

Marching Towards Disaster: What's Really Behind The U.S. Push In The Asia-Pacific?

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On the sidelines of the Group of Twenty (G20) Summit in Brisbane, US President Barack H. Obama delivered a keynote speech to diplomats, policymakers, faculty members, and students at the University of Queensland on the United States of America's foreign policy and Obama's so-called "Asian pivot" or "pivot to Asia."

In 2013, a report by Brian Andrews and Kurt Campbell for the British think-tank Chatham House described Washington's redeployment efforts in the Asia-Pacific region like this: "The United States government is in the early stages of a substantial national project: reorienting significant elements of its foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific region and encouraging many of its partners outside the region to do the same."

"The 'strategic pivot' or rebalancing, launched four years ago, is premised on the recognition that the lion's share of the political and economic history of the 21st century will be written in the Asia-Pacific region," the Chatham House report points out. In one way or another, what this analysis insinuates is that the nation that controls the Asia-Pacific region will dominate the world.

During the time Obama had been in Australia for the G20 gathering, it was falsely but consistently reported by the mainstream media in the US, Canada, the European Union, and Australia that Russian President Vladimir Putin and his delegation were isolated by the leaders of the so-called "Western" countries. Not only did Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott fail to violently "shirtfront" President Putin at Brisbane like he promised, but in fact Abbott had a cordial bilateral meeting with Putin days earlier in the Chinese capital of Beijing during the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting. Nor did British Prime Minister David Cameron or Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper – men of Abbott's own conservative political cloth that have subordinated their countries to Washington and its empire – dare confront Putin.

Swearing fealty as vassals and subordinates to Washington is not an issue of conservative politics versus socialist politics or left-wing parties versus right-wing parties. Despite different forms of rhetoric and varying nuances, the main political parties in Australia, as well as in countries like Bulgaria, Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Romania, South Korea, and Spain, have all followed the same contours in regards to their foreign policy as subordinates supporting US militarism.

Abbott's Labor Party predecessors in the Lodge and Kirribilli House wholly endorsed Washington's Asia-Pacific pivot and deepened Canberra's military ties with the Pentagon, even speaking abrasively about China to the point where the Chinese government broke its typical policy of silence to warn the federal government not to damage or endanger Australian-Chinese bilateral relations. Both officials in the Liberal and Labor Party even called for barring Putin from coming to Queensland for the G20 gathering; Australian Labor Party leader Bill Shorten and Queensland Premier Campbell Newman openly criticized Prime Minister Abbott for allowing the Russians to attend Brisbane for the G20 meeting.

The key word here is 'deceit'. While one thing is said, another is done or acted. At the G20 meeting everything was polite and diplomatic. Like the earlier APEC meeting in Beijing, Ukraine was not even on the agenda in Brisbane for group discussions by the gathering of world leaders. This, however, did not stop the US and its allies from taking jabs at the Russian Federation outside of the meeting rooms and G20 forums. The false portrayal of what happened in Brisbane between President Putin and the US and its allies are characteristic of Washington's deceitful regional approach in the Asia-Pacific region: in the name of peace and stability the area is being militarized and destabilized by the stoking of tensions by the United States.

Manufacturing an "Axis of Evil" for the Asia-Pacific?

In his speech at the University of Queensland, Obama warned potential aggressors to never question the resolve or commitment of Washington to its regional allies in East Asia and Oceania. Although President Obama did not emphasize this directly or too much, everyone knew which countries he was talking about, and the media vividly filled in the blanks. While President Obama directly named the nuclear program and missile arsenal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or North Korea as a regional threat, he was careful in how he talked about the People's Republic of China. Beijing was mentioned casually in terms of regional territorial disputes. Russia's mention was short too. The Russian Federation was only named once and briefly when President Obama said the Russians were a threat to the world because of their actions in Eastern Europe, specifically Ukraine.

It is with the above understanding that the billing the mainstream media narrative gave to Obama's University of Queensland speech was one that understood Washington's commander-in-chief was talking tough and hard to the villainous trio of China, Russia, and North Korea. Unlike Obama's speech, the names of these three countries were repeatedly named and demonized in the mainstream media. Beijing, Moscow, and Pyongyang have either directly or tacitly been portrayed as some type of "Axis of Evil" in the Asia-Pacific region.

Like Washington's Asia-Pacific policy, Barack Obama's University of Queensland speech was deceptive. China was mentioned seventeen times throughout the body of the speech while North Korea was mentioned twice and Russia once. Even though Beijing was not directly or openly called an adversary in the speech, it is clear the main US concern in the Asia-Pacific region is the Chinese. In reality, President Obama's message was a US call to arms against the Chinese, which along with the Russians are Washington's main global adversaries or rivals.

Although North Korea was thrown into the equation by Obama, Pyongyang is merely a pretext for Washington to station the Pentagon's forces and US nuclear assets in South Korea and Japan and to target Beijing and its strategic ally Moscow in East Asia. Under the

justification of protecting South Korea, the Pentagon maintains over a million Marines, soldiers, airmen, and sailors on standby for a nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The US even controls the South Korean military – in the event of a war whoever sits as the president of the United States in the Oval Office will give the South Korean military general command its orders through the Pentagon.

Beijing and Moscow understand the real targets of the Pentagon in East Asia. This is why China and the Russian Federation have always worked to prevent a confrontation in the Korean Peninsula from occurring by mediating in the tensions that North Korea has with South Korea and the United States. This is also the reason why the Chinese eventually intervened as combatants against the US in the Korean War in 1950. The Chinese did not want US troops directly on their border and so close to Beijing. Chinese leaders realized that North Korea was a stepping stone towards the US goal of encircling, destabilizing, and neutralizing the People's Republic of China.

Encircling and Isolating the Chinese and the Russians: Towards Unipolarity?

"I decided that given the importance of this region to American security, to American prosperity, the United States would rebalance our foreign policy and play a larger and lasting role in this region," Obama told his audience at the University of Queensland. He explained that more US Marines were going to be deployed to Australia while Washington's alliances with Australia and Japan would be deepened.

The Asia-Pacific region has steadily militarized in recent years. The Australian Defence Ministry has talked about a regional arms race and issued reports on increased Chinese military spending and naval expansion. Never once is it mentioned the Chinese naval expansion and Beijing's increased military spending are reactions to US militarism and Washington's attempts to encircle the Chinese. China is acting defensively and trying to secure the Indian Ocean's maritime trade routes and energy corridors from the US, because it fears the US could block them in the scenario of a confrontation.

Washington's militarization agenda is tied to a multilateral trade agenda that has hegemonic connotations. In other words, there is a trade dimension to the militarization and the stoking of tensions in the Asia-Pacific. The case is the same for Europe too. In both cases, Washington's thirst for a unipolar world order is evident. It is in this context that China and Russia are being demonized to help increase US influence and justify a larger US presence in both regions. The United States is trying to exclude and cast out the Russians and Chinese in both Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. While Washington works to exclude China and Russia, the US goal is to integrate the other countries of these areas with itself.

In Europe, the objectives of the US are to create instability in the flow of Russian energy supplies to the European Union by instigating problems inside Ukraine and between the Russian Federation and the Ukrainians. What the US is actually doing through this is working to weaken both the Russians and the European Union economically. This includes the goal of disrupting trade ties between the different sides in the European theatre. The deterioration of EU-Russian trade ties and relations is meant to aid US negotiations and weaken the European Union. This is part of the US strategy to eventually economically control and swallow the European Union under the framework of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is under negotiation between Brussels and Washington.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is loosely the military equivalent of the TTIP. Washington's objective is to construct a single US-controlled Euro-Atlantic military, political, and economic space. Doing this is one step closer towards the unipolar world order that the US seeks.

In the Asia-Pacific region the US is following or using the same strategy of artificially creating tensions and instigating problems between China and other countries in the region. This is exactly why Obama mentioned territorial disputes in his speech and the reason why the US has been getting itself involved in bilateral disputes between China and several local countries over territorial issues. The US government has used this to promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in the Asia-Pacific theatre. Creating tensions between the Chinese and other East Asian countries, like Vietnam, is part of the strategy to expand US influence.

Ultimately, what the US wants is to subordinate and control China and Russia. In the case of Russia, it wants to control Russia's vast resources and technology. This is why Madeleine Albright, the former US secretary of state during the presidency of Bill Clinton, has had the nerve and audacity to say in doublespeak that the Russians have "undemocratic" control of the world's resources on their country's vast territory.

In the case of the Chinese, the US wants to control China as an industrial colony. Washington and Wall Street want China to be a giant factory of labor and manufacturing for US corporations. In this regard, Washington's goal is to put a leash on China and harness the Chinese dragon like a beast of burden that carries or pulls heavy loads. This is why President Obama made the following points to his audience in Brisbane: "And the question is, what kind of role will it play? I just came from Beijing, and I said there, the United States welcomes the continuing rise of a China that is peaceful and prosperous and stable and that plays a responsible role in world affairs."

What Obama was really saying is that Beijing serves Washington interests as a manufacturing hub. "So we'll pursue cooperation with China where our interests overlap or align. And there are significant areas of overlap: More trade and investment," in Obama's own words. This is also part of the reason for the contradictions in the Australian government's foreign policy. While Canberra is a part of the US alliance directed against Beijing, Australia continues to deepen economic and business ties with the Chinese. [On 17 November, Australia and China signed off on a free trade pact.]

Cold War 2.0 and the Threat of a Nuclear World War

The Cold War was more than an ideological struggle. Ideology was merely utilized as a justification for foreign policy and unacceptable actions. The divisions that were perceived to have existed during the Cold War did not or have not disappeared either, because the struggle fuelling the Cold War did not really end. In reality, there has been a "post-Cold War cold war" or a cold war after the Cold War. Over the years it has become increasingly clear that the divisions that existed in the Cold War have been carried on and merely transformed. Those divisions have slowly re-emerged and are displaying themselves again.

Nor has the specter of a nuclear war disappeared. The threat of a nuclear war has actually increased because there is less pressure for constraint on public officials due to the fact that the general public is less aware of the nature of global rivalries and the dangers of nuclear escalation. This is why people like Malcolm Fraser, one of Australia's former prime ministers, warn against the path being followed by Australia and the United States.

A chain of US-controlled alliances and a military missile shield are being constructed and equipped around both China and Russia. Chinese and Russian allies, such as Iran, Belarus, Armenia, Syria, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Serbia, Brazil, Sudan, and Kazakhstan, are being targeted too. While NATO has expanded eastward in Europe towards the borders of Russia and its allies in the post-Soviet space, the US has tightened its system of alliances in East Asia and Oceania against China.

Land components of the missile shield have been kept and expanded in the Balkans, Israel, Turkey, and the Asia-Pacific region. Aside from land elements, the Pentagon's missile shield project has been expanded to include a naval armada of ships that will surround Eurasia from the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf, South China Sea, and the East China Sea. In Europe and the Middle East the missile shield project includes NATO. Missiles that are pointing at Armenia, Iran, Syria, and Russia have been deployed to Turkey while infrastructure has been put in place in Poland on the direct borders of Russian ally and Eurasian Union founding member Belarus, as well as the Russian Federation's Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad.

The Commonwealth of Australia, alongside both Japan and South Korea, is a key part of the global missile shield system targeting the Chinese and Russians. Australia, Japan, and South Korea are also homes to US-led rapid response military forces that are configured for immediate military action should a war ignite with China, Russia, or North Korea. The policies of Australia, Japan and South Korea have also begun to radically change as they harden themselves as frontline states facing the People's Republic of China. For example, the strategic aim of the Pentagon to encircle and contain China has encouraged successive Japanese governments to turn their backs on the Japanese Constitution, specifically Article 9, by re-arming Japan in an offensive context. Despite the objections and anger of many Japanese citizens and many more East Asians, Tokyo has violated and breached the framework of its constitution by militarizing.

There is very little question that Japan is a full partner with Australia, the US, Singapore, Taiwan, and NATO, against Beijing and Moscow. In 2007, Japan signed its second post-Second World War bilateral security agreement. The first one was with the US, but the 2007 agreement was with the Commonwealth of Australia. This was the beginning of the Australia-Japan-US Trilateral Security Dialogue. The security agreement led to the eventual signing of the Japan-Australia Acquisition and Cross-servicing Agreement (ACSA) on 19 May 2010, which allows for the pooling and sharing of military resources by both Canberra and Tokyo.

As for Australia, it has had a steady stream of secret deals and talks with the US government and the Pentagon. The deal signed between the Australian and US governments over the Pentagon intelligence facility and signals base in Geraldton followed years of secretive discussions between both sides. In 2011, Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her government allowed the US to deploy troops on Australian territory after a series of secret and public discussions.

The integration of Australia and Japan into a US-led military front against China and Russia has not only included the formation of the Australia-Japan-US Trilateral Security Dialogue. The creation of this Washington-led front includes NATO as a key feature of the strategy of militarily encircling all Eurasia. It is in this context that the accession of both Canberra and Tokyo, alongside South Korea, New Zealand, and Colombia, as NATO partners has occurred.

These NATO partnerships are referred to by NATO Headquarters and the North Atlantic Council as NATO's "global partners" program. Mongolia, post-2003 Iraq, and NATO-garrisoned Afghanistan are also partners. NATO has also created different partnership programs that include countries like Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, the Republic of Georgia, Ukraine, Kuwait, Bosnia, and Mauritania.

The hardening lines being created, specifically with the instigation and agitation of the United States, threaten to turn Europe and the Asia-Pacific region into war theatres. These regions could be theatres of a global confrontation or start off as theatres of regional wars that quickly escalate into a global nuclear war. This is why Malcolm Fraser warned that Australians risks being pulled into a disastrous war against China. Fraser has argued that successive Australian governments have surrendered their nation's strategic independence to Washington.

In 2011 the Chinese warned Canberra it was walking down a dangerous road. Prime Minister Gillard's deal with Obama for allowing US troops into Australia was unwelcomed by the Chinese and seen as the first significant expansion of the Pentagon into the Asia-Pacific region since the Vietnam War. In 2013, the Chinese told the governments of Australia, Japan, and the US not to use their regional alliance to inflame local tensions any further or to instigate hostilities in East Asia by interfering in bilateral territorial disputes in the East China Sea and South China Sea. In the same year, an official at the Chinese National Defence University even warned about the possibility of a nuclear war erupting because of the front being created by the US, Australia, and Japan against Beijing.

At the same time that tensions are being ratcheted up with the Chinese, tensions with the Russians are increasing too. Russian politicians and military leaders have continuously warned that if tensions continue, a nuclear war could erupt and devastate the world. Both China and Russia have taken measures to prepare for a possible global military conflict with Washington and its allies. Beijing and Moscow have increased their interoperability and are training together through bilateral exercises and through multilateral military exercises held by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. All the while, as Washington pushes the world closer to the abyss, the governments of countries like Australia and Japan continue sleepwalking their people towards disaster.

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