

We The People
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We the People 223 **China and the ADF**



Good day to you. As we all know China is transforming itself from a communist state to something else. There is no democracy but there is freedom if you toe the line and personal wealth can now be accumulated. China now has 128 of the worlds billionaires in its ranks and yet just a few decades ago we saw the image of an army tank confronting a civilian in Tiananmen square. The country now boasts an increasing standard of living but a huge divide between the poor and the wealthy while the Chinese Communist Party still retain tight control on power.

China is a huge customer for Australian iron ore and other metals and produce. Their export policies have now changed to a greater focus on internal consumption although their investors regularly move around the world looking for investment assets. Recently a Chinese company very nearly bought 1.3% of Australia's total land mass for a measly \$300 million dollars and thank goodness that was averted. Such a sale does nothing for Australia and creates a large psychological cost to the nation. By any means China is coming of age and its population has just exceeded 1.3 billion people generating more pollution for their crowded inhospitable cities.

Now let's switch thoughts and let me take you to the Champs-Élysées in Paris. It's a beautiful near 2km long boulevard which is regularly used to host parades and national days and celebrations. Coming toward us is a line of **Australian Soldiers** regimentally presented in their new darker khaki dress uniforms and slouch hats carrying the Australian flag and national regalia. A grand sight indeed in their Chinese uniforms. Yes you heard correctly in that our soldiers regimental dress uniforms are now made in China. Apparently the Australian government and the ADF decided they could save a bob or two by having these uniforms for the Australian armed forces, made in China.

Put simply I don't like this as it would have been far more prudent to have made the uniforms in Australia and not just for economic reasons but also for the national spirit. What sort of bureaucratic or political nong has the armed forces uniforms made in another country. I really can't fathom the stupidity of politicians and the like to let this happen and apparently they did so because it represented the "best value for money". No matter how good the uniforms are the decision says the Australian manufacturing industry can't do the job and they ignore the clear and present danger of deflating national pride. South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon has slammed the decision, saying the Government fails to see the economic and jobs benefit of buying local. "If something is a little more expensive on the surface here in Australia but it means we're going to get all sorts of flow on benefits in terms of jobs, in terms of economic activity and tax and other benefits then it's a no-brainer," he said and he's right.

The 'Australian Made Campaign' group CEO Chief Executive Ian Harrison says, "it beggars belief that the Defence Department is dressing its soldiers in clothing made in China apparently because of a cheaper upfront price". Again he is right and I will bet the drovers dog would have made a better decision. So where to from here, well I guess we watch as this nation slowly dies a death from a thousand cuts to our manufacturing, social, national and environmental base. The politically correct will probably think it's great and the multicultural lobby will love it too. For my money I want the return of common sense and pride in our country and fast and the minority voices and reckless politicians exported to China.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley

