

POLITICS

Daily Telegraph newspaper's 'New Xi-land' jab as China declares New Zealand 'an example for Australia'

10 hours ago



Zane Small



Watch: PM Jacinda Ardern put Huawei, human rights and cyber-security to China's leaders during her visit to Beijing in 2019. Credits: Image - Screenshot / Getty; Video - Newshub

China is heaping praise on New Zealand as "an example for Australia in how to deal" with foreign affairs after Trade Minister Damien O'Connor suggested our trans-Tasman neighbour practice "more diplomacy" with China.

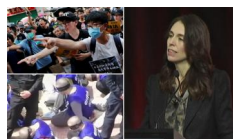
O'Connor's remarks have riled some Australian politicians, such as Liberal MP Dave Sharma, who told *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "I don't see this advice from New Zealand as particularly insightful or helpful."

The frustration is illustrated in a front-page story on Australia's *Daily Telegraph* newspaper titled 'Oz swipe from New Xi-land' - a reference to Chinese President Xi Jinping and commentary from China praising New Zealand's foreign affairs approach.

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In a report by the *Global Times*, a tabloid newspaper under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party, Qin Sheng from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences compares Australia and New Zealand's approach to China.

"Australia and New Zealand are very much alike in many ways," he writes, noting how both countries have similar histories of immigrants, are members of the intelligence-sharing Five Eyes alliance, and are reliant on foreign trade.

"But what has caused such a huge difference between Australia and New Zealand in their development of relations with China in recent years?" Sheng asks. [Read Next Story >](#)

"First, New Zealand respects rules of the market economy more than Australia does," he writes, criticising Australia's Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018, which

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China complains has led to a sharp decline of Chinese investment.



Daily Telegraph newspaper front page. Photo credit: Screenshot

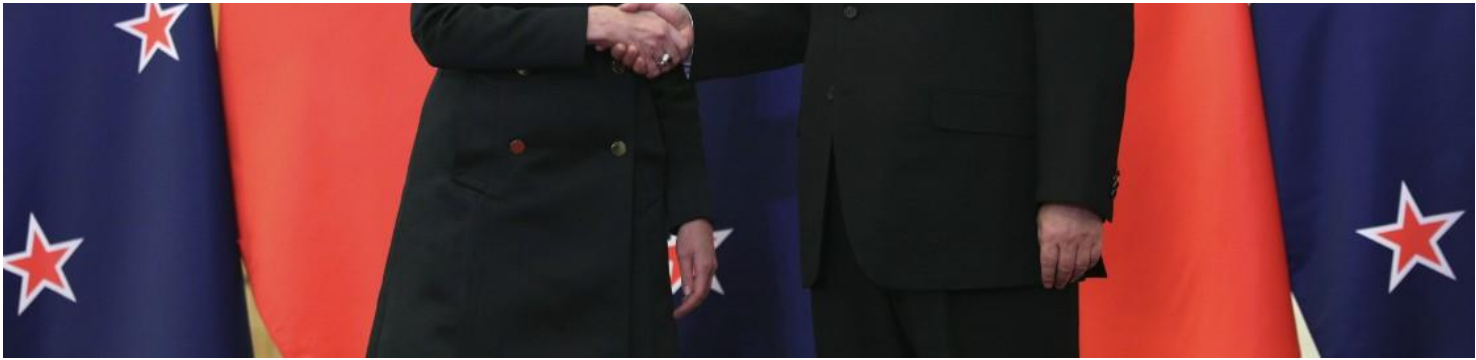
"Second, Wellington doesn't take sides between Beijing and Washington," Sheng adds, criticising Australia for acting as a "vanguard" for the United States as former President Donald Trump engaged in a trade war with China.

"New Zealand has maintained its own judgment in major China-related agendas, laying a solid foundation for sound relations with China."

Relations between China and Australia have deteriorated after Beijing objected to a number of its moves, including the banning of Chinese company Huawei from its 5G network, and calling for an independent inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic.

China has responded by slapping trade strikes of more than \$20 billion on Australian exports including barley, wine, cotton, coal and beef.





Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands during Ardern's trip to Beijing in 2019. Photo credit: Getty

Meanwhile, New Zealand signed an updated free trade agreement (FTA) with China on Wednesday, giving us faster access to Chinese markets and a reduction in tariffs for paper and wood products.

New Zealand appeared to get off scot-free, despite our spy agencies also putting Huawei's 5G plans on hold in 2018. Some in Australia have suggested New Zealand pull its weight a bit more in handling China's growing influence.

"Perhaps the New Zealand Government should be less craven and unprincipled on China and share the burden a little more," said Phil Lynch, director of the International Service for Human Rights and former head of Australia's Human Rights Law Centre.

TWITTER PHIL LYNCH



Phil Lynch 
@PhilALynch



I'm actually really proud of the Australian Government's consistent and strong approach to human rights in China. Perhaps the New Zealand Government should be less craven and unprincipled on China and share the burden a little more. [@MarisePayne](#) [@dfat](#) [@AustraliaUN_GVA](#) [@MFATNZ](#)



Elaine Pearson 
@PearsonElaine

If "speaking with more diplomacy" = silence on China's human rights violations then that's exactly what President Xi wants. Note - New Zealand did not join the Jan 10 joint statement on arrests in Hong Kong with [. smh.com.au/politics/feder...](#)

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 42

 23

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But New Zealand's relationship with China has not gone unscathed. In July, the Government suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong in light of China's decision to pass a controversial national security law for the city.

China responded by suspending Hong Kong's extradition treaty with New Zealand. The Chinese Embassy urged New Zealand to "stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs" and do more to promote the good aspects of the relationship.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has also spoken out in support of the Uighur people in China's Xinjiang region, where up to 2 million Muslims are said to be detained in "re-education camps".

Sheng said while relations between China and New Zealand "have recently been hot", he said Australia has adopted a "Cold War mentality".

"New Zealand has set an example for Australia in how to deal with China. We must ask: Will China-Australia relations continue to be in a frozen state?"

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