

Andrew Garber

March 29 2024

World Geography 2

Chapter 32 Response

Australia: a resource rich, democratic, and west-aligned nation is in a rough spot. The country is facing a number of challenges, most notably the rise of China and a rapidly changing climate - its salvation here must be its aligned partners in the US, EU, and others in the region.

The resource wealth of Australia, particularly in minerals, with some energy resources and proximity to far more in Indonesia and the South Pacific, is a major asset to the nation. Despite this, due to a small population and a resulting lack of a large industrial base, Australia--at the status of a wealthy nation--is a massive exporter of raw materials, especially to China. While the threat to cut this off is a major one, a Chinese decision to look elsewhere is an inevitable counter-blow which could decimate the Australian economy. This geostrategic reality is a major challenge for Australia, as it must balance its economic interests with its security interests along with its ideological distance from that of the Chinese regime.

Australia has always been hot--but it's getting still hotter. The nation is one of the most at-risk high-income nations, but without a significant technology or industrial base, it is difficult for Australia to meaningfully affect its destiny in this regard. Radical new technologies aren't likely to be developed in Australia, all while taking a major hit from the changing climate. Wildfires, droughts, and other natural disasters are becoming more common, and the nation doesn't have the necessary infrastructure--something difficult in a nation as gigantic and sparsely populated as Australia--to deal with these disasters. The nation is in a rough spot, and it's salvation must be its aligned partners in the US, EU, and others in the region, not on its own.

Australia's status as a commonwealth member and former British colony has led to a strong alignment with western nations, particularly the US, UK, and EU. This alignment has proven extremely beneficial to Australia, as large mutually beneficial trade and security relationships have been

formed. Despite this, they are an ocean away--nearer partners in the region like Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and its quirlier neighbor New Zealand are critical in providing the bullwark against China that the US Navy would need in event of a war. Australia's salvation, technologically, economically, and militarily, is in its collaboration with these nations, supplementing its own capabilities instead of trying to go it alone.

In conclusion, the path for Australia will be a rocky one in the coming years. It is a high wealth nation with a small population, small industrial base, and an over-reliance on resources for its material wealth. It is likely to feel some of the worst effects of climate change, and its most powerful allies are oceans away. The path forward will require a careful collaboration with local and global partners, as well as the consideration of sometimes contradictory interests in the realms of security, economics, and ideology.