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Australia's National Interests Jeopardized After Albanese's China Visit

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Prime Minister (PM) Anthony Albanese's recent China visit, intended to boost trade, has raised concerns that Australia's national interests are at risk due to Labor's focus on Beijing at the expense of strategic alliances. Critics argue the trip's emphasis on economic gains overlooks security threats and weakens ties with key allies like the United States (US).

Albanese's six-day tour through Shanghai, Beijing, and Chengdu included meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, yielding agreements on tourism and green energy. He claimed these advance Australia's \$312 billion trade relationship with China, per the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). However, Nationals leader David Littleproud warned that prioritizing China while failing to secure a meeting with US President Donald Trump undermines Australia's security. "The PM's playing a dangerous game neglecting our strongest ally," Littleproud told Weekend Today, highlighting Trump's tariff policies and AUKUS uncertainties as critical issues. China's military actions, such as unannounced naval drills off Australia in February 2025, further fuel concerns about Labor's naivety.

The visit's optics—Albanese touring the Great Wall and a panda research center—drew Coalition criticism for appearing indulgent. Shadow defence spokesman James Paterson told Sky News the PM's focus on symbolic gestures risks diluting Australia's stance on pressing issues like the detention of Australian writer Yang Hengjun, whose suspended death sentence remains unresolved. Chinese state media, including Global Times, praised Albanese's approach, but analysts like Justin Bassi from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) argue this coziness with Beijing could embolden China's regional assertiveness, threatening Indo-Pacific stability.

Economic data paints a mixed picture. Australian foreign direct investment (FDI) in China dropped 12% in 2024, reflecting business caution amid Beijing's tightened regulations, per the Australian Bureau of Statistics. While Albanese defended Australia's investment screenings as "not country-specific," Chinese complaints about market access barriers

suggest tensions persist. With Trump's tariffs looming and AUKUS under review, Labor's failure to prioritize US relations could leave Australia exposed. The Nationals warn that without a stronger focus on security and alliances, Albanese's China-centric diplomacy risks compromising Australia's sovereignty and long-term interests in a volatile global order.