

Asian 'NATO' encircles China

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The U.S.-steered Aukus military alliance is cranking up hostilities by inviting Japan into the anti-China pact



INTIMIDATION: Ships from the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group and from

the America Expeditionary Strike Group transit the South China Sea in 2020.

MAJOR new announcements this month indicate that the U.S. is intent on escalating its military interference in the Asia-Pacific and the seas around China.

The first announcement by the defence ministers of the U.S., Britain and Australia on the April 8 2024, revealed that the Aukus military alliance is seeking to expand with plans to invite Japan into the anti-China pact.

This was followed by another announcement three days later, at a summit in Washington between U.S. President Joe Biden, Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida, and the President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jnr, where a new trilateral agreement between the countries was unveiled, including plans to conduct joint naval exercises in the South China Sea this year.

Days before this announcement, on April 7, the first joint naval and air drills between the U.S., Australia, Japan, and the Philippines took place in the South China Sea.

These new initiatives aim to bolster the U.S.'s already substantial military encirclement of China, threatening to destabilize the region and lay the foundations for a U.S.-led hot war against China.

Washington is whipping up conflict in the South China Sea

Under the disingenuous rhetoric of safeguarding “peace and security” in the Asia-Pacific and the South China Sea, the U.S. is cajoling the Philippines and Japan into following its militaristic policy against China.

Since Ferdinand Marcos Jnr became president of the Philippines in June 2022, there has been a significant shift in the country's foreign policy orientation with a departure from the neutral policy pursued by the previous government led by former

president Rodrigo Duterte.

The new anti-China orientation of the current Philippine government has been strongly influenced by the U.S..

This was evident when President Marcos Jnr announced in 2023 that the U.S. would be granted access to four additional military bases, bringing the total number of Philippine bases used by the U.S. to nine.

Two of the new sites are located just across from Taiwan and southern China.

The trilateral summit between the U.S., the Philippines, and Japan on April 11 announced a further advance of the U.S. strategy: joint naval exercises in the South China Sea, which aim to whip up tensions between the Philippines and China.

The shift in the Philippines' foreign policy has been strongly criticized by the country's former president, Duterte, who has warned that his country risks being used as a pawn in a potential U.S.-led hot war on China.

Duterte said: "The Americans are the ones pushing the Philippine government to go out there and find a quarrel and eventually maybe start a war ... But I do not think that America will die for us ... I would tell the Americans, you have so many ships, so you do not need my island as a launching pad or as a launching deck for you."

It is important to understand these developments take place in the wider context of U.S. aggression against China. The U.S. already surrounds China with around 400 military bases. The U.S.'s main foreign policy goal now, and for at least the next decade, is to preserve U.S. global hegemony by stopping the peaceful rise of China.

The U.S. claims that its actions are "defensive" and designed to preserve the "status quo" in the region. These claims turn reality on its head.

The South China Sea is 12,000 kilometres away from the U.S. Countries in the region would be able to discuss and resolve their disputes peacefully without imperialist meddling from Washington.

The U.S. administration has appointed itself the world's "policeman" and is attempting to stoke division in the Asia-Pacific and create tensions through militaristic interference.

The U.S.'s claim that confronting China in the South China Sea is necessary to defend its own "national security" is nonsensical. China poses no "threat" to the U.S. — Beijing is not conducting naval exercises off the coast of California and has no military bases surrounding the U.S.

The U.S. push for an 'Asian Nato'

The U.S. wants its global North allies to join its military build-up against China. The founding of the Aukus military alliance between the U.S., Britain, and Australia in 2021 was a significant advance in that project.

The announcement that Aukus is now seeking new members, chiefly the former colonial power Japan, is an ominous development.

Many analysts are warning that the U.S.'s plans to expand Aukus are an attempt to create an "Asian Nato," pointing to the risk that Aukus could emulate NATO's role in Europe, which has intentionally provoked a devastating proxy war in Ukraine with the goal of "weakening Russia."

The Aukus pact promotes nuclear proliferation. The agreement involves the U.S. and Britain transferring tons of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium to Australia, a non-nuclear state. This breaches The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT).

The plan to invite Japan into Aukus threatens to escalate Japanese militarism and encourage Japan to move even further away from its post-War World II pacifist constitution.

In 2022 there was a significant shift in Japan's foreign policy when it was announced that the country's military spending would be increased to 2 percent of GDP by 2027, after decades of being capped at 1 percent.

This increase in military spending is claimed to be necessary to provide the funds for Japan to buy cruise missiles from the U.S. that are capable of hitting North Korea and parts of China.

An imperialist clique targeting China

It is particularly grotesque that the U.S. is proposing that Japan, a country with a shameful colonial history of invading and subjugating China in the 19th and 20th centuries, joins a military alliance aimed at stopping the peaceful development of China.

Japan has committed many brutal atrocities in China. In World War II Japan murdered millions of Chinese people and carried out mass rapes of women and girls.

Britain, already a member of Aukus, has its own appalling colonial history. Britain infamously launched two opium wars against China, forcing it to import and legalize drugs against its government's will.

Britain invaded and colonized Hong Kong in 1841 and then ruled it with an iron fist for 156 years.

Unlike Japan, Britain, and the U.S., China's remarkable rise over the past 70 years has not been achieved through invasions, colonialism, slavery, and genocide but through peaceful means.

It is precisely this peaceful development of China that the U.S. is determined to stop.

The stepping up of Washington's militarised aggression in the Asia-Pacific takes place in the context of the U.S.'s failures to compete with China economically.

The U.S. has not been able to raise its own rate of growth nor slow down China's through its cold war measures. China's economy is currently growing at a rate two-and-a-half times faster than that of the U.S..

To compensate for its relative economic decline, the U.S. is doubling down on military aggression, the sphere in which the U.S. remains globally dominant.

The U.S.'s increasing militarization of the Asia-Pacific is a key component of Washington's global war drive. It should be vigorously opposed by all those who want to stop the U.S. dragging everyone into another world war.

Source: [Morning Star](#)

