

Article from the AICC(WA)'s Annual Geo Political Event with Mr Gregory R. Copley AM, President ISSA, The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA. This event was sponsored and hosted by Herbert Smith Freehills on 23 October 2019.

“Do You Really Think China Will Save Australia?”



From L to R - Mr Tony Joyner, Managing Partner, Perth, Herbert Smith Freehills, Ms Pamela von Gruber, Executive Director, ISSA - International Strategic Studies Association and President, Argonaut Water, Mr Gregory R. Copley AM, President, ISSA - The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA, Mr Nev Power, Chairman, Perth Airport and Mr John Cluer, Chief Executive, Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce (WA)

To read a full copy of Mr Gregory Copley’s keynote speech click [here](#).

The now familiar partnership between the AICC(WA) and HSF to host Mr Gregory Copley met and exceeded expectations for the 2019 oration. Mr Tony Joyner, Managing Partner HSF emphasised the profound impact and strategic insight that comes from this event, a rare opportunity to hear from a leading international commentator and former Western Australian.

Mr John Cluer, Chief Executive AICC(WA) provided introductory comments that affirmed the longstanding interest of the Chamber in the geopolitical relationship of China to both Australia and Israel. In particular the AICC have framed tri-partisan trade opportunities that bring together the potential of Israel as an innovator, China as a manufacturer, and Australia as a service economy. Australia, China and Israel have a lot to offer to each other, and a huge potential still awaits to be fully tapped.

“It is notable that the strategic importance of China’s economic development to both Israel and Australia has dramatically increased in recent years.

Australia’s trade relationship with China is growing ever closer. Australia is China's sixth largest trading partner. We are China's fifth biggest supplier of imports and its tenth biggest customer for exports. The latest trade report shows that China was the destination for a record 40% of Australia’s exports in June, double than what it was ten years ago.

So too, relations between China and Israel have expanded rapidly in numerous areas, including diplomacy, trade, investment, construction, educational partnerships, scientific cooperation, and tourism. China's primary interests in Israel are advanced technology and Israel's location as part of the silk road trade route.

It was recently reported that between January and August of 2019, some 350,000 passengers flew between Tel Aviv and China, an increase of 24% on the previous year. For Israel, China now represents its largest trading partner in Asia and third biggest in the world, with \$US13 billion of bilateral trade.

It is also worth noting that, on the back of Israel’s signing of a Free Trade Agreement with Australia last year, that Israel is also close to concluding free trade negotiations with China.”



Mr Gregory R. Copley AM, President, ISSA - The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA

Structuring his topic on the need to strengthen Australia’s sovereign identity, Mr Copley placed historic, political and economic context around Australia’s partnership and confrontation with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). He made a distinction between the PRC, a one-party state run by the Communist Party of China (the CPC), and the historical nation-state of China. In framing the debate he posed the question “Why should any nation-state or society be responsible for another?”

“Prime Minister Morrison has come down strenuously in favour of Australia finally asserting its sovereignty. He made it clear that Australia cannot, nor should not resile from engagement in and with the broader human tapestry, including the People’s Republic of China. And he has discussed increasing Australian Defence spending from its present two percent of GDP to three percent. That has been a direct response to increasing belligerence from the PRC toward the West, but of course the Prime Minister’s plans for increased spending also depend on the hope that Australia’s GDP rises and that the strength of our dollar also rises.”



With a realistic and pragmatic approach, Mr Copley suggested that strategically, there is no deep civilisational affinity between Australia and the PRC, while, to the contrary, there is a geopolitical and ideological rivalry. The global situation is similarly structured, with PRC hegemony posing the dual elements of economic dependency and political challenge to many economies, including the world’s largest, and those that are emerging.

“Geopolitics is that attachment of human beings to geography. Geography is essential to our survival, and those who argue that the nation-state no longer matters miss the point that, absent our ability to control our geography — its space, its resources, its food and water — we cannot survive in control our own destiny.”

Global trade has shifted back to the primary agricultural elements. The PRC’s investment and development has been driven by shoring up its supply chain. Whilst Australia is a part of this, our exports only deliver a small component of the consumption demand from China.

“Today, the CPC has become profoundly nationalistic, of necessity. It has some 1.4-billion mouths to feed, and it wishes that it had less. It has almost 20 percent (18.4 percent) of the world’s population, and yet only seven percent of its water, and of that water some 25 percent, at least, is polluted, along with much of its agricultural water table.”

The slowing of growth, cited by Mr Copley (in accordance with the PRC's own admission) as being at its lowest level for 27 years, has been felt by Australia. Inherent within the experience is also an opportunity for Australia to look beyond primary production.

The PRC's undisputed "economic miracle" is no longer responsible for delivering the Australian dream. Indeed, by turning Australia into a giant mine, we transformed Australia — for Beijing's gold — into a developing state, abandoning our highly innovative industrial and manufacturing base for the easy money of "dig and sell". We added no value; not to the minerals, neither to ourselves."



Mr Gregory R. Copley AM, President, ISSA - The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA and Mr John Cluer, Chief Executive, Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce (WA)

Mr Copley's analysis progressed to discuss the political objectives and strategies of Beijing, and the fundamental global shifts that are impacting these goals. Rising prosperity in China has increased domestic expectations, and coupled with environmental, technology and military influences, the external issues that reflect on China's economy are becoming increasingly more complex. Some of the scenarios proffered are no less pessimistic than they are credible. Coupled with power shifts in the Middle East, particularly the diminution of US and Western influence in the region, Australia needs to revisit its diplomatic, defensive, technological and economic capabilities.

"Australians cannot avoid asking is to what extent Australia can and must shape its own destiny through independent diplomacy, economic resilience and self-sufficiency, and a flexible and capable defence capability. In the emerging global transformation, the new strategic power lies in what we can call "information dominance" capabilities, including cyber and political warfare and independently-sustained advanced weapons. The once-clear advantage in the power balance of population numbers and overall economic size count for less than innovation and fluid resilience."

None of this implies that Australia should abandon its trading position with the PRC, but the strength of that trading position is entirely dependent on Australia's ability to work with its allies in constraining Beijing from strategic expansion into the Central and South Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

With or without Australia's input of resources and food, the PRC may collapse economically before it reaches that point. Such a collapse would be accompanied by great internal upheaval and possible regional adventurism by Beijing.

In the meantime, Australia's own population management and security, linked to its immigration policies, are critical to Australian security.

So could Beijing target Australia as the next continent, after Africa, to dominate and overwhelm? Indeed, has that process already begun? Do we already exhibit a form of collective "Stockholm Syndrome" in which we plead the case of our captors?

In all of this, the only clear message is that the PRC cannot "save" Australia's future, economically or otherwise. Neither can the US, for that matter. Both are important factors in Australia's security and wealth, but the time has come for Australia to achieve sufficient maturity to truly become the sovereign state we imagine it to be."

Mr Copley's spellbound audience engaged in Q&A further discussing the Israel-China economic relationship. The US departure from much of its presence and influence in the Middle East places Israel and the entire Middle East in a very delicate position. Mr Copley suggested that if the US did respond to regional aggression it may not be in the form of direct military conflict.

In a philosophical response, Mr Copley demonstrated examples of the breakdown of the political spectrum, where left and right ideologies are no longer as pronounced or collectively defined. The consciousness of Australia asserting political sovereignty was a key factor in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's electoral victory, and a key theme of his leadership to date. The national and political identity of Australia would need to rapidly and further evolve, with clear objectives, values and ideals for Australia to confront the growing geopolitical divisions which Mr Copley outlined.



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About Gregory R. Copley AM

Gregory R. Copley AM, is President, ISSA – The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA

Western Australian Gregory Copley, an advisor to governments around the world for the past 45 years, and the author or co-author of 35 books, including:

- “Sovereignty in the 21st Century and the Crisis for Identity, Cultures, Nation-States, and Civilizations”;
- “Australia 2050; Such a Full Sea (Australia's Options in a Changing Indian Ocean Region)”;
- “UnCivilization: Urban Geopolitics in a time of Chaos”; and
- “The Art of Victory”

In 2016, he also launched the ISSA Zahedi Center for the Study of Monarchy, Traditional Governance, and Sovereignty, while continuing to oversee several other regional intelligence forums.

Greg returns home from his Washington, DC, base each year to present the AICC(WA)’s annual geopolitical event. His talk to the AICC(WA) a decade ago “Can Australia Survive the Next 50 Years?” is still being talked about. So, too, is his 2017 talk, which accurately forecast how US Pres. Trump would bring North Korea into negotiations and precipitate major new opportunities for security in the Indo- Pacific.



Ms Pamela von Gruber, Executive Director, ISSA - International Strategic Studies Association and President, Argonaut Water and Mr Martin Eyer, General Manager, CDM Australia



Ms Dinali David, Senior Business Manager, ICT Group and Colonel Dr Gregory Deleuil



Mr David Lake, Deputy BM/VP, Mitsubishi Australia and Mr Tony Joyner, Managing Partner, Perth, Herbert Smith Freehills



Mr Richard Lester, Chairman, Lester Group Pty Ltd and Mr Gregory R. Copley AM, President, ISSA - The International Strategic Studies Association, Washington DC, USA



Mr Paul Kordic, Head of Practice – Commercial, Cullen Macleod and Peter, Kasprzak, Chief Executive Officer, Innovate Australia

