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AUKUS
A Look Back at the First Analyses

EDITED BY
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PACIFIC FORUM

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SPECIAL REPORT

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Pacific Forum

Based in Honolulu, the Pacific Forum (www.pacforum.org) is a foreign policy research institute focused on the Asia-Pacific Region. Founded in 1975, the Pacific Forum collaborates with a broad network of research institutes from around the Pacific Rim, drawing on Asian perspectives and disseminating project findings and recommendations to global leaders, governments, and members of the public throughout the region. The Forum's programs encompass current and emerging political, security, economic, and maritime policy issues, and works to help stimulate cooperative policies through rigorous research, analyses and dialogues.

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INTRODUCTION

Announced just over a year ago on Sept. 15, 2021, the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security partnership promised work on two interrelated lines of effort between the three allies. One entailed providing Australia with a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. The other involved cooperation on developing and providing joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the region, including in cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technologies, undersea capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic systems, electronic warfare, and information sharing.

AUKUS sent shockwaves across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. Some praised the new partnership, explaining that it would tighten the US hub-and-spokes alliance system and stand as a powerful deterrent to China's new assertiveness in the region. Others—with the People's Republic of China in the lead—were much less enthusiastic, even outright critical, insisting that it would create unnecessary tensions, possibly leading to arms races or crises, and undermine nonproliferation norms and rules. France was also deeply upset because AUKUS immediately led to Australia's cancellation of a French-Australian submarine deal, without notice.

In the days, weeks, and months that followed the AUKUS announcement, the Pacific Forum published, via its *PacNet Commentary* series, several preliminary analyses on the trilateral partnership, each reflecting a specific national perspective from throughout the Indo-Pacific and beyond. One year later, and as implementation of the AUKUS partnership remains ongoing, we have compiled these analyses into a Pacific Forum *Issues & Insights* volume.

It is our hope that these publications will provide a basis for further study and additional recommendations.

David Santoro and Rob York
September 19, 2022

PACNET

AFTER THE SHOCK: FRANCE, AMERICA, AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

BY BRUNO TERTRAIS

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An earlier version of this article was published for L'Institut Montaigne. It has been edited and translated from French.

It felt like an earthquake. This isn't too strong a word to describe the French feeling last week, when the rumor began spreading that the United States and Australia were about to announce a new strategic partnership to replace the cooperation that Paris and Canberra had worked hard to build over the past 10 years.

The French submarine contract was in trouble, but no one seemed to know that the United States had been cooking up an alternative option with the Australian government, and that negotiations had begun months ago. There is no hint of that in the Joint Communiqué issued by Paris and Canberra on the occasion of the first foreign affairs-defense ministerial meeting, which took place Aug. 30 and celebrated the strength of France-Australia cooperation. US strategists like to talk about the "shock and awe" strategy. Typically, though, this is to bomb an adversary.

To be sure, the announcement of the new trilateral Indo-Pacific security partnership is the result of both well-calculated strategic considerations, and US and UK political expediency. Beneath the crude new acronym "AUKUS" (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) lies a desire to up the ante in military and technological cooperation between the three countries to counter Chinese ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.

A Strong Signal from the Anglosphere

AUKUS signals the rise of the Anglosphere, which in France is often, and wrongly, referred to as "Anglo-Saxon." Its centrality is well-known, particularly in the discreet framework of intelligence exchanges within the Five Eyes Club (with Canada and New Zealand). AUKUS hurts the French, but there is a logic to it and it makes sense for a senior US official to claim that the United States has "no better allies than the United Kingdom and Australia." Just a few days ago, Canberra, Wellington, and Washington commemorated the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) treaty with great enthusiasm. As for London, its participation in AUKUS is in line with its new post-Brexit Global Britain strategy.

Make no mistake, however: There will be a price to pay. How can France now take seriously the Biden administration's desire for greater European involvement in the Indo-Pacific, and for more consultation and coordination among allies over China? French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Defense Minister Florence Parly are right to talk about a "lack of consistency." Note that the US announcement was made on the same day that the European Union published its strategy for the Indo-Pacific. Talk about good timing!

For France, the shock is similar to the one it felt after the US abandonment of August 2013, when President Obama reversed its decision to conduct a strike on Syria. The United States may have felt the same 10 years earlier, when in 2003 Paris decided not to support Washington at the United Nations Security Council over its planned intervention in Iraq.

Context matters. The AUKUS announcement comes only weeks after another crisis of confidence, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, which proceeded with poor coordination with allies. French President Emmanuel Macron now feels vindicated, having argued for months that NATO is in a critical state. The traditional French narrative about America's unreliability, then, is validated. In any case, these are

Paris' lines. Per Le Drian and Parly, Thursday's event "only heightens the need to raise loud and clear the issue of European strategic autonomy." This is the French mindset as Paris is getting ready to assume the presidency of the European Union.

A Crushing Blow for France-Australia Cooperation

The "contract of the century" for 12 Shortfin Barracuda submarines—an adaptation to Australian needs of the French Barracuda—was worth 35 billion euros ($41 billion), of which 8 to 9 billion would have gone to the Naval Group (whose largest shareholder is the government, at 60%). The contract, signed in 2016, was already well underway and several hundred people were working on it, including many Australians in Cherbourg.

Implementation was difficult, but no one in France thought that Washington would offer Canberra an alternative, first because the major US defense contractor Lockheed Martin was involved and second because the United States does not traditionally sell nuclear-powered submarines.

Yet the American offer goes beyond this. Not only does the offer include submarines, but these submarines will also be armed with Tomahawk missiles, and the deal will proceed within the framework of a major trilateral cooperation on defense and security technologies. It is an attractive offer, especially given the regional security environment, which has worsened since the early 2010s. That's why, for example, the Labor Party can now accept nuclear propulsion technology, which provides a real military advantage both in terms of durability and patrol discretion.

For France, the submarine contract was part of a broader logic: It was about building a long-term strategic relationship, a marriage for 50 years, as the French used to call it. Many had worked hard to lay the groundwork for this, including through informal dialogue between government officials and experts.

This union, however, was cancelled before it was consummated, hence the harsh official reaction, describing Canberra's decision as being "contrary to the letter and spirit of the cooperation that prevailed between France and Australia." This relationship was meant to be one of the pillars of France's strategy in the Indo-Pacific, which was walking on two legs, one Australian, and the other Indian (notably via the Rafale contract). The only advantage for Paris now is that its strategy for the region will be no longer be perceived as simply following the United States' lead (which was never the case).

Nonproliferation Undermined

Nuclear propulsion has advantages, but it is a sensitive technology. That's why, until now, no nuclear-armed state has sold it to a non-nuclear-armed state. Only six countries possess such technology, the five nuclear-armed states "recognized" by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), plus India. France has never sold such technology, despite requests (from Brazil, for instance) and significantly, back in the early 2010s, Australia did not ask for it. The United States has now broken this taboo. Imagine Washington's reaction had it been France!

Even with access to this technology, Australia will likely not able to reproduce it. There will be a "black box," which will remain closed to Canberra.

There is also no risk of nuclear proliferation. Still, the reactors will probably use highly enriched uranium (HEU), a technology used by the Americans (and the British), unlike the French, who have chosen the more proliferation-resistant low-enriched uranium (LEU) option. Moreover, this technology could revive the debate in Australia about the need for a civilian or even dual (civilian and military) nuclear program.

The timing is also bad because of the next review conference of the NPT, scheduled for January 2022. HEU escapes international controls when it is used for propulsion alone; for practical reasons, because it is difficult to imagine foreign inspectors checking the rear part of national submarines. It is therefore possible, in theory, to remove HEU from controlled facilities to officially use it for nuclear propulsion. Iran could do this, for example. Moreover, other states could now sell similar propulsion reactors to non-nuclear-armed states, arguing that there is now a precedent.

The Way Forward

France should look forward. It should quickly settle the trade dispute and separate it from the unavoidable overhaul of its strategy for the Indo-Pacific. France is and will remain an important player in the region. Australia, for its part, will still need its "Pacific neighbor." More importantly, no one wants China to exploit and sharpen the differences between Western countries. Hence the importance, for example, to continue not only official but also "track 2" (experts) and "track 1.5" (officials and experts) France-Australia conversations.

Over the next 18 months, the three AUKUS countries will have to answer important questions. Will France be allowed to join AUKUS periodically, for some projects or operations? Or will France be forced to seek greater alignment with Germany (in Europe) and Japan (in Asia), ironically its two competitors for the submarine contract with Australia?

France, too, will need to reflect on this experience, which will have major implications for its industrial and strategic interests. Was Paris just too trustful of its allies? Was it naïve? For now, however, Paris should steer clear of drawing hasty conclusions. The Biden administration is not the Trump administration. The latter did not care much for its allies. The former does, though not for all of them.

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HOW AUKUS ADVANCES AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO COLLECTIVE DEFENSE

BY ASHLEY TOWNSHEND

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An earlier version of this article was published at The Strategist.

Canberra's announcement that it will acquire nuclear-powered submarines through its new defense pact with London and Washington, AUKUS, has generated considerable scrutiny. The decision to expand the basing and rotational presence of US forces in Australia has added to the heat. But in the breathless commentary on these moves, what they tell us about Australia's foreign and defense policy has been largely misunderstood.

These announcements don't signal a new direction in Australian strategic policy or a reorientation of our alignment preferences away from the region.

To the contrary, they mark an acceleration of Australia's push to assume a larger and more active geostrategic role in upholding a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific—both by acquiring advanced military and defense industrial capabilities and by supporting the strongest possible US security presence in our region, including through longstanding efforts to deepen high-end military integration between Australia and the United States.

The strategy behind these announcements isn't new either. It's articulated in Australia's 2017 foreign policy white paper and 2020 defense strategic update. Underscored by deep anxieties over China's growing power and assertiveness, and a clear-eyed assessment of America's eroding regional military position, these documents recognize that Washington can no longer defend the Indo-Pacific strategic order by itself. Together, they lay out the case for a stronger Australia and our pursuit of a collective regional strategy to supplement America's position and constrain Chinese power.

Look at the language. The white paper talks about "building a more capable, agile and potent Australian Defence Force" and working collectively with the United States and like-minded partners to "limit the exercise of coercive power" and to "support a balance in the region [favorable] to our interests." The defense update says that "Australia [will] take greater responsibility for our own security" by growing our "self-reliant ability to deliver deterrence effects," enhancing "the lethality of the ADF for … high-intensity operations," and being more capable of "support[ing] the United States and other partners" in our region "if deterrence measures fail" and "Australia's national interests are engaged."

Both documents call for broadening and deepening Australia's cooperation with the US, including by enhancing force posture initiatives and military interoperability and by "selectively increasing interdependence with the US and other partners" to assure our shared defense industrial, munitions and logistics supply chains.

Those surprised by Australia's decisions haven't been paying attention.

Of course, there is—or should be—much more to Australia's Indo-Pacific strategy than this high-end alliance integration agenda. Shaping our strategic environment, deepening our regional partnerships and building our influence by supporting regional countries' own priorities are critical. Some of these elements are progressing well, like our security networking with Japan, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Singapore. Others are worryingly underdone, such as our investment in diplomacy, economic engagement, and development assistance in Southeast Asia.

But just because these issues and partnerships weren't at the center of last week's announcements doesn't

mean AUKUS or the US alliance are displacing the other elements of our strategy.

Indeed, it's worth remembering that the only revolution last week was Washington's once-a-century decision to share its submarine nuclear-propulsion technology with an ally—something Canberra has quietly wanted for years, and a decisive capability upgrade, but not a sea-change in the trajectory of Australian strategy.

So why the hype about a purported Anglospheric pivot and new dependency on the alliance?

One explanation lies in the confusing pomp and ceremony that accompanied the made-for-television AUKUS announcement. Amid the flags and mawkish talk of a "forever partnership," it looked very much like a new alliance and conjured unhelpful images of English-speaking nations throwing their weight around the Indo-Pacific.

But AUKUS is neither an alliance nor a vehicle for strategic policy coordination. It's basically a memorandum of understanding for sharing advanced technology, defense industrial capabilities, and technical know-how—one that will hopefully build on the expanded US national technology and industrial base that has struggled to break down export controls between the US and Australia. If effective, it should provide two-way benefits akin to a defense free-trade zone, empowering Australia's pursuit of cutting-edge capabilities and filtering Australian innovation into US (and UK) defense projects—the kind of defense industrial integration Canberra has wanted for some time.

This raises a second reason for heightened concern: the risk that we will become gravely reliant on US technology by buying nuclear-powered submarines and other new kit. It's true that co-developing a boat with the US and UK will require their support to design, build, and service it. But this was also true of the French submarine, which was to be outfitted with US weapons and sensors.

More to the point, the ADF is already irreversibly dependent on American technology. The engines on our P-8A anti-submarine warfare aircraft (and most others) are maintained in the US, our F-35s and EA-18G Growlers rely on sensitive US data, most of our munitions are made in America, and our entire military depends on US satellites and other systems to talk to itself. An AUKUS-built submarine hardly poses a new problem.

Nor is it the case that buying US technology will necessarily leave us vulnerable to abandonment or entrapment. The suggestion that America must be prepared to fight for primacy in Asia to keep servicing our submarines is far-fetched to say the least. On the flipside, those who argue Australia's pursuit of nuclear-powered submarines will bind us to US war plans over Taiwan fail to appreciate how hard that would be in practice. We're not doing freedom-of-navigation patrols now, despite persistent US requests.

Indeed, one reason Washington has been reluctant to share nuclear-propulsion and other exquisite technology with allies is precisely because such capabilities provide independent options, making allies potentially less pliant. Australia currently enjoys, and must protect, a high degree of self-reliance within the alliance. Rather than jeopardizing that, AUKUS could support the establishment of deep maintenance and sustainment facilities for the new submarines in Australia, along with a "sovereign guided weapons and explosive ordnance enterprise" so that we can build high-end munitions, thereby increasing our sovereign industrial capabilities. This may not be a given, and Canberra must push for it. But it's simply not true that AUKUS is categorically riskier or all one-way in a dependency sense.

A final cause of concern relates to the Australia-US decision to advance new air, land and sea force-posture initiatives on Australian soil, which many worry will turn us into a US military outpost. In addition to increasing the already high number of US warplanes rotating through Australia, the real significance of this decision will be the establishment of a combined maritime logistics, sustainment, and maintenance facility. This will enable Australian, US, and other allied warships and submarines to rotate through Western Australia on a more regular basis, and undertake deeper refurbishment work there, allowing for expanded

operations and more time spent in the Indo-Pacific—which is particularly important given that American dry-dock and maintenance facilities are strained and distant.

These decisions aren't to be taken lightly and do position Australia to be a staging post for US power projection and military operations. But they are not new choices. They represent sovereign decisions expanded by Canberra with bipartisan support ever since Prime Minister Julia Gillard launched the 2011 Australia-US force posture initiatives. And they get us back to the core purpose of Australia's increasingly active defense strategy: sustaining the strongest possible US military presence in the region and playing a more significant collective defense role ourselves.

Critics of AUKUS and the alliance need to be more responsible. Australia is about to acquire one of the world's most potent military capabilities because of the alliance and Washington's readiness to empower our armed forces. The capability itself is a big deal—lethal and high-endurance submarines are the best way to deter Chinese aggression. But in form the AUKUS deal is little different from the way we've got US defense technology in the past, save for the fact that we now have an opportunity for more transfers of technology and technical know-how to Australia. Negotiating appropriate terms and conditions for this pact is crucial. But we must remember that AUKUS and the new force posture initiatives aren't a break with the past—they're part of our ongoing push to accelerate Australia's contribution to collective defense in the region.

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AFTER AUKUS, "PRESENT AT THE CREATION" IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY BRAD GLOSSERMAN

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For more from this author, visit his recent chapter of Comparative Connections.

Announcement of the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) "enhanced trilateral security partnership" has generated a lot of attention—good and bad. Most has focused on the decision to provide US nuclear propulsion technology for submarines to Australia; it's a historic move for sure, but it's only part of the AUKUS agreement. More important still is fitting AUKUS within the larger mosaic of Indo-Pacific security. This could be—should be—the beginning of a deep, structural modernization of regional security architecture, akin to the emergence of the trans-Atlantic community after World War II.

The submarines (and their contracts) have dominated discussion of AUKUS. They're important—they transform Australia's undersea capabilities, shift strategic calculations, raise nonproliferation issues, and mark a genuinely historic technology transfer—but the deal is much more than that. It includes munitions, as well as cooperation in other areas: cybersecurity, space, and new technologies like artificial intelligence. The initiative will, the three leaders declared, "foster deeper integration of security and defense-related science, technology, industrial bases, and supply chains. And … significantly deepen cooperation on a range of security and defense capabilities."

The following week, President Biden hosted the first in-person Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) leaders' summit. The four leaders—from the US, Japan, Australia, and India—reiterated their commitment to "a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond."

While attention has focused on Quad's military dimension—and the exercises are important – this meeting, like the virtual summit in March, devoted its energy to nonmilitary components. The leaders pledged to continue their cooperation in health security, and related vaccine diplomacy, plus climate change and new technologies, as well as in cyberspace, infrastructure development, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Significantly, the emphasis is on the provision of public goods, not merely forging an "anti-China coalition."

The Quad language echoes the declarations issued after the G7, US-NATO, and US-EU summits that were held in June. Each noted sharpening geopolitical competition with China and endorsed a wider spectrum of engagement, with emphasis on climate, vaccine diplomacy, and technology, as well as infrastructure development, embodied by the Build Back Better World Initiative. It sure looks like the Biden team has a template that they are using for regional engagement, whatever the forum.

Bilateral alliance modernization efforts are underway as well. After the AUKUS meeting, senior defense and foreign affairs officials held the US-Australia Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN), which announced a slew of initiatives to enhance force posture cooperation and alliance integration. When completed, they will significantly improve alliance defense and deterrence capabilities.

The US and Japan and the US and the ROK held their own "2+2" meetings in the spring. Coming so early into the new US administration, both were designed to reaffirm the governments' commitment to their respective alliances and a warmup for more systematic modernization efforts that would follow once the Biden administration got its team in place and concluded its policy reviews. Those fine intentions were repeated when the two alliance leaders,

Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, met Biden during their respective visits to the White House. (The schedule may be delayed given the change in administration in Tokyo and Korea's national elections next spring.)

The weave is thickening. Alliances are modernizing, allies are developing more robust ties between themselves, and all are beginning to institutionalize ties with nonalliance partners, such as India. Extra-regional powers are increasingly engaged. In addition to its role in AUKUS, the British Royal Navy has announced that it will station two new patrol vessels in the Indo-Pacific region for "at least the next five years." As a senior US official explained on background, the deal will "link Europe and particularly Great Britain more closely with our strategic pursuits in the region as a whole." Several European nations have unveiled Indo-Pacific strategies; the EU's effort was overshadowed by the AUKUS tempest. Once it gets over its anger at the submarine deal, France will be a factor; it has a genuine regional presence and a real role to play in security affairs.

Geographic expansion is complemented by efforts to broaden cooperation and better compete in geopolitics, evident from the establishment of vaccine, climate and technology working groups in almost every forum, to extensive cooperation on cybersecurity, space, supply chains, and infrastructure development. Martijn Rasser, a technology expert at CNAS, was describing the Quad's efforts but he could have been speaking more generally when he said they mark "a major step in achieving a comprehensive strategic technology partnership," adding that "by also emphasizing principles rooted in shared values, the Quad countries are shaping the contours of a new techno-democratic statecraft."

Together, this will force a rethink of regional defense and deterrence. The US and its partners will acquire new capabilities, which will demand a recalibration of roles and responsibilities. The US-Australia alliance is a model and other institutions will have to change to keep pace. So will the rhetoric. I continue to believe that we should abandon the phrase "extended deterrence" and instead talk about networked, layered, or cooperative deterrence. Whatever the phrase, the concept is the same: the more that deterrence is integrated among allies and partners, the less it will be "extended." (As always, this refers only to deterrence broadly; the US will continue to extend its nuclear deterrent.)

There will be difficulties. China is going ballistic: Literally, by threatening Australia with nuclear attacks, and rhetorically, with blistering commentary. Even more worrisome is the prospect of actions to show that Beijing is not intimidated and to warn other governments that they should not consider emulating Canberra. The record number of Chinese military aircraft that entered Taiwan's air defense identification zone in recent days is one such tactic. Regional tensions may well rise in the interim.

Southeast Asian governments are troubled by that possibility, and some experts, quietly, credit the observation of Chinese Ambassador to the US Qin Gang that "security affairs of the Asia-Pacific should be jointly decided by people in the region and not dominated by the Anglo-Saxons." Ironically, the prospect of a new "Caucasian Club" in the region could spur still more for reform, such as expanding the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing arrangement, which would entice Tokyo and Paris.

The organization, coordination, and (perhaps) eventual integration of these many efforts will be difficult. There are many moving parts and the number continues to expand. There is no forum that could begin the task of making sense of it all—and any effort to create one will make China's reaction to AUKUS look like a warmup.

Cumulatively, momentum is gathering for a transformation in Indo-Pacific security. Regional governments are adopting more comprehensive strategies, in which security is being defined more broadly and is drawing in a wider array of actors. A key element is trade, and the US failure to reconsider membership in CPTPP is a huge shortcoming. It is difficult, if not impossible, to predict the eventual outcome, but this moment is rich in opportunity—and risks.

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NEW ZEALAND AND AUKUS: AFFECTED WITHOUT BEING INCLUDED

BY ROBERT AYSON

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Seventy years ago Australia and New Zealand cut a deal with the United States. In exchange for accepting Washington's generous peace agreement with Tokyo while they were still concerned about Japan's intentions, Canberra and Wellington got a security treaty. A side-deal, at America's insistence, was that the new alliance would not include the United Kingdom. Even the legendary UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had returned to 10 Downing Street before the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (or ANZUS) went into effect, was unable to get the United Kingdom added to the threesome.

In 2021 the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security pact appears to have turned the tables. This time the United Kingdom is one of three, alongside Australia and the United States, and it is New Zealand's turn to be left out. As the feelings of surprise wear off, some New Zealand commentators have found an easy explanation for their country's exclusion. AUKUS means that Australia was in line to get nuclear-propelled submarines. New Zealand couldn't belong because of its nuclear-free policy, which includes propulsion in addition to weapons.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appeared to confirm this hypothesis. While signalling her government's support for "the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region," she also confirmed that nuclear-powered Australian submarines would not be permitted to operate in New Zealand's internal waters (i.e., within the 12-nautical-mile zone).

But there are other, more convincing explanations. First, New Zealand isn't in the submarine operating game. When (and if) the new subsurface vessels arrive, they will join a list of Australian commitments to advanced maritime combat capabilities for which New Zealand has no equivalents. The existing (conventionally propelled) Collins Class submarines, Air Warfare Destroyers, and Joint Strike Fighters are three other examples of this long-standing trend. New Zealand isn't in the same capability league that Australia is set to play in with its two AUKUS partners. From a military technological standpoint, it would have made more sense to include Japan or the Republic of Korea than to contemplate a place for New Zealand.

Second, AUKUS will enhance Australia's already extensive military integration with US forces. That's a position only a very active ally of the United States could occupy. For the United Kingdom, another close US ally, AUKUS helps build London's Indo-Pacific and trans-Atlantic credentials after Brexit. It's true that New Zealand has been enjoying much warmer security relations with Washington since deploying forces to Afghanistan after 9/11. There is the Five Eyes relationship as well. But formal ANZUS alliance relations between the United States and New Zealand have been suspended for more than three decades.

Third, AUKUS represents an elevated commitment among its three members, and especially between the United States and Australia, to confront China's growing power in maritime East Asia. Any nuclear-powered submarines based in Australia, whether leased or owned by Canberra, will be an intrinsic part of a US-led order of battle for missions focused on China's People's Liberation Army. Concerns about China's impact on regional stability have been growing in New Zealand's national security community for much of the past decade. But Wellington still wants some separation from US-led efforts to treat China as an adversary, and from Canberra's most strident criticisms of Beijing.

AUKUS would be a step too far in that context. But that's still where the rub will hit New Zealand. Since

the ANZUS crisis with Washington in the mid-1980s, governments in Wellington have come to see Australia as New Zealand's *one and only* formal military ally. Their major statements of defense policy routinely include a commitment to respond should Australia come under armed attack. This does not mean that wherever Australia goes, New Zealand is bound to follow, but it does mean that Australia's defense policy has an oversized impact on New Zealand's choices.

Even before any new submarines arrive on the other side of the Tasman Sea (and they could be nearly two decades away), AUKUS could bring more of the US competition with China closer to New Zealand's neck of the woods. There will be a greater presence of US warfighting platforms and personnel at Australian bases and ports. There is likely to be an even deeper integration of warning and strategic intelligence systems. More Australian targets are likely to feature in China's war plans. Year by year New Zealand's alliance commitment to the defense of Australia will carry bigger implications.

Wellington's public expressions of alliance unity across the Tasman don't entertain coming to Australia's aid in a great power conflict further north. But this doesn't necessarily forestall the possibility of an unwanted entanglement. When Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison was in Queenstown for a May summit with Ardern, he was asked what his government would expect from New Zealand if Australia got caught up in a war over the South China Sea or Taiwan. He indicated the answer lay in the ANZUS Treaty.

Australia's latest partnership may give New Zealand's extra reason to be concerned about Canberra's approach to China in East Asian hotspots. Barely a day after the AUKUS announcement, Australia's Foreign and Defence Ministers were in Washington for their annual AUSMIN meeting with US counterparts. The resulting statement broke new ground for US-Australian expressions of support for Taiwan. In a television interview conducted while he was still in Washington, and which was reported in one of New Zealand's leading newspapers, Peter Dutton intimated that Australia would follow the lead of its US ally in the event that China sought to absorb Taiwan.

A few days later, New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs Nanaia Mahuta refused to be drawn in by a New Zealand journalist on Taiwan hypotheticals involving China, the United States, and Australia. But she emphasised New Zealand's close relationships with traditional partners and noted that New Zealand vessels were presently exercising in East Asian waters. In a later write up, the New Zealand Defence Force explained that it had been operating "in the South East Asia region for decades as part of bilateral and regional defence engagement," including with its partners in the [50-year-old] Five Power Defence Arrangements. But this was no ordinary trip. The NZDF also indicated that New Zealand forces had been working "off Guam" alongside the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group led by the (conventionally powered) HMS Queen Elizabeth and had been exercising and training with US carrier battle groups led by the *nuclear*-propelled USS Ronald Reagan and USS Carl Vinson).

How do you stay connected but retain autonomy? Ardern's government argues that New Zealand sees AUKUS through a "Pacific" lens, intimating some separation from the great power competition which the new partnership intensifies. While New Zealand now refers to its wider region in Indo-Pacific terms, Ardern's definitive speech on the subject emphasized inclusiveness, multilateralism, and regional cooperation. But Wellington doesn't get to write the region's overall narrative. All manner of interpretations and connections will be made by others when the atmosphere is feverish. Bit by bit, New Zealand is getting closer to the flame. It doesn't have to be a member to be affected by the bow waves that are likely to grow now that AUKUS is here.

PACNET

FOLD, CALL, OR RAISE? CHINA'S POTENTIAL REACTIONS TO AUKUS

BY YUN SUN

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Over a month has passed since the announcement of the defense cooperation agreement among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS). While the deal includes cooperation in a variety of areas, the most eye-catching aspect of the cooperation is the sale of nuclear-powered submarines, a crown jewel of US military technology, to Australia. Although AUKUS does not mention China directly, it is well-understood that China motivated the formation of this partnership. Given the scope of AUKUS and its relatively long implementation timeframe, there are four ways to analyze Chinese reactions: threat assessment, nuclear nonproliferation, potential responses, and the regional arms race.

The threat assessment

The Chinese worry about Australia obtaining nuclear-powered submarines, but do not consider the threat urgent. They are concerned by the impact such submarines could introduce to China's maritime domains, especially in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. Beijing, therefore, has focused on the deal's geopolitical impact and attacked AUKUS, arguing that it is the product of a "Cold War mentality" among Canberra, London, and Washington and that it will undermine regional security and stability. Some have equated AUKUS with an "Asian version of NATO," with the potential to expand to include other like-minded countries.

Despite the severity of the challenge, there is also an impulse in Beijing to "wait and see" as to its real impact, as the details remain elusive and consultations will take time. The Chinese are not yet clear whether the submarines will be built, or whether they will come from retired US fleet. In addition, Beijing believes that AUKUS might be scrapped by future political transitions in the Australian government, especially considering its high financial and strategic costs. The fact that three former Australian prime ministers have expressed varying reactions to AUKUS leaves China with a sense of hope that this may not be a done deal.

Impact on proliferation

The most stringent Chinese attacks on AUKUS have focused on its implications for nonproliferation. The Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna made a statement on Sept. 16 on the deal's "undisguised nuclear proliferation activities." He called for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to publicly condemn AUKUS, which, he claimed, demonstrates the "double standard" the United States and United Kingdom pursue in nuclear exports. According to a prominent Chinese arms control expert, director of the Arms Control Center at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) Guo Xiaobing, AUKUS violates the mission and core obligations of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in five different ways:

- It contributes to the proliferation of a delivery system for weapons of mass destruction.
- It contributes to the proliferation of fissile materials that could be used to make nuclear weapons.
- It has the potential to lead to the proliferation of uranium enrichment technologies.
- It undermines the NPT because it sets a bad precedent.
- It could fuel a regional arms race.

To be sure, AUKUS does not violate the NPT. In the IAEA Safeguard Glossary (2001 Edition), section 2.14, on the use of nuclear material in a non-

proscribed military activity which does not require the application of IAEA safeguards, it is stipulated that "[n]uclear material covered by a comprehensive safeguards agreement may be withdrawn from IAEA safeguards should the State decide to use it for such purposes, e.g. *for the propulsion of naval vessels*" (emphasis added). This, in other words, excludes nuclear-powered submarines from IAEA safeguarding requirements. As such, then, China's attack on AUKUS is that it violates the spirit of the NPT, but not its letter.

Potential responses

Given the impact of AUKUS is not immediate, Chinese reactions will take time to manifest. At present, China appears to prioritize understanding the scope and details of AUKUS and attacking its legitimacy for geopolitical and nonproliferation reasons. Still, in retaliation, some have proposed additional economic sanctions on Australia through trade. Hu Xijin, chief editor at *Global Times* called for "no mercy" to Australia if Canberra dares to "assume it has acquired the ability to intimidate China now that it has nuclear submarines and strike missies." He has also proposed that China should "kill the chicken to scare the monkey" if Australia takes any aggressive military moves. In the event of perceived attacks from Australia, this could mean that China will retaliate militarily.

The most important challenge for China

For Chinese strategic thinkers, the real danger and core challenge of AUKUS (and the United States' overall coalition-building in the region) lies in the intensification of the arms race in the Indo-Pacific. Although Beijing considers that the goal of its military buildup is to offset, or undermine US military dominance in the region, rather than targeting any regional countries, Chinese officials seem to be coming to the painful realization that their military modernization has led regional players to seek new (or more) weapons. Plainly, Beijing is realizing that its actions have contributed to a regional arms race. What's more troubling for China is that this arms race is between China on one side and the United States and its allies and partners on the other. Beijing, then, must counter multiple countries at the same time.

Equally upsetting for China is that this arms race is created, fueled, and supplied by the United States. Starting with nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, China believes that the United States will receive—and deliver on—rising demands from allies and partners in the region for newer and more advanced weapon systems, even if they are not nuclear-powered submarines; South Korea, for one, has made this request for a decade.

Beijing must decide if it should "fold," "call," or "raise." "Calling" or to "raising" vividly reminds China of the fall of the Soviet Union, and how Moscow exhausted its resources in its arms race with the United States. "Folding" does not appear to be an option—Beijing is unlikely to give up its regional ambitions. Beijing could call for arms control dialogues, but that will require compromises, and it is unclear that there is an appetite for this in China at the moment. Still, AUKUS might force China to make tough decisions.

PACNET

WHAT AUKUS MEANS FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY

BY MARIE JOURDAIN

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The Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) security pact is a European—not just French—issue. While the canceled contract with Australia was not about European submarines, and the strategic partnership with Australia was not with the European Union, EU leaders and heads of European states did more than sympathize with the French. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borell stated that EU member states consider AUKUS as "affecting the European Union as a whole." Michael Roth, the German Secretary of State for European affairs, called it a "wake-up call for everyone in the EU" and German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass states the manner in which it was established was "irritating and disappointing, not only for France."

Why are Europeans worried?

First, the way AUKUS was negotiated and announced led to a crisis of confidence across the Atlantic because it suggests that Europe is no longer the US priority. For Europeans the problem is less the loss of a contract than the way France was treated. If this is how the United States acts with France, which has the strongest military in the European Union and its second-largest economy, what would keep Washington from doing the same with any other European country? Furthermore, if AUKUS confirms that the Indo-Pacific is now the priority for the United States, it implies Europe is no longer the strategic partner it once was. Not only did it sideline France—which is at the forefront of Europe's growing Indo-Pacific engagement—but it also did so on the very day the European Union released its own Indo-Pacific strategy.

Second, AUKUS directly impacts the security architecture in the Indo-Pacific, where the European Union has strategic interests and its own approach, as developed in its strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. AUKUS might complicate Europe's deepening cooperation with Australia, and European countries could be tempted to limit engagement with the Indo-Pacific more generally. The timing is especially poor now: New Caledonia's independence referendum is set for December and China favors independence to extend its influence in the South Pacific (a New Caledonia under Chinese influence could break the encirclement of China by isolating Australia, as demonstrated by Paul Charon and Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer).

One reason for the crisis might be the absence of political appointees in the Biden administration—no ambassadors in Europe, and Karen Donfried was only confirmed as assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs in late September—while the White House Indo-Pacific team is much more robust. The first tour of the secretaries of state and defense was in that region, the DoD's priority is China, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") in the Indo-Pacific has been revived. Even Biden's tour in Europe in June was remarkable in the way the communiqués of the G7, NATO, and EU-US Summit all mentioned China, paving the way for more awareness in Europe over this challenge.

Furthermore, Ukraine (a European, though not an EU, state) claimed to be "surprised" when the United States decided to permit the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. The withdrawal from Afghanistan was not a collective decision; the G7, EU, UN, and NATO secretary general called on the Americans to extend the Aug. 31 deadline to end evacuations, but the US response did not meet their expectations. Finally, the lifting of the travel ban (expected in November) was not announced until Sept. 20, despite high vaccination rates in Europe (while other

countries with lower vaccination rates have not been subject to such a ban).

AUKUS is the last straw. It is a wake-up call for Europeans, a clear sign that they must do more to safeguard their strategic interests. The US commitment to Article 5 remains iron-clad, but Europeans might wonder what the US stance would be if a crisis emerged in Europe's neighborhood, especially one that impacts Europe but not the United States. If the United States were to leave Iraq, what would the Europeans do, as the American armed forces ensure force protection? It is not surprising, then that there are debates over strategic autonomy.

What is the way forward?

First, Europe does not have a shared strategic vision. To form one will require some collective imagination: as Carnegie Europe's Judy Dempsey put it, "strategic autonomy is meaningless" if Europe does not "collectively suppose strategically." The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific was a significant step in enhancing a shared vision, and it will inform the future strategic compass (to be released in March 2022 under the French EU presidency). The European Union should agree on the key challenges ahead, and new EU special envoy to the Indo-Pacific Gabriele Visentin will be essential to foster consensus.

European states differ in their views of China, which the European Union has labelled a "systemic rival," "economic competitor," but also a "negotiating partner." It will not be easy to adopt a new EU strategy on China, but the recent report from the European parliament is a first contribution. It calls for engaging Beijing on matters of global concern—climate, health, and nuclear disarmament—but also defending core European values and interests, including engaging China in a human rights dialogue. It says no comprehensive agreement on investment can be reached while China sanctions European members of parliament and institutions—themselves a response to EU sanctions on individuals believed to be responsible for repression in Xinjiang—and even suggests an EU investment agreement with Taiwan.

Second, Europe must demonstrate that it is ready to be the global actor the European Union wants to be. This comes with a price, financial (increasing investments in defense spending or developing critical capabilities) and political. The endorsement of the EU strategy on the Indo-Pacific by the heads of states in October is significant in this regard. Implementing the strategy, including its security item (increasing naval deployments and port calls, for instance) will demonstrate to regional actors and the United States that Europe is a key Indo-Pacific actor, offering a unique approach it can implement.

Third, the European Union must engage in an open-eyed discussion with the United States on European security (not limited to European territory). Organizing the focused dialogue on security and defense (with an agenda item on the Indo-Pacific) as promised during the EU-US summit last June would be a welcome initiative. High-level consultations on the Indo-Pacific later this year, which were announced by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and HRVP Borell, would also give the United States an opportunity to encourage Europeans to step up. NATO will remain the cornerstone of European collective defense, but the United States has much to gain from a more credible, stronger European defense, as acknowledged by Biden in the joint communiqué with French President Emmanuel Macron. Significantly, the communique states that the United States "recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defense, that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to NATO."

Fourth, regaining trust with Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States is vital for further cooperation. How it happens will be critical. Opening avenues for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, between the European Union and the Quad (as considered in the EU strategy) would be a positive step. The fruitful meeting on Oct. 29 paves the way for France and the United States to restore this trust. This positive dynamic is yet to be found with Australia and the United Kingdom.

AUKUS will have lasting effects on European security. It revealed how much the strategic environment had changed and how the European Union's critical security partners intend to play in it.

Europeans must step up, not only to secure its own strategic interests, but also to participate in renewing a more balanced and more effective transatlantic relationship, including in the Indo-Pacific.

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WHAT AUKUS MEANS FOR MALAYSIA'S TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURE

BY ELINA NOOR

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When the leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced their new trilateral security partnership, AUKUS, on Sept. 15, Malaysia's prime minister released a statement expressing concern about its impact on stability in Southeast Asia. Malaysia's minister of foreign affairs and minister of defense separately issued a statement in support of the prime minister's position, underscoring the risks of a conventional and nuclear arms race, particularly in the South China Sea.

These statements are worth parsing out. At the outset, however, it is important to note that despite Malaysia's reservations about AUKUS, the government has continued to welcome deeper relations with all three countries in the pact, bilaterally and through multilateral platforms such as the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA). What's more, nuclear-powered submarines are only a piece of AUKUS. Of greater significance to Malaysia, and the rest of Southeast Asia, is the longer technological arc of AUKUS, which will reshape the regional strategic landscape.

The nuclear objection

Although uneasiness about AUKUS was downplayed as overhype or strategic naiveté, Putrajaya's position is an assertion of Malaysia's long-standing foreign policy. The underpinnings of AUKUS bring to bear Malaysia's stance on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, non-alignment, as well as its management of the South China Sea dispute all at once.

Some may have interpreted Prime Minister Ismail Sabri's statement that AUKUS could trigger a regional nuclear arms race as misunderstanding the nature of the deal. AUKUS, of course, involves nuclear-powered—rather than nuclear-armed—submarines. However, AUKUS marks the first time a non-nuclear weapon state would receive nuclear-powered submarines and, therefore, this raises uncertainties about proliferation and international legal safeguards. These questions, although distant for now, remain deeply unsettling for Malaysia given its position vis-à-vis the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. For example, Malaysia has tabled a United Nations resolution every year since the 1996 International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. The resolution underscores the ICJ's call for nuclear disarmament "in all aspects under strict and effective international control." Since AUKUS exploits a loophole in existing nuclear safeguards regimes, Malaysia believes that there is a risk that this will undermine the disarmament goal.

But even if Malaysia's nonproliferation concerns with AUKUS may be misplaced, Putrajaya is not alone in fearing that it will trigger a conventional arms race among the major powers in Southeast Asia's backyard—specifically, in the South China Sea. In looking at AUKUS, Indonesia's foreign ministry, for instance, voiced "deep concern" over the continuing arms race and power projection in the region. Even Singapore and Vietnam, which are often described in the media as welcoming of AUKUS, gave carefully crafted responses that suggest they are cautious. Both states stress the importance of regional peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity.

Partners and problems

Despite Malaysia's apprehension of AUKUS, Putrajaya has continued to welcome closer bilateral and multilateral ties with Washington, London, and Canberra, including in the areas of security and

defense. Only a month after AUKUS was announced, Malaysia's Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein affirmed the country's commitment to the 50-year-old FPDA, the overlap in FPDA and AUKUS partners notwithstanding. As part of the FPDA, Malaysia participated in a 10-day exercise, Bersama Gold 2021, involving 25 fighter jets, six support aircraft, six helicopters, 10 maritime ships, one submarine, and over 2,000 military personnel alongside Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom in the international waters of the South China Sea. Malaysia also hosted the FPDA's anniversary celebration and the FPDA defense minister's meeting following the exercise.

This proclivity to segment relationships based on issues and interests as well as the desire to preserve an expansive network of ties with competing major powers are a key element of Malaysia's foreign policy approach. This is true with AUKUS countries, as it is with China. Despite sustained harassment by Chinese vessels around Malaysian waters, the Malaysia-China relationship remains warm and friendly. Putrajaya has sought to sequester its problems with Beijing in the South China Sea from the economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions in the bilateral relationship. This separation of issues both between and within partnerships is a feature rather than a bug of Malaysia's foreign relations. It does not, however, always work perfectly.

Technological pathways

Accordingly, to retain geopolitical space for itself in the middle of deepening fissures between the United States and its allies on the one hand and China on the other, Putrajaya will need to intensify its diplomatic engagement with all sides proactively rather than reactively. This will require looking at trends which now appear to coalesce around technology as well as the governance and regulatory frameworks that underpin it. AUKUS underscores this point.

Nuclear submarine technology for Australia is but a "first initiative" under AUKUS. In the pipeline is trilateral collaboration on cyber, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum, and undersea capabilities. While the subtext for these plans may be defense technology competition with China, there are converging opportunities for cooperation between Malaysia and the three AUKUS countries that could empower Putrajaya in shaping the regional tech landscape. The most accessible, benign, and functional entry point for tech cooperation is the digital economy. Much of this is already underway in Malaysia, with ongoing industry partnerships as well as capacity-building and training efforts to improve cyber security and the operationalization of AI in various economic sectors.

There is one practical way Malaysia can carve out strategic agency while helping chart the region's tech-based future amid rival powers. The government could create either a coordinating ministerial or ambassadorial portfolio specific to the cross-cutting role of technology. This senior official would stitch together the country's technology interests in trade and economy, national security, and foreign affairs, and register Malaysia's perspectives on tech's rules of the road—from ethics and norms to standards and laws—in bilateral, multilateral, and multi-stakeholder discussions. Although the National Cyber Security Agency of Malaysia currently functions as the lead coordinating agency on cyber security matters, a senior official representing the country's cross-sectoral interests in broader emergent/emerging technologies could help streamline multi-faceted policies at the domestic level. Additionally, a single, senior point of contact could facilitate cooperation with AUKUS countries and others on new and unfolding technologies. In both substance and form, a coordinating minister or ambassador would recognize tech's reach across agency silos and the importance of a whole-of-government approach in contributing to the evolving governance frameworks of technology.

Several countries outside of Southeast Asia already have representatives in similar roles that reflect the ubiquity of technology transcending a range of agendas in government, industry, and civil society. Malaysia could benefit from that model. A focused and active Malaysia, along with its ASEAN counterparts, offering thought leadership on tech governance would not only design the country's digital future in a more comprehensive manner but also potentially help the region avoid the pitfalls of US-China decoupling.

Malaysia may not welcome AUKUS. But it should use it to shape rules of the road to ensure that Southeast Asia's tech and strategic landscape remains inclusive rather than exclusive.

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PACNET

BUILDING ON AUKUS TO FORGE A PAX PACIFICA

BY HENRY SOKOLSKI

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America's offer to supply British and US nuclear submarine technology to Australia (AUKUS) became a political fact almost instantly. President Biden and prime ministers Boris Johnson and Scott Morrison announced it. Yet, whatever its outcome, if it's just limited to building subs, it's unlikely to deter Beijing. To accomplish that and create a real Pax Pacifica, Washington will have to up its ante and forge additional strategic technology collaborations between Japan, South Korea, and Europe.

What will happen if Washington doesn't? Seoul and Tokyo could go their own way. Having been rebuffed after asking Washington to help it build nuclear submarines in 2020, South Koreans now wonder why Washington just said yes to Australia. Assuming Seoul proceeds with its plans, though, it would squander billions on nuclear submarines unlikely to perform well in the closed and shallow seas that surround Korea. Worse, it would give Seoul a pretext to enrich uranium for its subs with plants that could also produce weapons-grade material for bombs. Japan would hardly stand for this. Count on it, and possibly others, developing additional nuclear weapons options, straining rather than strengthening America's security ties in the region.

This, however, is hardly inevitable. Washington, Tokyo, Seoul, Canberra, and Europe could create a Pax Pacifica by tightening the nuclear rules and collaborating on new, cutting-edge technological projects. The aim would be to get China to realize that any regional hot war it might threaten in the short run would only further catalyze a larger cool competition against it that it would likely lose.

How might the United States and its allies pull this off? One way, recently suggested by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, would be to amplify the Australian-UK-US deal's nonnuclear features—its space cooperation, unmanned underwater warfare systems development, and advanced computing and missile collaboration—and open them up to the participation of Japan, South Korea, and others as appropriate.

Washington also could forge new collaborations. One might be an ROK-French-US (ROKFUS) initiative to build an enhanced space surveillance system that, among other things, could aim to eliminate the blind spots the moon's brightness creates near it for our ground-based telescopes. France, the hips of the European Space Agency and NATO's space command, should be interested. So should Seoul, which otherwise is poised to waste billions on unnecessary space launch systems and redundant navigational satellite constellations. Meanwhile, the project's surveillance system could keep track of Chinese military and civil satellites, including those near the moon, threatening critical US and allied satellites in geostationary orbits.

Another useful project would be to have Germany, as the European Union's lead, work with Japan and the United States on advanced computer and communications systems that could help could crack codes, secure communications, and open up closed internet systems. This deal (DEJPUS?) could exploit Japan's, Europe's and America's considerable accomplishments in these fields, Japan's and Germany's current cooperation on advanced computing, and help assure US and European markets for the systems the undertaking might generate. This,

after China's rush to tap the European 5G market, would be no mean accomplishment. It also could help penetrate Beijing's Great Firewall, which tracks and censors open communications in and outside China.

These additional initiatives could include additional participants. Their aim would be to reduce Japan's and South Korea's incentives to go their own way (or nuclear); encourage Europe's democracies to engage more deeply with those of the Pacific; and create peaceful counters to Chinese economic, military, and diplomatic forms of intimidation.

Sound too good to ever be true? It may be. Certainly, there's one question Chinese and Russian critics of AUKUS raise that could make all this stillborn: Isn't sharing nuclear submarine technology with Australia directly at odds with reining in nuclear risks? For many, the answer is yes. It ought to be just the opposite.

Former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has publicly supported AUKUS so long as Australia keeps clear of enriching its own uranium. Scott Morison's Australia's Liberal Party, which enjoys a mere one-seat majority in Australia's House, seems to be listening: Prime Minister Morison recently stated that Canberra does not intend to develop a civilian nuclear program. Even if it did, Australia has no need to enrich uranium or reprocess spent reactor fuels. As such, Australia could follow the UAE and Taiwan's example by forswearing these activities in its nuclear cooperative agreement with the United States.

This could be done by amending the existing US-Australia nuclear cooperative agreement or 123, which currently prohibits the transfer of any controlled US nuclear technology for any military purpose. Agreeing legally to forgo enriching and reprocessing also has the advantage of short-circuiting nuclear proliferation critics at the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference this coming January. Finally, it would help further restrain South Korea, which would like to enrich uranium and reprocess US-origin spent fuel but is prohibited from doing so by its current nuclear cooperative agreement with Washington.

As for concerns regarding highly enriched uranium, which would fuel the subs but could also help make nuclear weapons, both the US Los Angeles and the British Astute-class submarines use this fuel. Their reactor cores, however, do not require refueling for 33 years or more and cannot be serviced without cutting open the hulls. Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom should exploit this by announcing that either the United States or the UK will retain title to the fuel, so Australia will have no need to touch it.

Combine that with a legally binding pledge not to enrich or reprocess and additional American-European strategic technological collaboration with Japan and South Korea, and Washington could set the stage not only for less nuclear proliferation but a Pax Pacifica with real staying power.

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WHY THE UK WAS THE BIG WINNER OF AUKUS

BY DAVID CAMROUX

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An earlier version of this article appeared in The Diplomat.

The diplomatic and media spat has only now begun to die down since the announcement on Sept. 15 of the AUKUS security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While the agreement has been presented as allowing Australia access to sensitive US technology to acquire eight nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarines, the agreement also involves cooperation in other sensitive areas. AUKUS meant the concomitant cancellation of Australia's contract with the French Naval Group to build 12 conventionally-powered submarines.

For the United States, the strategic benefits of AUKUS are symbolically important, but otherwise modest. Upon celebrating the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS alliance with Australia and New Zealand, the United States extolled Australia as its historic partner, the only country that has been involved in every war—from the justified to the ill-considered—that Washington has fought since 1917.

Today, Australia is completely on the US side in its rivalry with China. Having a fellow member of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing arrangement (dating from World War II) and, more recently, a member of the Quad as an even closer ally in the Indo-Pacific is a plus for Washington. More concretely, having an Australian submarine force of some eight vessels as an auxiliary fleet to the US Navy in the South China Sea makes good, if marginal, strategic sense for the Pentagon.

However, whether the perceived loss of autonomy and sovereignty is in Australia's own interest is a cause of some debate Down Under. While supporting, in principle, the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS, the opposition Labor Party has criticized the government for the 10-year gap in submarine capacity that will result from waiting till 2040 for the first of the yet-to-be-designed vessels to arrive.

It is also unlikely that the submarines will be built in the United States for two reasons. On the one hand, as things stand today, the specialized US shipyards already have their order books full over the next decades producing vessels in much larger numbers—and in absolute priority—for the US Navy. On the other, Australian requirements would seem to be for a smaller hunter-killer submarine than those produced for the US Navy, and rather for something akin to the Royal Navy's existing Astute-class submarine.

US manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin were already set to provide the weapons systems for the 12 Australian submarines commissioned under the aborted project with the French; they will now do so for the eight vessels planned under AUKUS. US companies will, however, more fully benefit from other aspects of AUKUS with the development and manufacture of high-technology weaponry. Still, these cooperative arrangements were already underway prior AUKUS. For example, the emblematically named Loyal Wingman unmanned aerial vehicle developed by a subsidiary of Boeing in Australia had its first flight in February of this year.

So, if in economic terms the United States is not the major beneficiary of AUKUS, this leaves the United Kingdom. Somewhat surprisingly the role and, above all, the economic interests of the United Kingdom in the pact have been left unexamined. Britain has not suffered from any of the diplomatic blowback that has occurred since Sept. 15. For example, while Paris recalled its ambassadors from Canberra and Washington, its ambassador in London remained in place. At the time this was interpreted as a subtle way of pooh-poohing the importance of the United

Kingdom. Perhaps, also, given the parlous state of relations across the Channel as the unfortunate but predictable consequences of Brexit are worked through, it may have seemed unhelpful to add another area of contention.

Most commentators have essentially highlighted the symbolic value of AUKUS for London. At worst, this means reviving a kind of Anglosphere with echoes of Churchill and Roosevelt or even shades of a return of the British Empire in the Indo-Pacific. At best, it involves giving some substance to the post-Brexit trope of a Global Britain, returning as a major security actor in the region almost 60 years after the withdrawal from "east of Suez." From this perspective, the timing is not inconsequential. The AUKUS announcement was made the day before the presentation by the president of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, to the European Parliament of a Franco-German-inspired major policy paper on the EU Strategy for the Indo-Pacific.

The timing of the announcement may have been prompted by London to eclipse any European foreign policy grandstanding. If so, it was quite effective: the EU Strategy went largely unreported. However, for Canberra it seems not to have been clever to offend a key European country while in negotiations for an EU-Australia free trade agreement.

Beyond the symbolism, and the post-Brexit one-upmanship, the importance of AUKUS for Britain lies elsewhere. A recent post from International Institute for Strategic Studies in London traces the genesis of AUKUS to a request made by the chief of the Royal Australian Navy to his British counterpart. This request is understandable: Historically the Australian submarine fleet has been dependent on expertise from the Royal Navy and several senior officers are from Britain. But other than questions of comradeship, for very rational reasons, the British seemed to have jumped on this opportunity. At a practical strategic level, AUKUS will enable Britain to have more permanent basing rights for its own nuclear-powered submarines in Australia. This would enable a more sustained naval presence in the Indo-Pacific rather than the fleeting deployment, as at the moment, of a naval group around the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Nevertheless, the most important benefit of AUKUS for Britain is for what former US President Dwight Eisenhower famously described as the military-industrial complex. A mere two days after AUKUS was announced, the British government awarded two contracts to BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce for initial design work on a new generation of nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarines for the Royal Navy. It makes a great deal of industrial sense to share design costs with a reliable partner-client, i.e., Australia, especially as BAE Systems already has a significant presence there.

Given the issues of technical specifications and industrial capacity mentioned above it would appear that, by default at least, most of the production will occur in the United Kingdom. This would involve a lower level of local production in Adelaide compared to that under the contract with the French. Moreover, the yet-to-be designed class of submarines for Australia would enter service in the 2040s, the same timeframe as that mooted for the British subs. This is a decade after both the next generation of US nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarines, as well as the initially planned entry into service of the conventionally powered submarines envisaged in Australia's contract with the French. Thus, a major motivation for Britain is in the industrial logic of economies of scale. Such economies would benefit most of all the United Kingdom.

Beyond this understandable industrial logic, there are also electoral concerns that underpin the AUKUS announcement. In his short declaration on Sept. 15 with the US president and his Australian counterpart, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted on the jobs that would be created in his country. He somewhat heavy-handedly insisted these industrial jobs would be created in those poorer, pro-Brexit constituencies in northern England that swung to the conservatives in the 2019 elections, but which cannot be considered as permanent Tory territory.

As European middle powers and important arms manufacturers, France and Britain share a similar approach. While appealing to historic ties, such sales

of weaponry are designed to tie the buyer into a degree of international partnership. The difference, however, is that France, unlike Britain, is a resident middle-power in the Indo-Pacific. The French territory of New Caledonia is Australia's closest eastern neighbor, so in that sense France's now much-damaged partnership with Australia also has a domestic dimension.

It is therefore not surprising that the loss of the submarine contract has engendered not merely recriminations, but a concerted reevaluation in the last two months of French—and even European—strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and the place of Australia within that framework. It remains to be seen whether Canberra's decision to throw in its lot with the United States, to the detriment of damaging relations with other partners, is in the county's national interest.

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"JAUKUS" AND THE EMERGING CLASH OF ALLIANCES IN THE PACIFIC

BY ARTYOM LUKIN

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When the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) agreement was announced in September, Moscow's initial response was gloating. In 2015 Paris had reneged on a deal to sell Russia two amphibious Mistral warships and now France itself has been let down by its close allies.

Quickly, however, emotional satisfaction gave way to cold geopolitical calculations, which had little to do with France. On the surface, the military-technological arrangement of the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia is of minor concern to Russia. AUKUS' area of focus is the Indo-Pacific, whereas Russia's most vital security interests and geopolitical ambitions are in Europe and the Middle East. In the Pacific, Russia's strategic posture is defensive and status-quo-oriented.

That doesn't mean Russia isn't concerned. The Russian Pacific Fleet currently has only seven nuclear-powered submarines on active duty, and Australia is expected to receive eight submarines with American and British assistance. Still, no one expects that Russia will need to fight Australian subs, if only because their area of operation would likely be much closer to the South China Sea than the Sea of Okhotsk.

Everyone understands that AUKUS has China in its crosshairs. So, Moscow's stance on AUKUS is first and foremost determined by Russia's relationship with China. Mostly because they have a shared foe—the United States—Moscow and Beijing have been building up a "strategic partnership" since the late 1990s. The Russo-Chinese alignment, as it stands now, has all the features of a quasi-alliance, or entente.

There is little chance that Russia and the United States work out their differences in the foreseeable future, especially given the Ukraine issue. At the same time, a multi-faceted geopolitical and geo-economic rivalry between Beijing and Washington is intensifying. The Moscow-Beijing bond, then, will only get stronger. Russia expects Chinese support in its confrontation with NATO in Eastern Europe. As we will see, based on readouts of official talks and commentary from Chinese state media, Beijing seeks to enlist Moscow as an ally against US-led coalitions in the Indo-Pacific. This is why Moscow opposes AUKUS—and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") between the United States, Japan, India, and Australia—even if these arrangements do not pose a direct challenge to Russian security.

Moscow has repeatedly expressed its disapproval of AUKUS, including at the highest level. In a recent public appearance, Vladimir Putin called it a "closed alliance" whose establishment "leads to more tensions" in "the Pacific zone." During his videoconference with Xi Jinping on Dec. 15, both leaders denounced AUKUS, as well as the Quad. Putin has also expressed support for Beijing's "legitimate position on Taiwan-related issues." According to *Xinhua*'s account of the Putin-Xi conversation, Russia "will firmly oppose moves by any force to undermine China's interests using Taiwan-related issues, and moves to form any type of 'small groups' in the Asia-Pacific region." Reciprocating Putin's understanding of Chinese strategic concerns in the Indo-Pacific, Xi "supported Russia's demands" that NATO should stop expanding toward Russian borders.

Chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov referred to AUKUS as a "bloc" and "destabilizing factor," which may "usher in a new phase of struggle for dominance not only in the Asia-Pacific, but in other regions as well." Gerasimov also emphasized AUKUS' potential to proliferate nuclear technology. In another sign of Russian solidarity with China, the Russian envoy at the International Atomic Energy

Agency in Vienna joined his Chinese counterpart in labeling AUKUS a potential nonproliferation concern. (As an aside, Russia's purism with respect to the nonproliferation dimension of AUKUS may smack of double standards. For decades, since the 1980s, the Soviet Union/Russia has been leasing nuclear-powered submarines to India and this collaboration program is still active.)

To counter AUKUS, Beijing may expect more from Moscow than rhetorical solidarity. With China bracing for a long-haul rivalry with the United States and its many allies and partners, Beijing will probably attempt to construct its own network of alliances, and Russia will be front and center. In military terms, Russia offers three benefits to China. First, Russia is the most significant external supplier of military technology for the People's Liberation Army (PLA), even as China is becoming increasingly capable of designing and producing most sophisticated weapons. Second, Russia can tie down US forces in the European theater, distracting Washington and weakening its capacity to respond to contingencies in the Western Pacific. Finally, Russia could support China in the Pacific strategic theater in the event of a confrontation, most probably over Taiwan.

It is perhaps only a question of time before a fourth nation, Japan, throws its weight behind AUKUS. *De facto*, it is already there, informally, and a formal linkage may be in the works, despite US officials' claims to the contrary. Tokyo has consistently signaled that it would not stand aloof in a contingency over Taiwan, and it has been more vocal in recent months.

The emerging "JAUKUS" is primarily a naval partnership. If there is a war between China and JAUKUS countries, it will happen primarily at sea. This is where Russia's assets in the North Pacific would come in handy, and there are signs that Beijing is beginning to see Russia as an important part of China's response to the maritime threats coming from the JAUKUS coalition. Even just a month before AUKUS was announced, the Russian International Affairs Council published an article by Zhao Huasheng, a professor of Fudan University, in which he proposes to add a maritime dimension to the Sino-Russian strategic partnership. The article argues that "China and Russia are facing serious security threats from sea, some of which are from the same source. Maritime military cooperation between China and Russia can enhance their respective military defense capabilities and more effectively safeguard their security."

Given the sensitivity of the subject, it is unlikely a senior Chinese scholar published this article without a nod from Beijing. In a Russian-Chinese expert roundtable in late October, which I attended, there were also calls from the Chinese side for arrangements consisting of states not happy with AUKUS and the Quad.

The maritime domain has been an increasingly important component in Russo-Chinese military cooperation. The most spectacular recent manifestation was a "joint patrol" by Russian and Chinese warships in the Pacific Ocean, in which they nearly circumnavigated Japan. Of note, the commanding ship of the joint flotilla was the Chinese newest destroyer Nanchang. Beijing's *Global Times* said the Sino-Russian naval demonstration was "a warning to Japan as well as the US, which have been rallying allies to confront China and Russia, destabilizing the region."

The North Pacific is the most logical theater to operationalize a Moscow-Beijing military axis. Russia and China have a direct presence in the region, where they maintain substantial military capabilities, which can complement each other. It is also in the North Pacific that Russia and China directly interact with a shared adversary—the United States and its junior ally Japan. Last June, Russia held massive military drills in its Far East and adjacent waters. The exercise simulated "a standoff of two coalitions of states," even though the composition of antagonistic coalitions was not revealed.

Russia's naval capabilities in the Pacific are limited, with the Russian Pacific Fleet being essentially a green-water navy. Still, Russia can provide a range of force multiplier functions to the Chinese in the event of a new Pacific War. For example, Chinese submarines can use Russia's Pacific littoral zone, especially the Sea of Okhotsk, as a sanctuary. In

recent years, Russia has been building its coastal defenses in the Pacific, paying special attention to the Kuril Islands that guard the entrance into the Sea of Okhotsk. The prospect of China getting basing rights on the Russian Pacific Coast, perhaps in Kamchatka, also no longer looks out of question. When a conflict over Taiwan erupts and the United States and Japan intervene militarily, China might rely on Russia to launch a counterattack against Alaska and the Japanese Islands.

One might ask about Russia's motivation to get drawn into a Pacific war between China and JAUKUS, especially given that such a war could easily escalate? The simple answer is that Moscow has no choice. If the Ukraine crisis escalates and the West imposes massive sanctions on Russia, Moscow will turn to China for an economic lifeline. Chinese help is unlikely to come free of charge. In return, Russia might be asked to accommodate Beijing's military requests in the Pacific.

North Korea is another strategic player in the North Pacific whose geo-economic dependence on China, along with its avowed anti-Americanism, makes it a suitable candidate for a Sino-centric alliance network.

Over the next few years, a "RUCNDPRK" partnership could become a counterbalance to JAUKUS.

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AUKUS' SHORT- AND LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR TAIWAN

BY FU S. MEI

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More than a mere pact over submarines, the Australia-United Kingdom-United States trilateral (AUKUS) signifies the crossing of a strategic threshold by Washington and its partners, past robust competition and toward outright confrontation. This, naturally, has significant implications for Taiwan's security.

By agreeing to afford Australia access to nuclear naval propulsion and other advanced strategic technologies—a first since the US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement of 1958—AUKUS fortifies the US-led order to deter military challenges in the region. AUKUS, of course, has the Chinese Community Party (CCP) regime in mind. This strengthening of the defense relationship with Canberra, even at the expense of political fallout with Paris, signals to Beijing that Washington (and its partners) are preparing in case of conflict.

Taiwan is where such conflict looks likely, given the irredentist claims by China, the significance of its geography to major regional powers (e.g., the United States, or Japan), and its critical role in the global supply chain.

Nuclear-powered submarines (or SSNs, as the US Navy calls them) will give Australia the range, transit speed, and endurance to provide meaningful presence in the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, SSNs are one of the few assets able to penetrate and conduct sustained operations within China's anti-access area-denial, particularly in combination with submarine-launched cruise missiles. The other long-range strike capabilities provisioned under AUKUS (Tomahawk cruise missiles for the Hobart-class destroyers, air-to-surface missiles for Royal Australian Air Force fighter aircraft, precision strike missiles, and US-Australian collaborative development of hypersonic missiles) will also strengthen Australia's capacity to support US military operations in first-island-chain contingencies.

What's more, AUKUS signals strengthened British security commitments to the Indo-Pacific, already demonstrated by the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier strike group's 28-week deployment to the region.

These contribute to enhancing the so-called "integrated deterrence" championed by the Biden administration, particularly Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

Implications for Taiwan

Though heartened by AUKUS, Taipei remains cautious about its significance for its security.

If AUKUS partners are committed to deterring China from conquering Taiwan, the three governments must reassess their policy regarding defense cooperation with the island. For example, London still imposes strict restrictions on defense exports to Taipei. Canberra, for its part, has long forbidden direct contact between Taiwanese officials with Australian defense establishment outside of the military education system. Not surprisingly, then, Taipei is prudent in its expectations of any realignment of Canberra's security cooperation posture, especially given Australia's economic interdependence with China.

The United States has begun making headway towards enhancing Taiwan's defense while managing tensions with China. One example appears to be quietly encouraging a select number of allies to loosen restrictions on security cooperation with Taipei, including defense technology, intelligence, and other exchanges. Similar policy realignment should be among priority considerations for AUKUS countries.

AUKUS countries, meanwhile, are unlikely to deploy additional military capabilities to change the power balance in the Taiwan Strait by 2027, when US-based sources say the threat of Chinese invasion is most severe. Current Australian power projection assets are limited to six Collins-class conventionally powered submarines, with the deployment of nuclear submarines still over a decade away. Also unclear is Britain's willingness and ability to rapidly base and sustain substantive capabilities in the Indo-Pacific that would contribute to deterring and, if necessary, winning a major military conflict with China.

AUKUS' significance to Taiwan, therefore, is primarily over the long term.

Near-term options

AUKUS countries should advance an ambitious security cooperation agenda focused on a Taiwan Strait conflict scenario. At a strategic level, they should participate in joint war planning. At the operational level, they should consider a joint working group to ensure interoperability—including, most importantly, with Taiwan forces and C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) systems.

Between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, there should be discussions about assisting Taiwan with defense systems and/or related technology, which can help alleviate the severe arms embargo Beijing imposes on Taipei. AUKUS countries should also explore expanded participation through track-2 discussions on collective measures for countering gray-zone threats, improving regional interoperability, and enhancing intelligence sharing.

In the short-term, however, even before such measures are enacted, AUKUS signals to Taiwan that key countries are now willing to push back more seriously against Beijing's rising military assertiveness. It suggests to Taipei that outside help is increasing, making its leaders more resolute in the fight for its own defense and survival, which is critical to strengthen deterrence against Chinese military adventurism.

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AUKUS' OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS FOR INDIA

BY MANPREET SETHI

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While China's economic rise had been a reality for over a decade, its belligerence and assertive behavior has become prominent only in recent years. For India, China's aggressive tendencies, evident since 2017, came into sharper focus with the border clashes in Galwan valley in June 2020. In India's view, China planned serial incursions into disputed territory, taking advantage of New Delhi's (and the rest of the world's) preoccupation with the pandemic and its socio-economic fallout.

The bloody clashes in the Himalayas brought India face to face with China's new reality. The hope that carefully curated high-level political engagements, steadily growing economic trade, or even boundary agreements that maintained peace at the disputed borders since the 1990s could sustain a cooperative bilateral relationship quickly evaporated. A heightened threat perception of China today influences India's security strategy.

It is not surprising, therefore, that AUKUS, the trilateral security arrangement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States is perceived through this prism. While the three allies have not mentioned China explicitly in the context of the new pact, concerns about China clearly motivated their taking of their relationship to a new level. AUKUS envisages sharing of information and knowhow in technologies like artificial intelligence, long-range strike capabilities, and transfer of technology to Australia to build and operate eight nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs). Transfer of SSN technologies is typically avoided, even among allies, due to its proliferation risks. Even the Russia-India deal in this regard was for lease of an SSN, not transfer of its technology. AUKUS, therefore, is unique.

At first, the Indian government offered no comment on AUKUS when it was announced in September 2021. It was not until a week later, before the visit of the Indian prime minister to the United States for the first in-person summit meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad"), that Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla mentioned it at a press conference. When asked if it would cast a shadow over the Quad summit, Shringla said, "From our perspective, [AUKUS] has neither relevance to Quad, nor will it have any impact on its functioning." In truth, the implications of AUKUS have both positive and negative dimensions for India.

Positives

From an Indian perspective, there are two positives. First, AUKUS targets China's expansionist tendencies and aggressive behaviour. Anything that distracts China and complicates its security offers the potential to ease pressure on India. By equipping a Quad member with nuclear-powered submarines that have the advantages of greater stealth, endurance, and carrying capacity, AUKUS will strengthen overall military power projection in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, in India's view, AUKUS will not diminish the role of the Quad; it will enhance deterrence.

Second is the precedent it sets on the transfer of naval nuclear propulsion technology. The Indian Navy is interested in designing and building modern SSNs. Upon a recommendation by the Indian Navy, a decision to this effect was made by the cabinet committee of security in March 2021, which amended the 30-year submarine-building plan to replace the construction of conventional attack vessels with SSNs. A foreign original equipment manufacturer for this project is yet to be identified. India's traditional partner for SSN lease has been Russia. A third deal to lease another *Akula* class SSN from 2025 onwards was signed in 2019. US sanctions could complicate future Russia-India cooperation in this area, however.

France could be a natural alternative. Paris is furious at being cut out of the submarine deal with Australia and may not be averse to sharing nuclear submarine technology with India. The Indian Navy is already working with the French DCNS (Naval Group) for its P-75 Scorpene class of submarines, the last of which is being completed. A new deal with the French for SSNs would then build upon the existing partnership. Interestingly enough, the same French company is also constructing SSNs for Paris.

While help on naval nuclear propulsion could supplement India's indigenous efforts substantively, it is unclear whether any bilateral arrangement between France and India will emerge. Given the tradition of long-winding debates in the two democracies and the long-time need to reach decision points on military procurements in India, there is no certainty that India and France will use the precedent set by AUKUS.

Negatives

One negative aspect of AUKUS for India would be the use of this precedent by others, especially adversaries. The United States has described the tripartite deal as a "one-off special arrangement" for an ally with a good non-proliferation record (and implicitly directed against a common adversary). But that the common adversary, China, could make similar exceptions.

Beijing, which has strongly criticised AUKUS, may attempt to get back at the United States by making a similar offer to Pakistan. Given China's desire for parity with the United States as a global rule-maker, Beijing could use AUKUS as an opportunity to establish its own credentials as a great power. The defense relationship between the "iron brothers" China and Pakistan goes as far back as the 1980s; ties have only grown stronger since. Pakistan would be thrilled to equip its naval Strategic Forces Command with SSNs. As a matter of fact, Pakistan's National Institute of Maritime Affairs, a think tank conducting research on maritime issues, has already suggested that Islamabad should take advantage of AUKUS and use it as a pretext to build nuclear submarines with the help of its allies.

North Korea and Iran could also be potential Chinese customers. The irony would be that while AUKUS countries iron out the procedures of technology transfer, including safeguards arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, China would settle for less cumbersome transfer agreements, even if its clients have poor nonproliferation records. Proliferation dangers, therefore, could increase in India's neighborhood.

The second negative dimension of AUKUS, from India's perspective, relates to its timeframe. The three countries will likely work out the details of the arrangement over the next 18 months. It will then take up to a decade or more for the first vessels to become operational, even though the threat from China is here and now. Therefore, there will be no real instantaneous dividends for India, except for some distractions and disturbances that the announcement of the deal has already caused China. Of course, China will likely respond by strengthening its own naval capabilities and presence in the region, in addition to using the precedent to its own advantage.

AUKUS has been crafted, primarily by Washington, to address its looming security concern it vis-à-vis China. The intent is to strengthen the deterrent capability of allies. But the arrangement may open the possibility of new security dilemmas in the long term, including for India. New Delhi, however, should not hope for immediate help in addressing its China threat. It must continue to build its capability to keep both its flanks covered, in the Himalayas and at sea.

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NUCLEAR SUBMARINES FOR OUR PACIFIC ALLIES: WHEN TO SAY YES

BY HENRY SOKOLSKI

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On March 9, South Korea will elect a new president. One of the first things the new president will have to determine is whether or not to get Washington to support South Korea's development and fueling of a nuclear submarine fleet. The progressive candidate, Lee Jae-myung, has publicly vowed to press the United States to cut a submarine technology transfer deal for South Korea similar to what Washington struck with Australia. In a recent interview, Mr. Lee noted, "It is absolutely necessary for us to have those subs."

But is it? Mr. Lee's key opponent, Yoon Suk-yeol, says no. He favors investing in military space and airborne surveillance systems instead. In fact, if South Korea is serious about neutralizing the naval threats it faces, it would do far better with a sound mix of advanced non-nuclear anti-submarine and anti-surface systems than with nuclear submarines.

A detailed study, which *The Naval War College Review* just published, spells out why. Commissioned by my center and authored by James Campbell Jr., of Naval Sea System Command, "Seoul's Misguided Desire for Nuclear Submarines" details how poorly nuclear submarines would perform in the relatively closed East China, Yellow, and East Seas, which border Korea. His conclusion: The best way to track and contain North Korean naval threats and help the United States and Japan monitor the First Island Chain (the islands connecting Russia, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines) is not with nuclear submarines. Nuclear submarines are vastly more expensive and far less effective than a proper mix of advanced non-nuclear naval systems for these particular missions.

Such systems include upgrading South Korea's air-independent propulsion submarines, anti-submarine aircraft, and naval surface combatants; upgrading, sharing, and analyzing acoustic and non-acoustic anti-submarine sensor information with Washington and Seoul; and investing in new anti-submarine technologies. The latter include airborne and underwater drones, wave runners, artificial intelligence-enhanced anti-submarine systems and the like.

As for South Korea using nuclear submarines to launch conventional missile "second strikes"—yet another argument some South Korean naval advocates make for "going nuclear"—using these boats for this mission compares poorly against using air and mobile ground-launched missile systems. These are far more survivable, can fire many more rounds, and cost far less per flight. Finally, if Seoul is eager to secure a blue-water navy, then developing advanced surface combatants, including small aircraft carriers, is more cost effective and avoids compounding the growing challenge of identifying nuclear submarine friends and foes in the open Western Pacific.

Sensible for Seoul, this set of recommendation is also sound for Tokyo. From bases in Japan, super-quiet, advanced conventional submarines and other select non-nuclear systems can monitor and contain Chinese and North Korean naval threats within the First Island Chain far better than nuclear submarines.

What, then, about Australia? Located thousands of miles from China's coast, Canberra requires naval platforms that can quickly travel significant distances and stay on station for extended periods. For this purpose, nuclear submarines make sense. In short, it's different.

Why belabor these points? First, if Washington wants Seoul and Tokyo to make military investments that are leveraged to deter North Korea and China, preventing South Korea and Japan from wasting billions of dollars on nuclear submarine cooperation is essential. This, in turn, requires making a no-nonsense distinction between Australia's naval requirements and those of Seoul and Tokyo.

Second, green lighting South Korea on nuclear submarines risks spreading the bomb. Nuclear submarines require enriched uranium fuel. Seoul, which attempted to build nuclear weapons in the 1970s, has been asking Washington to allow it to enrich uranium now for nearly a decade. So far, Washington has said no. Why? Even if Seoul promised to enrich uranium ever so slightly, it could flip any enrichment plant it ran to make weapons-grade uranium in a matter of days. Bottom line: If Seoul pursued its own nuclear naval program, it would alarm Japan (a historical antagonist that also has pondered going nuclear) and disrupt alliance relations with Washington, Seoul's nuclear guarantor.

What's to be done? It would help if Seoul weren't the only one being asked to restrain its nuclear aspirations. In this regard, my center has proposed having Australia commit to a moratorium on enriching uranium tied to its 30-year AUKUS nuclear submarine deal. It also has recommended that the United States and Japan join South Korea in suspending their commercialization of fast reactors and the recycling of nuclear weapons explosive plutonium. This would help spotlight similar militarily worrisome plutonium production-related activities in China.

Finally, Washington should work with Europe to help Seoul and Tokyo tackle significant cutting-edge defense related projects of their own. For South Korea, this might be developing space surveillance systems. For Japan, it could be advanced communications, computing capabilities and cryptology to crack China's great firewall.

Each of these steps would help. First, however, South Korea and Japan need to conclude that their acquisition of nuclear submarines would be, at best, a dangerous distraction.

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