

Who should Australia emulate for economic recovery?



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Lead Editorial

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Relations between the USA and China are so poisonous the world is suddenly thinking the unthinkable—nuclear war (p. 9). How did it come to this? Instead of automatically siding with the USA, Australia and the Australian people should take stock of the unacceptable endgame and work backwards to assess the progression of events that led to this point, to see if things could have been done differently. And we should think through what is truly in our national interest: a world dominated by one military power in which we earn our “security” as the loyal deputy sheriff; or a world in which all nations cooperate on the common aims of raising living standards through economic development?

If we realise it's the latter, Australia has a unique role to play in brokering a settlement between the USA and China that can take back us from the brink. If we stick to the former, however, Australia will be complicit in pushing the world to the edge.

To truly assess what's in our national interest, look at the state of the economy that the coronavirus pandemic has exposed. We need to engineer an economic recovery, and fast. Which country presents the best example of economic development and progress? China is the stand-out economic success story of our time; in terms of the sheer speed and scale of raising living standards, some argue it is the most successful economy of all time. By contrast, the USA is literally crumbling in terms of infrastructure, including its healthcare system. And this is self-inflicted: Donald Trump tries to whip up electoral support by declaring that China “raped” America economically (and some claim China did likewise to Australia), whereas it was Wall Street that raped America through its wholesale outsourcing of America's productive industries. While China was happy to take those industries, it was doing much more to secure its economic future.



A 1996 map of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, the seed kernel of what is now the BRI, which the Citizens Party (CEC) promoted around Australia. The world would benefit immensely from cooperating on this project, but criminal warmongers have twisted it into a threat.

The most pernicious aspect of the current tensions over China is the demonisation of the Belt and Road Initiative as a geostrategic threat to the world. In truth, the BRI is precisely the opportunity for economic cooperation the world needs if we are to move away from conflict. In 1996, the Citizens Party (then CEC) started promoting the seed kernel of the BRI concept, the Eurasian Land-Bridge, following a landmark conference in Beijing addressed by our collaborator Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the wife of American physical economist Lyndon LaRouche who had proposed the Eurasian Land-Bridge as one of a number of ideas for post-Cold War economic development to secure lasting peace and prosperity (the concept of connecting the productive economies of Europe with the mass-population centres of Asia has expanded into a World Land-Bridge—see Almanac).

China embraced this approach not least because it was keen to emulate the economic success of Western countries— investment in grand infrastructure projects is how the USA and Australia developed! While the USA, Europe and Australia self-destructed into casino economies, China got on with investing in its own and other countries' economic development, with spectacular results. China invited the world, including the USA, to join initiatives such as the BRI and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank where the USA could help to shape the projects and share the success; instead the neoconservative gang running US and British foreign policy chose to treat it as a threat. Their most fateful decision was Barack Obama's Asia Pivot in 2012, shifting 60+ per cent of US military power to the Indian and Pacific ocean regions to confront China, including 2,500 US Marines to Darwin, to which China responded by building up the islands in the South China Sea that are now the flashpoint for war.

Australia desperately needs economic development, not war. Instead of choosing sides, we should choose the approach that works, and convince the USA to choose it too.

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