

是时候接受身处亚洲的命运了

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时事透视

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“按地理位置的逻辑，居住在澳大利亚大陆的应该是亚洲人。然而，因为历史的一次偶然事件，生活在澳洲的却绝大多数是西方人。”

这是我在 8 月为澳大利亚国立大学准备的一份报告的开头。报告的结论是，既然澳洲的命运系于西方的时代即将结束，它必须开始为命运系于东方做准备。

遗憾的是，没有任何澳洲主要报章或专家学者对此做出反应。这让我意识到，澳洲的知识分子仍然不愿意面对让人不快的新地缘政治现实。

在这个背景下，《亚洲世纪白皮书》(Asian Century White Paper) 的公布可说来得正是时候。它应该让澳洲人惊醒，意识到澳洲的命运现在同亚洲紧密相连。澳洲总理吉拉德说得一点都没错：“亚洲地区成为世界经济龙头的进程不仅势不可挡，而且加快了步伐。”

报告一个确实让人印象深刻的地方，是对亚洲崛起所提供的数据。比如，它指出：“过去 20 年，中国和印度占全球经济的比重增加近三倍，经济的绝对规模也增加近六倍。到 2025 年，整个亚洲的产出将占世界产出的几乎一半。”

报告也许可以指出，从公元 1 年至 1820 年，中国和印度一直是世界的两个最大经济体。因此，西方过去两百年在经济上称霸，是历史的一个重大偶发事件。

提出这点是很重要的，因为西方势力在过去两百年，为澳洲提供了对亚洲地缘政治现实的重要缓冲。在亚洲世纪，当西方势力逐渐消退时，澳洲将被“搁浅”，成为亚洲唯一的西方国家（加上新西兰）。2200 万澳洲人必须学习谨慎和敏感地同 35 亿亚洲人打交道。

忽略亚细安令人意外

对亚洲一无所知可能危及澳洲的长远未来。因此，报告凸显澳洲人对亚洲的误解是正确的。“比如，罗伊研究所 (Lowy Institute) 2011 年的一项调查显示，许多澳洲人相信‘印度尼西亚基本上是由军方控制，尽管它有民主制度政府’。”

说来遗憾，这种极度的无知可能是澳洲教育制度根深蒂固的缺陷造成的。这是报告透露的一项让人担忧的情况：“只有一小部分的 12 年级学生，在使用现有官方课程修读历史、文学、地理、经济、政治及艺术等科目时，学习到任何同亚洲有关的事物。”更糟糕的是，在每一批同年级学生中，只有 5% 修读任何亚洲语言。

因此，我于9月在墨尔本澳洲小学校长协会（Australian Primary Principals Association）的常年大会发表演讲时表示，澳洲社会可以为其5岁孩童所做的最好事情，是教导他们一种亚洲语言，不管是华语、印地语、印度尼西亚语或日语。学习亚洲语言也会让他们认识到亚洲文化和政治上的敏感地带。

澳洲成为联合国安全理事会非常任理事国后，将立刻面对政治敏感度的考验。它的亚洲邻国将观察，它的投票立场是同理事会里的西方成员国，还是亚洲成员国较一致。西方和东方的实力此消彼长，澳洲必须做的痛苦地缘政治抉择，明显的不是任何官方白皮书所能解决的。报告书谨慎地提及“中国、美国和澳洲”，但却没有提到澳洲不时得做出的痛苦抉择。

报告书令人意外地忽略了亚细安，也没有提到亚细安在最近数十年为澳洲提供了重要的地缘政治缓冲。对此缺乏了解是导致澳洲一些最不明智外交决策的原因，包括有时候试图绕过亚细安。

无论如何，亚洲人应该欢迎澳洲政府公布这份白皮书的果敢决定。澳洲人深入思考他们的命运系于亚洲的时候到了。澳洲人越早对这做出调整，调整的过程就越没有那么痛苦。

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（以下为英文原文：）

Time to accept our place in Asian region

By Kishore Mahbubani

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“By the logic of geography, the continent of Australia should have been populated with Asians. Instead, by an accident of history, Australia has been predominantly populated with Westerners.”

This is how I began a paper for the Australian National University in August, which concluded that as Australia’s Western destiny was coming to an end, it had to start preparing for its Asian destiny.

Sadly, no major Australian newspaper or pundit commented. This made me aware that Australian’s intelligentsia is still reluctant to face head on Australia’s painful new geopolitical realities.

Against this backdrop, the release of the Asian Century white paper is timely. It should provide a sharp wake-up call to the Australian population that Australia’s destiny is now firmly tied to Asia. Julia Gillard is absolutely right in saying: “The transformation of the Asian region into the economic powerhouse of the world is not only unstoppable, it is gathering pace.”

One truly impressive part of the paper is the data it provides on Asia’s rise. It notes, for example, that “in the past 20 years, China and India have almost tripled their share of the global economy and increased their absolute economic size almost six times over. By 2025, the region as a whole will account for almost half the world’s output.”

The paper could have helpfully added that from the year 1 to 1820, China and India always had the world's two largest economies. Hence, the past 200 years of Western economic domination was a major historical aberration.

This would have been an important point to make because for the past 200 years, Western power has essentially provided Australia a valuable buffer from Asian geopolitical realities. In this Asian century, as Western power recedes steadily, Australia will be left "beached" alone as the solitary Western country (together with New Zealand) in Asia. Twenty-two million Australians will have to learn to deal with 3.5 billion Asians with great care and sensitivity.

Ignorance about Asia could prove to be fatal for Australia's long-term future. This is why the report is right in highlighting Australian misperceptions about Asia. "For example, a Lowy Institute poll in 2011 found that many believe that 'Indonesia is essentially controlled by the military, despite Indonesia's democratic system of government'."

Sadly, this kind of abysmal ignorance may be a result of deeply rooted flaws in Australian education. This is one alarming revelation of the report: "Only a small proportion of Year 12 students study anything about Asia in the subjects of history, literature, geography, economics, politics and the arts under existing state-based curriculums." Worse, only 5 per cent of each Australian cohort study any kind of Asian language.

Hence, when I addressed the annual convention of the Australian Primary Principals Association in Melbourne in September, I said that the kindest thing Australian society could do to its five-year-old children was to teach them an Asian language, be it Mandarin or Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia or Japanese.

Learning Asian languages would also open windows to Asian cultural and political sensitivities.

An early test of Australian political sensitivities will come when Australia joins the UN Security Council. Its Asian neighbours will be watching to see if it votes more in line with its fellow Western or fellow Asian members in the council. The painful geopolitical choices that Australia will have to make as Western power recedes and Asian power rises are clearly something that no official white paper can address. The paper delicately touches on "China, the United States and Australia" without pointing out some of the painful choices Australia will have to make from time to time.

The one surprising omission in the paper is ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations). The paper fails to acknowledge that ASEAN has provided Australia with a valuable geopolitical buffer in recent decades. The failure to understand this has led to some of Australia's most unwise foreign policy decisions, including efforts to bypass ASEAN sometimes.

Despite this, all Asians should welcome the bold decision of the Australian government to release this white paper. The time for Australians to think deeply about their Asian destiny has arrived. The sooner Australia adjusts to its new Asian destiny, the less painful the adjustment will prove to be.

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