



Colliding Nationalisms: China's relations with its Neighbours

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“Building the Community of Common Destiny between China and its Neighbours: Challenges and the Future”, NIGS International Thinktank Forum, Beijing, 18-19 Nov. 2016



- Introduction: globalisation and the neoliberal turn.
- Nation-building in the Asia-Pacific.
- Three dynamics of Asian nationalisms:
 - The rise of the territorial state;
 - Colonial and war legacies;
 - Sectarian politics.
- Challenges to China and its neighbours.



- Neoliberalism and the post-Cold War order.
 - Western triumphalism: Fukuyama's *End of History* (1992).
 - Acceleration of globalisation of all forms:
 - Economic liberalisation;
 - Political changes;
 - ICT revolution;
 - Social movements.
- China and the Asia-Pacific.
 - “Free” from the Cold War shackles?
 - New institutional-building and interconnectedness: “Asianness”.
 - Initial optimism tempered by new challenges: from new forms of global agenda to domestic fissures.

- Follows Gellner's (1983) model of nationalism.
 - Most in Asia are non-natural nation-states.
 - Non-organic, top-down.
 - Role of the elite class in constructing the identity and its subsequent diffusion, via:
 - Shared, common education;
 - Language standardisation;
 - Centralised polity and bureaucracy;
 - Dominant cultural forms and identifiable icons or artefacts;
 - Constructed shared, common history.
- Sustenance of the modern state form: continuous nation-building endeavour.
 - Politically-driven, rather than socially-driven, project.
 - Citizenry as an exclusive membership.
 - Activism as perennial feature.

- Modern Asian states are a recent phenomenon.
 - Traditional societies superimposed with colonial boundaries and administration.
 - Decolonisation: acquiring “modernity”.
 - Sovereignty as a newly-defined status;
 - Congruence of the State and its society;
 - Introducing territoriality: modern states are inherently territorial.
- Territory becomes a fixed asset and rallying flag.
 - Infused with new national (previously traditional) identity.
 - Tangible feature that all nations share: provides ground for competition.

- Active promotion of “Us vs. Them” mentality.
 - Centrality of common memory construction.
 - Colonial legacies:
 - Assertion of the exploited past;
 - Anti-West outlook.
 - War legacies:
 - Enemy-inclination: common enemy for sooth over internal fractures.
 - Overlapping historical (esp. war) experiences create opportunities for exploitations.
- Easily translate to an anti-outsider mentality?
 - In tandem with growing anti-globalism movement worldwide.
 - Greater accessibility of information.



- Political ecology in Asia creates states that are bigger than the respective society they encompass.
 - Creation of sectarian politics.
 - Ethnicities, religions, localities, ideologies, etc dominate political differences.
 - Liberalisation and democratisation exacerbated differences.
 - Activism spillover: from physical to cyber spaces.
 - Rise of assertive, populist politics.
 - Indulgence to all forms of nationalist expressions.











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Farmers risk living in 'a rented country', says Barnaby Joyce

The Australian | 12:00AM October 27, 2016



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Reporter - Rural/Regional Affairs @BushReporter

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce has warned that the sale of Australian farmland to foreigners is threatening the nation's patriotism and sovereignty.

The Nationals leader fears that as more land mass is bought and owned by overseas interests, it is less likely that Australians will be prepared to fight and die to defend their country.

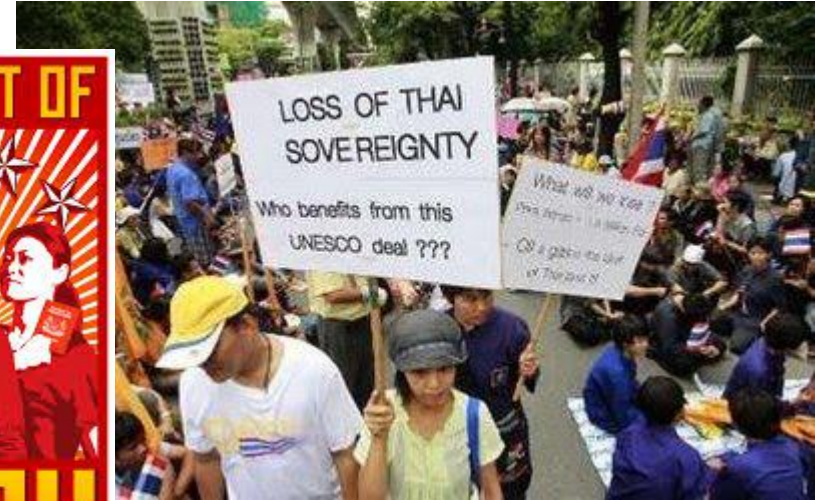
Mr Joyce, who is also federal Agricultural Minister, believes Australian farming families are at risk of ending up mere tenants in a "rented country".

"It is the essence of patriotism, the love of one's country, (and) it is best delivered when you own that country," a passionate Mr Joyce told the National Farmers Federation annual congress in Canberra yesterday.

"And there's one thing that people are not prepared to do, and that's to die for a rented country."

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- Living with the beast.
 - Frivolous nature of nationalism makes it difficult to predict.
 - Growing influence in interstate relations in the Asia-Pacific.
 - Combustible conditions when nationalisms collide.
 - States have much to gain as much as to lose by incessantly feeding the nationalist sentiments.
 - Growing conservative, right-wing politics a worrying addition to the mix.
- Taming the beast.
 - Cannot rely on economic solutions given the political orientation.
 - Greater regional institutionalisation?
 - Forging greater regional commonness?
 - Pessimism prevails...



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