

Interview: UTS:ACRI Director James Laurenceson speaks with the Global Times 悉尼科技大学澳中关系研究院院长罗震接受环球时报采访

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Global Times: How is the Morrison government's hype of war dangerous and damaging? Do you think the hawkish officials from the Morrison government are clearly aware of the consequences of a military clash with China to Australia? Or is talking about war just an easy gesture to make for political expediency?

环球时报：莫里森政府对战争的炒作究竟有多危险，并会对澳中关系产生多大的损害？您认为莫里森政府中的鹰派官员是否了解与中国发生军事摩擦将对澳大利亚产生的后果？抑或这种战争炒作仅仅是政治上的权宜之计？

James Laurenceson: Former prime minister Rudd's criticism of war talk was mostly because he regarded it as being deployed by members of the current Morrison government for domestic political gain. But in the process, the chest-thumping rhetoric further damages Australia's already dysfunctional relationship with China, nor did it inform the Australian public just how catastrophic the costs of such a war would be.

罗震：前总理陆克文对这种战争说法的批评主要是他认为这只是一些现任政府成员用来获取国内政治利益的筹码。但在过程中，这种猛烈抨击的言论进一步损害了澳中之间本已岌岌可危的关系，并没有让澳洲社会公众了解到这样一场战争会带来多么灾难性的代价。

This political tactic of hyping an external 'threat' to induce a 'rallying around the flag' effect occurs in other countries too, including China and the US. That said, the risk of a kinetic conflict over Taiwan has increased compared with, say, five years ago. This means it is appropriate for sober-minded analysis and planning within the Australian government's Department of Defence, and in communicating to the public just what is at stake in terms of Australia's national interests and values. But the priority must be avoiding a military conflict, not hyping the risk for domestic political gain, or regarding it as inevitable and now starting to treat China as a de-facto enemy. China is far more a friend to Australia than an enemy.

这种过度炒作外部‘威胁’以达到国家内部团结一致的政治操作在其他国家也纷纷上演，这也包括了中国和美国。的确，相较于5年前，台湾地区发生冲突的风险升高了。这意味着联邦政府国防部应进行清晰的分析和规划，并让公众了解这对于澳大利亚的国家利益和价值有何影响。然而重中之重必须是避免军事冲突，而非为了国内政治利益炒作战争风险，或认为战争不可避免而开始将中国视为假想敌。中国对澳大利亚来说是朋友而远非敌人。

Global Times: Most analysts would not deny that Washington can no longer expect a quick and easy victory in a war with China in the Western Pacific. Why has Australia under Morrison been boasting following the US and taking the risk?

环球时报：大部分分析师都不讳言华盛顿已经无法在西太平洋地区对中国实现迅速轻松的军事胜利。为什么澳大利亚在莫里森的带领下信心满满地跟随美国铤而走险呢？

James Laurenceson: Within the Australian government, there is a significant gap between the key decision-makers and those more on the fringe. The reported hawkish comments by Minister for Defence, Peter Dutton, for example, were more qualified when you read the full transcript of what he said rather than just the version presented in the headlines.

罗震：在澳大利亚政府内部，关键决策者与非主流人物之间存在巨大的差距。例如，对于国防部长彼得达顿（Peter Dutton）的鹰派言论，当你阅读他的讲话全文而非只看新闻头条的报道，就会觉得更有说服力。

My own view is that the Australian Prime Minister should not seek to silence those more on the fringes. We should have the confidence as a country that having a vibrant and sometimes messy public debate eventually sees the best ideas, arguments and analysis rise to the top. But there's still a compelling case for political leadership to be exercised during this process. For example, the Prime Minister should make it clear that fringe positions do not align with the considered and informed views of government ministers or the National Security Committee of cabinet. Further, the Prime Minister ought to plainly call out hysterical talk that hypes the threat that China poses to Australia. I find it interesting that Joe Hockey, the former Australian ambassador to the US, said last year that while we regularly disagree with the US, we do so 'quietly' and in a way designed to not 'humiliate the United States or humiliate the President'. And this sensitivity is despite Australia and the US touting '100 years of mateship' and an 'Unbreakable Alliance'. Yet, in the case of China, Canberra regularly reaches for the megaphone.

我个人认为澳大利亚总理不应试图压抑非主流的声音。我们作为一个国家应当有信心开展激烈的甚至有时有些混乱的公开辩论，最终让最佳的想法、论点和分析浮出水面。在这个过程中仍然需要政府行使政治领导力已取得令人信服的结果。举例来说，总理应明确指出，一些非主流政治人物的观点与政府部长或内阁国家安全委员会考量后得出的观点不同。此外，总理也应将那些炒作中国对澳洲威胁的疯狂言论指正出来。有趣的是，澳大利亚前驻美大使乔霍吉（Joe Hockey）去年说道，尽管我们经常与美国意见不合，但我们通常会‘悄悄地以一种不伤害美国或美国总统颜面’的方式表达。尽管澳大利亚和美国一致宣扬我们是‘百年情谊’和‘坚不可摧的联盟’，但这种敏感性仍然存在。然而，在中国问题上，堪培拉却经常惟恐天下不知。

Global Times: Some scholars argued that the Morrison government's attempt of containment against China is one of the biggest failures of statecraft in Australia's history. To what extent do you agree?

环球时报：一些学者认为莫里森政府试图遏制中国将成为澳大利亚史上最大的败笔。您同意吗？

James Laurenceson: I'm not yet willing to conclude that the Morrison government is trying to 'contain China' - if what is meant by that is keeping China down so that it will forever be second place to the United States in terms of wealth and power. Certainly, there are voices in Australia, including within the government, who do favour that approach. But again, I don't think that's the view of the key decision-makers.

罗震：如果‘遏制中国’是指压制中国的发展以使其在财富和权力上永远落于美国之下，我还不愿意将莫里森政府的作为总结为在试图这么做。当然在澳大利亚，包括在政府内部，存在支持该做法的声音。但我仍不认为这是主要决策者的观点。

What I would say is that the government and much of the Australian public is anxious about what a region dominated by China would mean for the national interest. And this has been compounded by the trade disruption that Beijing has authorised over the past year. Whatever the domestic political logic within China of these trade disruptions - and I do understand the legitimate sense of grievance that China feels over a number of Australian government decisions - this economic punishment has backfired badly in terms of wider perceptions about China in Australia. Quite frankly, it has been a gift for those in Australia keen to advance a China Threat narrative.

我想说的是，让澳大利亚政府和很多民众感到担忧的是一个由中国主导的地区将对我们的国家利益产生什么影响。而过去几年由北京授意的澳中贸易中断使这一情况更加复杂。无论中国国内对于这种贸易中断的政治逻辑为何（我也确实理解中国对于一系列澳大利亚政府决策所产生的合理不满），就澳大利亚各界对中国的更广泛认知来说，这些经济制裁措施产生了严重的反效果。坦白来说，这对于热衷于宣扬中国威胁论的人来说送了大礼。

For example, Australian farmers were previously amongst the biggest supporters of strong China ties. But now they are suffering harshly because of political disagreements they have nothing to do with. These hard-working, down-to-earth Australians are the furthest from Canberra and the defence and security establishment you could possibly imagine. Beijing regularly blames the Australian government and media for poisoning the discussion of China and I accept that there are plenty of examples where this is true. But a good chunk of the grist for the China Threat narrative in Australia also comes from actions that Beijing has itself decided to pursue.

例如，澳洲农民曾是加强对华关系的最强支持者。但现在他们因为完全与他们无关的政治分歧而遭受重创。这些勤劳朴实的澳大利亚农民是你能想象到离堪培拉和国防安全机构最遥远的族群。北京经常谴责澳大利亚政府和媒体扭曲了针对中国的讨论，我相信很多例子都确实如此。但澳大利亚的中国威胁论叙述有很大一部分也来自于北京自己决定采取的行动。

I hope that informed diplomats in the Chinese foreign ministry have noted that despite trade ties being disrupted, not only has Canberra not changed its political decisions, but Australian public support and that of groups like the business community have also fallen away. Similarly, I hope that informed diplomats in Canberra realise that the current Australian government approach of being 'tough on China' is more sloganeering than serious strategy, and doubling down on this doesn't serve the national interest.

我希望中国外交部的有识外交官们能够注意到，尽管贸易连接遭到中断，但不仅堪培拉没有改变其政治决策，澳大利亚民众和商业团体等的支持也渐行渐远。同样，我希望堪培拉的知情外交官们能意识到，目前澳大利亚政‘对华强硬’的路线是口号性的而非严肃的战略，并且变本加厉并不符合国家利益。

Global Times: In international politics, striking a delicate balance between big powers is believed to be the optimal approach for smaller nations to emulate. This is how countries like Singapore and even New Zealand tread carefully between China and the US-led Western camp to maximize their interests. But Australia clearly stands by the US and takes the lead to confront China at the cost of its own interests. Is it a miscalculation?

环球时报：国际政治中，在大国间取得微妙平衡被认为是规模较小国家效仿的最佳策略。新加坡和新西兰等国就是在中国和以美国为首的西方阵营间谨慎行事，以最大化自身的利益。但澳大利亚显然与美国站在一起，以自身利益为代价带头同中国对抗。这是打错了算盘吗？

James Laurenceson: I'd begin by making the points that Australia has significantly more economic and strategic weight than Singapore and New Zealand, and it is not only Australia that is finding it difficult to maintain constructive relations with China. China's foreign policy has become significantly more assertive - some would say aggressive - over the past decade. Most recently we've seen that an investment agreement

between China and the EU that was celebrated just a few months ago by both sides now risks being suspended. China can, of course, pursue any foreign policy it wishes, and I also understand that historical factors mean Beijing and the Chinese public are, quite understandably, not willing to be pushed around and treated as second-class global citizens as Western countries treated them in the past. Still, other countries will naturally respond when they see their interests being threatened. Great powers like China and the US, for all their greatness, must still deal with the fact that smaller, less powerful countries possess considerable agency.

罗震：首先我想说明的是，澳大利亚明显比新加坡和新西兰在经济和战略上更有分量，而且澳大利亚也不是唯一认为与中国维持建设性关系有困难的国家。在过去十年中，中国的对外政策显然变得更加有主见，有些人可能会说更加激进。最近我们也看到几个月前双方庆祝达成的中欧投资协议正面临暂停的风险。中国当然可以按照自身意愿奉行相应的外交政策，并且我也理解历史原因让北京和中国人民不愿意像过去那样被西方国家颐指气使地当作二等世界公民。任何国家看到自身利益受到威胁的时候都会有此反应。但强大如中国和美国这样的大国，也必须正视这样一个事实，规模较小、实力较弱的国家也发挥了相当的作用。

But yes, I do think that since 2017 the Australian government has been let down by inept diplomacy and an excessively uncritical position towards the US alliance. To be clear, I'm not suggesting - and hardly anyone in Australia is - that Australia should walk away from the US alliance. Australia is in an alliance with the US because it's in Australia's interests to do so. But the US alliance has become the de-facto centrepiece of Australia's foreign policy. What Beijing regularly gets wrong is that Australia just follows US orders. In fact, the causality is often the opposite. Australia lives with an acute 'fear of abandonment' and so strives for opportunities to signal its worth to a 'great and powerful' friend. It is, in my view, an embarrassing trait that lies deep in the national psychology.

但我的确认为自2017年起澳大利亚政府无能的外交政策和过于不假思索地同美国站在一起让人感到失望。我必须说明，我或者任何澳大利亚人都不会建议澳大利亚退出与美国的同盟关系。澳大利亚成为美国的盟国是因为这符合其国家利益。但澳美同盟关系已经成为澳大利亚外交政策默认的核心。北京经常误会澳大利亚仅仅是在执行美国的命令。其实，这里的因果关系恰恰相反。澳大利亚生活在一种急迫的‘被抛弃的恐惧感’中，因而不遗余力争取机会像‘伟大而强力’的朋友证明自己的价值。我认为这是一种深植在国民心理的令人尴尬的特征。

This treatment of the US alliance as a civic religion is all the more ridiculous given just how much the world has changed with China's rise. Other countries seem to grasp better than Australia that while they need to protect their interests, they also need to have a constructive working relationship with China because this brings significant benefits. These days in Australia there is an excessively one-eyed preoccupation with the risks associated with engagement with China, and a failure or unwillingness to accept the basic point that Australia cannot achieve its foreign policy objectives given the current state of relations with China. The hope in Canberra these days is that relations will, if we stand up to China enough, reach a new 'settling point' where a 'happy coexistence' can begin. But what is not explained by Canberra is why we should expect a settling point rather than a continuation of the downward spiral we are now on, or at what level this 'settling point' will be achieved. An extended period of dysfunctional relations with China with growing economic costs can hardly be considered an acceptable 'settling point' for Australia's national interest, particularly if other countries are able to maintain constructive relations with China, albeit not without having to work hard to manage their own challenges.

考虑到随着中国的崛起，世界发生了多大的改变，这种将澳美同盟关系当作国民信仰的操作变得相当荒谬。其他国家似乎比澳大利亚掌握得更好，尽管他们需要维护自身的利益，他们也需要与中国建立一个建设性的合作关系，因为这能带来显著的效益。目前在澳大利亚，人们过度关注与中国交往的风险，却未能或不愿意接受一个基本的观点，即以目前与中国的关系，澳大利亚无法达成其外交目的。现在堪培拉希望的是，如果我们对中国采取足够的立场，两国关系将能达到一个新的‘和解点’而开始一种‘愉快的共存’。但堪培拉没有解释的是，为什么我们可以期待一个和解点而非目前的恶化螺旋继续下去，或这个‘和解点’将在什么情况下达到。长期与中国无法正常运作的关系和不断上升的经济代价很难成为一个符合澳大利亚国家利益的可接受的‘和解点’，特别是当其

他国家在努力管控自身挑战的同时还能同中国维持建设性的关系。

Particularly disappointing at the moment is that both sides blame the other entirely for the current tensions. Canberra is demonstrating no capacity for critical reflection and an ability to adjust course. This is true for Beijing too, and Chinese government ministers are not even willing to pick up the phone when their Australian counterparts call. The disappointing attitude seems to be that dialogue would be a concession to Australia.

目前特别令人失望的是，双方都将现在的紧张情势完全归咎于对方。堪培拉没有表现出批判性反思的能力和改变方向的能力。这对北京也是如此，中国的政府官员甚至不愿意接听澳大利亚同行的电话。这种令人失望的态度似乎是在说开展对话就代表向澳方的让步。

Global Times: Although Australia and the US are allies, how much confidence do Australia's political and strategic circles have toward the actual support and protection Washington will (or can) offer to Australia?

环球时报：尽管澳大利亚和美国是同盟关系，然而澳大利亚的政治和策略圈对于华盛顿会（或能够）给与澳大利亚带来的实际支持和保护有多大信心？

James Laurenceson: I think there is a high degree of confidence within political and strategic circles that the US would support Australia in a military conflict. Of course, there are a lot of scenarios between where things are now and one where Australia is being attacked in a military conflict. And along that spectrum, my view is that Australia should be realistic and not be 'doe-eyed' about what it can expect from America. For example, the US has said that it stands 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with Australia on the trade disruption that China is directing at Australia. And that's true in terms of rhetoric and expressions of sympathies. This is to be appreciated. But meanwhile, companies from other countries, including the US, are snapping up the markets in China that Australian ones previously supplied. Many strategic concepts like military alliances and intelligence-sharing arrangements struggle in the economic realm and I don't think high hopes should be placed in these. Rather than trying to forge an 'economic alliance' against China amongst, for example, the Five Eyes countries, it would be far more effective for Australia to put fresh and rigorous thinking into how we ourselves can improve economic resilience rather than relying on others. Doing so would also help Australia to break out of a mentality of being dependent on 'great and powerful friend'.

罗震：我认为政治和策略圈对于美国为澳大利亚在军事冲突中提供支援抱有高度的信心。当然，在目前情况与澳大利亚实际受到军事打击之间存在很多等级的情形。在这个范围内，我的观点是澳大利亚应该是务实的，并且不会对美国有‘天真’的期待。比如，美国说在中国针对澳大利亚发动的贸易中断事件上美国将和澳大利亚‘站在一起’。在论调和表达同情上面的确如此，而且我们十分感激。但同时，包括美国在内的其他国家的公司正在抢占澳大利亚此前在中国占有的市场份额。军事同盟和情报共享机制等概念在经济领域都举步维艰，我认为我们不应报太大希望。与其试图在例如‘五眼联盟’国家间建立对抗中国的‘经济联盟’，还不如更加有效地投入新颖严谨的思考如果提高自身的经济弹性而非依靠其他国家。做到这一点也将帮助澳大利亚拜托现有的依附于‘伟大而强大的朋友’这一思想。

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