

From: John Stone [mailto:j_o_stone@bigpond.com]
Sent: Thursday, 4 October 2018 9:03 AM
To: Des Moore
Subject: Re: Chinese Threaten US Warship

Dear Des,

Thanks. For Brian Loughnane to say he was not "not enamoured" of Pyne would have been a masterly piece of understatement on his part!

Like Brian, I despise the little bastard. But after he was interviewed by Andrew Bolt on *The Bolt Report* on Tuesday evening I said to Nancy that I thought he had given a very good interview (which seems to have been similar in many respects to his Melbourne Club performance).

Yes, I did see *The Bolt Report* again last night, including the stuff on Taiwan. It will continue to be a potential flash point.

Having spent most of yesterday at the annual conference of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, I'm well behind in my email traffic.

All the best.

John

On 3/10/18 11:16 pm, Des Moore wrote:

John

Last evening, at the invitation of cousin Patrick, I attended the Melbourne Club to hear a speech by Christopher Pyne which was sponsored by the Pacific Institute of Australia, whose patrons include Brian Loton and Hugh Morgan. At cocktails before I spoke briefly to Brian Loughnane who said he is not enamored by Pyne. But P spoke well (oratorily) on defence issues and after his speech he attracted several questions (incl from Michael Porter) which he answered well (I had my hand up but did not get the call).

There were bits where he was not convincing but for which I have not been able to acquire in detail as Pyne's media publications on web are well out of date. However, he did say:

>There is no doubt about the French sub and the fact that there has not yet been any signature with the French (notwithstanding that the French minister was here quite recently) simply reflects the complexity of the proposal, which requires a longer range than other possible subs. The government had been

unanimously advised by experts to approve the French model. The 2030 finish remains intact;

>In describing the South China sea problem he referred to the exercises mentioned in the article below but did not say how close to the SS islands the exercises would go;

>He referred to our US alliance but only briefly and said nothing about Trump or the challenge the US is emanating under T. The report of the comment by Morrison today suggested a rather limited relationship with the US, presumably reflecting the Turnbull-like approach of limiting any endorsement of Trump.

You probably saw the Bolt show on tonight's Sky and the threat facing Taiwan from China.

Des

China warned after US warship is challenged



Guided missile destroyer USS Decatur, pictured in the Sea of Japan in 2016, had to manoeuvre away from a Chinese destroyer that came within 45 yards (41m) of the ship near disputed reefs in the South China Sea. Picture: AFP

Primrose Riordan, Political Reporter, 12:00PM October 3, 2018

Scott Morrison says Australia will aim to provide a calming influence on rising tensions between the United States and China in the South China Sea. Australia has warned Beijing that the use of "intimidation or aggressive

tactics” was “destabilising and potentially dangerous” following reports a Chinese navy destroyer launched an “unsafe” challenge to a US warship in the South China Sea.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to see stability and prosperity in the region continue.

“We’re cool heads in this situation. Times of uncertainty are exactly that and it’s our job to work with everybody to reduce that uncertainty - that’s what we’re doing,” Mr Morrison told 6PR today.

In the latest conflict between the US and China, the Pentagon revealed that a Chinese warship had issued a challenge to the guided-missile destroyer USS - Decatur as it sailed within 12 nautical miles of the Gaven and Johnson reefs in a freedom-of-navigation operation. With tensions between the nations worsening, a decision by US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis to abandon a planned visit to Beijing was followed by a statement by Defence Minister Christopher Pyne last night warning against aggression in the region.

In a further deterioration in relations, Beijing also refused a request for a US warship to make a port call at Hong Kong and cancelled plans for its naval chief to visit the Pentagon.

The dispute between the Pacific giants escalated yesterday as China’s claims over the disputed waters come under increasing pressure, with Australia taking part in new multilateral naval exercises in the region.

Mr Pyne this week announced that the Bersama Lima exercises involving Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and Britain would be partly conducted in the South China Sea. Australia last week confirmed it was also planning with France naval exercises in disputed waters. Asked about the Chinese naval challenge, Mr Pyne said the reports were “concerning”. “We would view any use of intimidation or aggressive tactics as destabilising and potentially dangerous,” he said. “Australia has consistently expressed concern over ongoing militarisation of the South China Sea and we continue to urge all claimants to refrain from unilateral actions that would increase tension in the region.”

The Pentagon said the Chinese ship conducted an “unsafe and unprofessional manoeuvre” near the USS Decatur as it sailed near reefs claimed by China. “The (People’s Republic of China) destroyer conducted a series of increasingly aggressive manoeuvres accompanied by warnings for the Decatur to depart

the area,” said Captain Charlie Brown, a spokesman for the US Pacific Fleet in Honolulu. “The PRC destroyer approached within 45 yards (41m) of Decatur’s bow, after which Decatur manoeuvred to prevent a collision.”

China yesterday accused the US of threatening its “sovereignty and security” and disturbing “regional peace and stability” by sending the USS Decatur into the disputed waters. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs last night said the US was “taking one provocative operation after another under the pretext of ‘navigation and overflight freedom’ ”.

Beijing said the US destroyer had sailed close to what it calls the Nansha Islands, otherwise known as the Spratly Islands, without permission from China.

In Washington yesterday, Foreign Minister Marise Payne met US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Donald Trump’s National Security Adviser, John Bolton. She later released a statement focusing on “regional infrastructure” co-operation. The statement, understood to be in reference to countering Beijing’s spending power in the South Pacific and Asia, came after the top US diplomat in Australia, James Carouso, confirmed the US was working with Canberra to counter an offer from Huawei to build Papua New Guinea’s domestic internet cable network.

The setbacks in US-China relations came amid a worsening trade war as Donald Trump declared he was unwilling to hold talks with China because Beijing was not prepared to cede ground in a dispute that has seen the US slap tariffs on \$US250 billion of Chinese goods. “Frankly, it’s too early to talk,” the US President said. “Can’t talk now because they’re not ready ... Because they’ve been ripping us for so many years.”

The naval confrontation is another sign of how the trade war is souring other areas of the US-China relationship. It comes after China’s Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, warned at the UN last week that relations between the two countries could “break like glass”.

Amid the worsening relationship, US defence officials confirmed that Mr Mattis had dropped plans to visit Beijing this month to meet his Chinese counterpart. Mr Mattis played down the long-term implications of the tensions, predicting the countries would “sort this out”. “I just think it’s part of reality,” he said. “We’re two ... great powers, two Pacific Ocean nations. We

have various issues: diplomatic, economic, security. We're going to have to find ways to work them out. We will. There's tension points in the relationship but based on discussions coming out of New York last week and other things that we have coming up, we do not see it getting worse."

China has also been angered by Washington last week announcing a \$US330 million military sale to Taiwan. Beijing soke of "severe damage" to the US-China relationship if the sale went through. Last week, Mr Trump angered Beijing by saying at the UN Security Council that China was interfering in US mid-term elections to damage Republicans. "They do not want me or us to win because I am the first president ever to challenge China on trade," he said. "We are winning on trade. We are winning at every level. We don't want them to meddle or interfere in our upcoming election."

He t did not say how China was interfering although he did criticise China's attempts to turn farmers in Mr Trump's rural heartland against him by taking out large ads in local papers arguing that tariffs were hurting them. Terry Branstad, the US ambassador to China, accused Beijing of "bullying" by running a four-page paid China Daily supplement in an Iowa newspaper.

Additional reporting: Cameron Stewart, Glenda Korporaal, Paul Maley, AAP Primrose Riordan