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The U.S. ‘cold war’ drive and the Australia nuclear deal

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The U.S. aircraft carrier USS Nimitz in the South China Sea for military ‘games.’

On Sep. 15, Australia’s Prime Minister Scott Morrison, U.S. President Joe Biden, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain announced their new trilateral security

agreement, AUKUS, and its first initiative — the delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia. The deal is a dangerous escalation in the U.S.'s new Cold War against China.

Australia already had an agreement to buy a fleet of diesel submarines from France. For France, the deal was worth somewhere near \$90 billion and was part of a plan to strengthen their economic and military standing in the Indo-Pacific region without damaging trade relations with China. The U.S. kept the nuclear submarine deal secret from the French government until the ink on the contract was already dry. France — taken completely by surprise — called the deal a “stab in the back,” and in an unprecedented move, withdrew its ambassadors to both the United States and Australia.

It isn't only the money that dealt a blow to France, although all the imperialist powers lean on arms sales to remedy the inevitable economic contraction that happens at the bottom of their capitalist boom and bust cycle. Only rarely are secrets of advanced military technology shared, even with allies.

The fact that Britain and the U.S. are providing nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, means that Australia will be dependent on them for maintenance, training and support. Australia has unambiguously signed on to the Cold War against China. The new alliance locks Australia into deeper participation in the Pentagon's growing aggression against socialist China and sets back France's plans for a military alliance with Australia.

Growing military presence

In addition to their own unilateral and growing military presence close to China's coast, the Pentagon and the State Department have also been twisting arms, bribing and otherwise coercing countries in the region to join in their reckless anti-China aggression through a network of alliances. The World War II vintage “Five Eyes”

alliance — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Britain, and the United States — was an outdated, multilateral nest of spies.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) was established in 2007 between Japan, India, the United States and Australia. The “Dialogue” in the Quad’s name is a misnomer — it was an expansion of military “games” called “Exercise Malabar” that are periodically repeated. Previously, these military “games” were only between the U.S. and India in the Indian Ocean. In 2007 they were held on a huge scale off the Japanese island of Okinawa, as close to China as it is to Japan. Quad members and Five Eyes countries have also been called on to voice support for the bogus “lab leak” theory that blames China for COVID-19.

A decade ago, Australia had dropped its role in the Quad out of fear of losing trade with China. After they rejoined the Quad, the U.S. redoubled its effort to lure them into a yet stronger commitment, and sent troops to Darwin, the settler outpost on the northwestern corner of Australia. The unexplained presence of U.S. Marines in Australia has ebbed and flowed ever since, and recently when Australia became a mouthpiece for the phony lab-leak theory angering China, the U.S. sent 1,200 additional Marines.

France and the other European powers also trade with China and resisted joining the Pivot to Asia. The differences between the imperialist ruling classes of Europe and the U.S. over how to deal with the emergence of socialist China as a world power are at the root of this rift.

U.S. media propaganda

A recent U.S. Defense Department paper, the “China Military Power Report,” fueled a media buzz propagating the idea of China having the world’s most powerful navy, reminiscent of the lies preceding Desert Storm, when U.S. media trumpeted that Iraq had the strongest army in the world. That was a way to justify the war they

wanted.

While it is true that China has the most naval vessels in the world, the vessels are almost all small craft designed for defense of the coastline. China has a right to all the military that's needed to defend itself. But U.S. imperialism is not David challenging a Chinese military Goliath. The U.S. has been maintaining a provocative naval presence in the South China Sea, including three of their eleven aircraft carrier groups. China has two carriers, and neither is anywhere near the U.S.

And then there are the alliances the U.S. has coerced with South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and—now more than before—Australia.

To be sure, China's People's Liberation Army is prepared and powerful, dedicated, ready to defend. But the people of China don't need and don't want a horrendous war. China has issued an appeal for a reversal of the AUKUS agreement. Zhao Lijian, China's foreign ministry spokesperson issued a statement saying: "Facing common challenges of fighting the pandemic and economic recovery, the people in the Asia-Pacific region need growth and employment, not submarines and gunpowder," and urged the AUKUS members to "fulfill their international nuclear non-proliferation obligations."

