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### **Foreign Policy impact of poor international relations, vis-a-vis Australia-China.**

As a working member of Conflict Resolution Network, I am embarrassed and frightened by the aggression our leaders show towards our closest trading nation, China, and I wonder who is planning and assessing of the impact of such aggravations. Is it ignorantly poor form or deliberate provocation and incitement? To what aim? It sounds loutish.

I have noted the escalation of this language when Australian Government Ministers have recently returned from visiting the United States of America, and wonder about guns and bullets. Who is calling the shots? Is this war-of-words really in the best interests of the Australian people or are we volunteering to be a proxy?

China, even more than average, is sensitive to face-loss given the appalling history of their humiliation from the West. They read diplomatic communications with sensitivity and are not unreasonably likely to feel that the volume of their trade entitles them to be treated with respect. This loss of mutually respectful behaviour is costing our exporters.

China is responding like the behemoth it is, and bullying in return. While capitulating is not an effective response to bullying, throwing stones is just stupid.

Indeed, there are multiple reasons for Australia to nudge our trading partner on Human Rights issues. Australia itself is not short of Human Rights issues. As an Australian, I feel that bristle of embarrassment when our woeful history of displacement and genocide of First Nations peoples are reflected to us. Let's tend our own fire, while not diminishing, the sins of our neighbours. Self-righteousness is not endearing.

The worthy art of diplomacy has served well since Marco Polo, bearing warm, kind words and riches beyond imaging. Hurling insults is not known to promote bilateral security, and yet in recent times our diplomats have been reduced to mere messengers. Skilled diplomats and international mediators can offer a firmer ground for social, communal and economic growth and flourishing if they are allowed to.