, social and political history, although the Economic change since 1978/9 has arguably reversed about 5000 years of Middle Kingdom thinking! Could the current President Xi Jinping's savage anti-corruption drive through his CPC Disciplinary body herald a Monitory Democracy with Chinese characteristics.

3) Property Relations - Socialism is dead, Long Live Feral Capitalism, come back Wall Street all is forgiven! Since the Second World War we have witnessed the Americanisation of Everything, private/free enterprise and free trade such that traditional rights of welfare protections by governments no longer exist. But does that mean the privatisation of the International Commons, the Seas and Atmosphere, the genes and internet and all the other products and services that underwrite global humanity? When 1% of US citizens own 50% of their country's wealth, and the bottom 50% own barely 1%, is this the future of the world? If the CPC-PRC State government does not evolve to a greater concentration on individual

rights, then globalism will be seriously influenced/directed by 7 members of the Chinese CPC Politburo. There needs to be a new definition/consideration of "socialism" in the 21st century other than Leninism. International Commons is neither the property of capitalist MNC nor Leninist Party structures.

4) Multiculturalism - The rebirth of religious fundamentalism this century is not a new phenomenon nor is the continuation of ideas of exceptionalism and exclusivity. The Class and Colour divisions of the 19th century may be on the backburner, and Education might not be the determinant of acceptability as in the past, but Muslim World Order revivalist sentiment comes in all shades - civilisation is only the Muslim world, other religions may make a payment to peacefully survive, and all the rest are barbarians. Sharia Law must prevail even in the countries which gave/give you sanctuary. How are Western multicultural principles to be upheld in this world of the 21st century? The US refuses to uphold International Law, only its interpretation and when convenient, China adheres to an authoritarian governance, the EU has significant identity problems and economic flatulence, India's global aspirations seem democratically impossible based on such a diverse society including the largest Muslim population other than Indonesia.

Chamber 'Structuralism'

Responding to the above is a little difficult. We could simply do what most others do, head in the sand and read the Australian and Telegraph. The ABC is not much good as our PM Tony Abbott has so potentially "bankrupted" the organisation that the repeat programmes are becoming legendary. Intelligent conversations now require ten minute coffee/wine breaks not just for the commercials. Genuine intellectual inquiry has been so yesterday for virtually decades. I wonder how many people have the intellect and time to read books such as Kissinger's World Order or previously On China.

But all organisations require decisions/action to survive and usually structure is a foundation stone for any possible successful programmes.

1) The forthcoming 3/5 years require succession planning as the generation of leaders since Tiananmen will retire. How to find and train the best people given that ACCCI is a challenge for very experienced people across all walks of life - economic, political, social and cultural. Australia has traditionally been a branch office in business, a fellow traveller in politics, a consumer of fashions socially, and more recently a hotchpotch culturally, although the PM is fighting hard to maintain the Anglo-sphere roots. Over forty years we have been extremely disappointed by the calibre of Australian leadership everywhere - in this respect thank heavens for the US, EU and PRC.

2) If you read Jawaharlal Nehru's Glimpses of World History written between 1931-33 whilst a guest of the British Government and prior to assuming the Prime Ministership of India in 1947, he regularly refers to the part of the world that he calls West Asia, not the Middle East or Near Asia which are American and European terms. It is fascinating reading, unique to its times and very perceptive. Why then the shock and horror when ACCCI uploaded Indauspac on its website and began to discuss the affairs of the three oceans that are Australia's sphere of influence. How dare we challenge the great lady Gillard in her Australia in Asia

Inquiry wherein Russia was defined out of Asia even though it was hosting the APEC in Vladivostok, and West Asia was totally erased from Asia despite our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and the unconscious support for Greater Israel.

The Chamber has essentially bypassed Australian governments of all colours, federal, state and local, for forty years simply because they have been irrelevant to world events in all forms. I was always treated better in China by the CPC than government representatives by the PRC. How is it that the Queen of England is the queen of Australia? Why do Australians not want to be a Republic like other countries? How do you manage Sydney with over 40 mayors? Whom do we meet of equivalence (power) in Australia at Local and State levels? Australians do not wish list and it care so why should ACCCI? Yet questions of governance, structuralism, are front and central of any economic prosperity/survival strategy for Australia in coming decades, hopefully not the dog days. By default the Abbott government has willy nilly thrown around the sparks that have ignited the prairie fire of Public Policy debate on so many issues. Determinations can only be made in the context of what is happening in our region, and Australians need to participate in Public Policy formulation that potentially impacts us. For example BRICS policies in Indauspac, or why Saudi Arabia declined to take a seat on the UN Security Council this year, or the significance of the Sri Lanka election result. And if Australian company senior executives did make a contribution to the recent Davos WEF conference, what was it and in which areas of Economic Relations? Chamber intends to make Submissions to various Inquiries raising an Australian perspective.

3) One of the founding principles for ACCCI in September 1976, apart from the concept of Greater Sydney and its historic role in the Australian Federation and South West Pacific region, was the role of Peoples Diplomacy. Most of the founding member companies had business connections with China going back to pre 1912, or the Qing/Manchu Dynasty. We had been thoroughly discussed by Australia's refusal to follow the UK in recognition of the PRC in 1949 and the toadying to the US on the question of recognition until Gough Whitlam did so in very late 1972. ACCCI has never needed, nor asked for government money, we have simply funded Peoples Diplomacy through our Special Projects ourselves. Apart from our high-profile role in the early 1990s in Australia, and again in China during the years immediately following admission to the WTO in late 2001, Chamber has deliberately kept below the radar - publicity organisationally and personally is the kiss of death in Australia China Relations.

However there are some limited benefits from outlining a strategy for G2 involvements, if only as an example for other organisations and perhaps history. Australia should recognise:

- A) The economic significance of Shanghai and the cluster of cities around it such as Wuxi, Suzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Ningbo
- B) The role of China's key provincial cities in new global relations especially with our Indauspac Region, the massive trade and investment flows into Asia, Africa and Latin America from mega-cities like Wuhan, Chongqing and Chengdu.
- C) The imbalance of China's economic miracle/welfare particularly among the Minorities in the cities/regions from Xi'an to Urumqi - Muslim and Buddhist.
- D) The need for Australia to have allies beyond the US and Japan in Indauspac, similar challenges bring cooperation and China's global economic, political and future social and

cultural onslaught, if only because omits size and people dynamic, will require common policy responses if independence is valued.

E) The new World Order based on new beliefs including Human Rights and Democratic Forms that raises so many questions of governance impacting initially the spaghetti board of FTAs that have emerged in recent years - the three competing versions from China, ASEAN and the US for an Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement need to be extended via the WTO. ACCCI intends to play a Peoples Diplomacy role.

Michael C H Jones

Dated 30th January 2015