Economic Environment

In pursuit of prosperity

Why do some emerging economies grow rapidly while others languish? New research highlights the role of public policy, effective government, and globally competitive companies.

[In-pursuit-of-prosperity]

Natural / Physical Resources

The Climate Apocalypse Is Now, and It’s Happening to You

What people say they know about climate change is a roller coaster of human ignorance—wait, everyone knows that but no one knows that? It’s striking to learn (according to Yale’s climate survey program) that 74 percent of women and 70 percent of men believe climate change will harm future generations of humans, but just 48 and 42 percent, respectively, think it’s harming them personally.

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Nuusbrokkies / News Snippets

New Zealand ‘particularly vulnerable’ to China: US think tank report

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China’s influence operations in New Zealand are rooted in the same set of policies and institutions that guide its work globally, often proceeding outward from efforts targeted at the diaspora community. As has been observed elsewhere, influence operations in New Zealand have increased markedly since Xi Jinping became general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese government considers New Zealand an “exemplar of how it would like its relations to be with other states.” One unnamed Chinese diplomat even characterized relations between the two countries as similar to China’s close ties with totalitarian Albania in the early 1960s.

New Zealand is of strategic interest to China for several reasons. As a claimant state in Antarctica, the country is relevant to China’s growing ambitions in that territory. It manages the defense and foreign affairs of three other territories in the South Pacific. It is an ideal location for near-space research and has unexplored oil and gas resources. Most critically, as a member of the “Five Eyes” security partnerships with the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, New Zealand offers enormous possibilities for Chinese espionage.

New Zealand is particularly vulnerable to Chinese influence because it is a small state of 4.5 million people with strong trade ties to China. China is New Zealand’s second largest trading partner and a critical market for two of its most important sectors, tourism and milk products. It should be noted that New Zealand has historically pursued closer ties with China than many other nations. What is changing is the willfulness with which China appears ready to exploit this dynamic and to subvert New Zealand’s continued ability to independently shape its policy priorities.

China & NZ

Technology

Synthetic wine is on its way

In early 2016, a trio of bright young Californians called Mardonn Chua, Josh Decolonon and Alec Lee hit the headlines after announcing that the Ava Winery they’d set up the previous year was about to achieve vinous alchemy. After identifying and isolating the individual flavour compounds of a 1992 Dom Perignon using equipment including gas chromatography and mass spectrometry, they were going to replicate it without the use of a single grape.

Anyone who doubts the possibility of this happening might like to cast their minds back to the 1980s when Swatch quartz watch movements surprised traditionalists by supplanting mechanical ones. Or to 2003 when a man called Elon Musk founded a company called Tesla. Just 15 years later, almost every big motor manufacturer has launched or is readying itself to launch an electric car, and electric trucks are on the way; 2019 is not a good time to invest in diesel.

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