

## **Reflections - China Is Not the Centre of the World.**

In September 2022 we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the first known, historically recorded, circumnavigation of the globe by Juan Sebastián Elcano, a Spanish Basque, sailing from the Moluccas in the Spice Islands following the death of Ferdinand Magellan in April 1521 resulting from an unnecessary intervention in the Mactan Island civil war.

In late November 1520, sailing for the Spanish Crown, Magellan had passed into the Pacific Ocean reaching Guam, of present day US military base fame, in early March 1521. Elcano in the Victoria reached the Cape of Good Hope in May 1522 and Spain by September thereby transversing the Pacific and Indian Oceans via the Philippines in 18 months - November 1520 to May 1522.

It was left to James Cook to record the first serious exploration of the Southern Ocean in the 1770s though many European sea captains sailed its periphery such as Abel Tasman "discovering" Tasmania and New Zealand in the 1640s.

INDAUSPAC, Indian/Australasia/pacific, is a geo-economic concept derived from the positioning of Australia as the focal centre for global maps, and originated from ideas arising during the negotiations 1977/78 for then Australian multinational transportation company TNT to join the Pacific Basin Economic Council. It recognised that the Australian island continent dominates the Eastern Indian, Southern and Western Pacific oceans and would be the key to economic and military power in the ASEAN/Australasian Region during the 21st century. Indauspac sits across the waters from Cocos/Christmas and McDonald/Macquarie Islands to the Nauru and Swains Islands, and south to an Australian claim of over 40% of Antarctica.

There have been four complimentary strategies over about 25 years which support China's return to global recognition. Firstly, the Sydney- Shanghai Economic connection from the mid-1990s which has evolved into a second wave of Key Chinese Cities - primarily Nanjing, Wuhan, Chongqing and Chengdu and additionally Xian to Urumqi. Secondly, the Southern Alliance Round Table, SART, again initiated during the mid-1990s, which seeks to link Southern Ocean countries such as Argentina, Chile, South Africa and Zimbabwe with New Zealand and Australia in economic relations negotiations with China and India. Thirdly, from as early as 2002 an emphasis on assisting the strengthening of civil society in China and from the rise of Xi during 2007/12 participation in the critical debate for the reform of the Communist Party of China leading up to its 100th anniversary in September 2021. Fourthly, the advocacy of a socio-cultural resistance/alliance with democratic states throughout Indauspac backed by the return of Europe to Asia over the next three decades in opposition to the possible military assertiveness/hegemony of China's eco-political power as the PRC approaches its 100th anniversary.

Each of these four strategies has a long and complicated history, they are both stand-alone and integrated, and require medium to long term thinking and an understanding of living with contradictions.

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