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## The role of the AUKUS alliance in counterbalancing China

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### Abstract

In the process of protecting sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests, countries with the same purpose or common enemies have joined together to combine military capabilities, Politics creates common strength to achieve the set goals. Because countries have different characteristics of population, geography, ruling class, and culture, conflicts always exist. Therefore, the fact that one country cooperates with another country to protect national security has always been common since ancient times. There are temporary, loose alliances, but there are also strong, lasting alliances. National security is ensured when there are no threats to its interests or if it is, the state has the ability to prevent and repel such threats. Countries often choose to join an alliance as a solution that brings many benefits to the country. First, an alliance will help the country replenish its strength. Because countries are always limited in resources, countries will face certain limitations when it comes to dealing with security threats on their own. With the combination into an alliance, the ability to combine powers will bring many benefits. In the context of the cold war, when the two opposing countries, the US and China, are both looking for ways to enhance their strength, expand their influence, and at the same time contain the enemy's strength, finding more comrades-in-arms is a challenge. Proving yourself is very important. To deal with growing China, the US - UK - Australia chose to ally with each other and established the AUKUS alliance.

**Keywords:** AUKUS, China, counterbalance, alliance

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### 1. Introduction

The AUKUS Alliance is a military alliance between Australia (Australia), the United Kingdom (United Kingdom), and the United States (United States) established on September 15, 2021 with the joining of the alliance. The United States and Britain will help Australia deploy nuclear submarines, helping to increase the Western military presence in the Pacific. They are now concerned about the impact such submarines could have on China's maritime domains, especially in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. As a result, Beijing has focused on the geopolitical impact of the deal and condemned AUKUS, saying it is a product of the "Cold War mentality" between Canberra, London and Washington. In addition, China also believes that AUKUS will weaken the security and stability of the region. Some have equated AUKUS with an "Asian version of NATO," with the potential to expand to include other like-minded nations. Regardless of the severity of the challenge, Beijing has an incentive to "wait and see" its real impact, as details remain elusive and consultations will take time.

- **AUKUS deal could increase energy risks with China**

It is not clear to China whether the submarines will be built or if they will be delivered from the "retired" US fleet.

- **Impact on the nuclear nonproliferation process**

China's strongest attacks against AUKUS have focused on its effects on nuclear non-proliferation.

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China's permanent representative to the United Nations issued a statement on September 16 in Vienna about the agreement's "open nuclear proliferation activities". He called on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to publicly condemn AUKUS, which he said represented the "double standard" pursued by the US and UK in nuclear exports.

#### ▪ **Arms race**

For Chinese strategic thinkers, the real danger and core challenge of AUKUS (and overall US alliance building in the region) is that it will spur an arms race in India. Ocean-Pacific. Although Beijing argues that the goal of its military buildup is to offset or weaken US military dominance in the region, rather than targeting any country in the region, officials China seems to be realizing that modernizing its military has left regional rivals looking for new weapons. Clearly, Beijing is realizing that its actions have contributed to an arms race in the region. What is more worrisome for China is that this arms race is played out between China on the one hand, and the United States and its allies and partners on the other. Therefore, Beijing must fight many countries at once.

Equally sad for China is that this arms race was created, promoted, and reinforced by the United States. Starting with the supply of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, China believes that the United States will receive and meet the growing need of its allies and partners in the region for systems. Newer and more advanced weapons, even if they are not nuclear-powered submarines.

Beijing must decide whether it should "give up," "pursue" or "intensify" further in this arms race. The options of "pursue" or "intensify" remind China of the collapse of the Soviet Union and how Moscow has exhausted its resources in an arms race with the United States.

"Give up" does not appear to be an option because Beijing is unlikely to give up its ambitions in the region. Beijing could call for arms control talks, but that would require compromise, and it is not clear whether China wants this at this point. However, AUKUS could force China to make tough decisions.

## **2: AUKUS' alliance role in between China**

### **2.1 The current status of AUKUS's alliance role in counterbalancing China.**

#### ▪ **Cause of the birth of AUKUS (AUS - UK - USA)**

##### • **From the Chinese elements**

It is China's economic, military growth and hegemonic ambitions and the pressure it exerts on Australia in both political, economic and military aspects that are the roots for the birth of the alliance. The most recent standout is Beijing's response to Australia's call for an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19. The way Beijing "counterattacks" Canberra makes Australia realize the urgent need to find ways to push back China's influence. Besides, despite international law, China has issued and unilaterally required countries to comply with their Maritime Law (effective from September 1, 2021). Faced with China's "unruly" acts, most countries in the international community reacted violently. US President J. Biden declared AUKUS "an investment in our greatest source of strength, our alliances, providing timely information to better respond to *today's threats to today's threats and in the future*. It is a new way of bringing together existing allies and partners of the United

States."

Under the agreement, Australia will build new defense technology nuclear submarines with the US and UK. And the world has changed a lot since April 2016, when Australia chose French diesel-powered submarine technology as a key weapon on the ocean floor. At that time, nuclear submarines were excluded because of the sensitivity, complexity of nuclear technology and high cost and because Australia was committed to strategic needs to be met by diesel submarines. The issues of sensitivity, complexity and cost remain, but the strategic environment has changed. That change is summarized by analysts into the phrase: "China under Xi Jinping.

#### ▪ **Features" outstanding" of US nuclear submarines compared to diesel-electric submarines**

Accepting the possibility of heavy fines, Australia bets on the US as an ally and the allure of submarine technology that it will gain deep stealth and longer range than diesel-electric technology. Diesel submarines do not have enough endurance to operate from Australia to a place as far as the South China Sea or the Strait of Malacca, but nuclear submarines are qualified to meet those requirements. At the same time, nuclear submarines have good stealth capabilities, are difficult to detect and have stronger attack capabilities. In addition, cooperating with the US, Australia will be able to participate in the US and UK nuclear submarine infrastructure, and build its own capabilities and skills. This is how the UK has been doing since 1958.

And there are also a number of other reasons leading to the establishment of the AUKUS Alliance such as:

#### ▪ **Australia with China**

##### • **Political**

The "trails of tension" dominate the bilateral relationship. Foreign policy and decisions to impose restrictions on Australian exports have led the Scott Morrison government and the Australia-China Business Council (ACBC) to reject any compromise on the table. negotiations, and at the same time called on the international community to cooperate against China's economic "coercion". China has always insisted that Australia needs to take concrete actions to improve relations between the two countries, after Canberra called for an international investigation into the origin of the Covid-19 epidemic earlier this year, issued an order ban Huawei, publishing "antagonistic" media reports about China - a series of moves that Beijing says have "poisoned" relations between the two countries. The Australian side complained that China had refused to negotiate at the ministerial level and only agreed to maintain negotiations at the consular level. In April 2020, Australia supported a global investigation into the origin of the corona virus that almost exclusively pointed to China.

In May 2020, Australia and the European Union (EU) successfully lobbied for the opening of an independent investigation into the Covid-19 pandemic at the World Health Assembly and received support. households in more than 120 countries.

Then, the diplomatic conflict escalated in December 2020 when a Twitter spat broke out between the two countries. The Australian government's 'confrontational' statements against China over the Covid-19 pandemic have raised concerns among Australian businesses and farmers about a trade war with China.

### ▪ **Economic**

Coal import ban has left large areas of China in the dark. Power outages in Shanghai and across southern China were interpreted by the government as "routine maintenance" of the power grid.

Shortages across China have pushed up coal prices, especially as the country's economy is in the process of recovering, so energy demand has increased sharply.

In the first week of June, power outages occurred across southern China, forcing many places to apply power distribution measures, the price of thermal coal rose to about \$120/ton, the highest level in a year. Three years, nearly three times higher than \$48/ton last year. This is a major factor in Australia's growing trade surplus.

According to economic experts, trade is like "a ferris wheel." Although Australia cannot export much coal to China, when China looks to source this fuel elsewhere, Australian coal has to fill the gaps there.

In terms of iron ore, the price of this ore is back above 200 USD/ton despite the efforts to reduce prices in the previous two weeks. In the long term, iron ore prices won't stay high forever as China finds new supplies in West Africa.

However, according to experts, Beijing will not be able to ignore the reliable supply of iron and steel in Australia because of the role of steel in the "health" of the economy as well as the country's military ambitions.

In terms of agricultural commodities, China does indeed ban imports of Australian barley, but not wheat.

China launched a series of trade blows to pressure Australia, but Canberra successfully neutralized it by redirecting export flows. When Australia proposed to open an independent international investigation into the origin of Covid-19, China angrily responded with a series of unprecedented trade sanctions, blocking the clearance of many key exports of the country. Australia.

Australia entered the competition with China not with a "nothing to lose" mentality. Wilson noted that the economic ties between the two countries have grown increasingly close over the years.

From 2009 to 2019, exports from Australia to the world's most populous country tripled, reaching about \$110 billion a year. Nearly half of bilateral trade is Australia's iron ore, an important source of raw materials to help China's economy satisfy its hunger for steel, serving as hot as the construction industry. In addition to coal, gas and agricultural products, Australia also has a significant income from Chinese students flocking to universities in the country.

For a long time, Canberra and Beijing tacitly agreed to put aside political disagreements in favor of mutual economic goals. The principle is maintained even in times of tense bilateral relations, helping trade turnover to grow steadily year by year.

But everything changed after the outbreak of Covid-19. In April 2020, the Australian government led efforts to call for an independent investigation into the origin of nCoV in Wuhan. China issued a statement protesting, and pre-empted Australia with trade blows, which were drawn up by strategic planners in Beijing. China opened with a threat from Ambassador Thanh Canh Nghiep about the possibility of boycotting Australian goods in the country's market. A month later, Beijing imposed an 80.5% import tax on Australian barley, sending the country's barley exporters reeling. The sanctions list extends from beef, wine, wheat, sheep wool, lobster, sugar, copper, timber, grapes, cotton to coal and

liquefied gas.

### ▪ **About culture**

In early December, when Australia joined the US and a number of other countries in deciding to diplomatically boycott the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing to protest China's human rights-related actions. Sino-Australian relations have become more strained after Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian posted on Twitter a photo showing Australian soldiers holding a knife to the neck of an Afghan child holding a sheep. Australia said this was a fake photo and demanded an apology from China, but China refused to apologize. According to Reuters news agency, this post has angered Australia. And seemingly "adding fuel to the fire", China's Global Times on December 6 published a cartoon for its commentary on Australia and also shared it on Twitter. The caricature shows a kangaroo (kangaroo, symbol of Australia) standing in the shadow of an eagle (an American symbol). "Clearly Australia has been a pawn in the US strategy in the region in recent years, especially under US President Donald Trump. In the US campaign against Huawei, Australia fired the first shot." The commentary published in the Global Times has a paragraph.

### ▪ **About technology**

China-Australia bilateral relations have been strained since 2018, when Australia became the first country to publicly ban Chinese tech giant Huawei from participating in the development of 5G networks in the country. China has announced an "indefinite" suspension of economic dialogue with Australia after Australia publicly banned Huawei Technologies from participating in the development of its 5G network in 2018.

### ▪ **UK vs China**

Overall, China has captured many markets by applying operating principles that allow Beijing to "unfair competition". Therefore, in order to maintain exchanges with Beijing, the EU must adopt a more offensive strategy.

On the other hand, China is very resolute in implementing the "One Belt One Road Initiative" that goes through Eastern European countries. In addition, the relationship with the European Union is often referred to as the "17 + 1" relationship, which implies the inclusion of Eastern European countries as a partner, thereby allowing China to negotiate directly with these countries.

Other disagreements over 5G and Huawei or the origin of Covid-19 also disrupted Sino-European relations. European businesses like Nokia and Ericsson can provide the EU with 5G network infrastructure, but Huawei has a better advantage in price and quality.

Political choices are also taken into account, especially in terms of security conditions, such as data protection, risk of espionage. In diplomatic terms, the EU does not oppose any company but avoids dependence on suppliers which can pose many risks... China sees it as protectionism in disguise. But European trade is still important nonetheless: The EU is the world's second-largest trading power and the world's largest exporter of goods and services. China, Europe and the United States accounted for a combined 46% of world merchandise trade in 2019. Liaou's imports and exports of goods with the rest of the world accounted for about 15% of global trade. As for goods, according to the European Statistics Agency, Europe exports the most to the United States (406 billion

euros) followed by China (210 billion euros). As for imports, Europe imports the most from China (394 billion euros), followed by the US (267 billion euros). On trade, the European Commission negotiates free trade agreements with the rest of the world, but member states have their say, through the European Council (consultation) and Parliament. Europe (with veto power). The official aim of the European Union is clearly stated in article 206 of the Treaty on the European Union's mode of operation: "The Union contributes, for the common good, to the harmonious development of world trade, gradual removal of restrictions on international trade and foreign direct investment, as well as the reduction of tariff and other barriers". Therefore, the economic policy with China as well as with other geographical regions (Canada, Japan...) is negotiation and trade development rather than protectionism. However, the EU has equipped itself with the tools to combat fraudulent practices, through a very strong competition law. These rules come with the trade protections discussed above. Anti-dumping is a prime example. China is often criticized for dumping to dominate the market. Therefore, the goal of European lawmakers today is to make a quick decision before it is too late because the market and market share are changing rapidly. In short, the EU intends to show strength in economic relations with China.

#### ▪ The United States counterbalances China

##### • Economic

It is an economic partnership, but it is contested for hegemony in the Pacific, and the two countries are suspicious of each other's intentions. Thus, both countries have adopted a cautious attitude toward each other as a potential enemy while at the same time being each other's extremely close economic partners. This relationship has been described by world leaders and academics as the world's most important bilateral relationship of the twenty-first century. As of 2019, the United States is the world's largest economy and China is the world's second largest, although China has a larger GDP as measured by PPP (written in off: PPP). Relations between the two countries were generally stable with some periods of open conflict, most notably during the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

##### • Political

Currently, China and the United States share common political, economic, and security interests, including but not limited to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, although there are unresolved concerns regarding the role of nuclear weapons of the Chinese government's democracy and human rights in both countries. China is the largest foreign creditor of the United States. The two countries are still in dispute over territorial issues in the South China Sea.

##### • About US - China technology

The world is currently entering the early stages of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The application of advanced technology in this industrial revolution is considered to have the potential to impact many aspects of socio-economic life on a much larger scale and extent than the three industrial revolutions before.

At the same time, the world political-security situation also changes rapidly, complicatedly and unpredictably, strongly affecting the security and development of all countries. The

United States under the administration of President Donald Trump has proposed the slogan "America First", "Make America Great Again", advocates a tougher stance towards China.

In that context, the US-China technology competition is emerging as the "focal point" of the strategic competition between the world's two leading economies, but more broadly, between the two superpowers with combined power. Outperforms the rest of the countries. Since the Cold War, the United States has faced China for the first time - a power whose economic size surpassed the US in 2014 (in purchasing power parity), not an ally, not in the same price system and have technological capabilities in some areas such as: 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), enough to pose a challenge to US security.

The 2017 US National Security Strategy considers China's technological capabilities a threat to its economic and military might. At the 18th Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore (June 2019), Acting US Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan accused China of "stealing" technology from other countries and warned of the risk. Espionage from the telecommunications network of the multinational corporation of network equipment and telecommunications Huawei. Faced with accusations from the US, on June 2, 2019, China published a white paper "China's position on China-US economic and trade consultations", stating that China does not "take stealing" technology, in an effort to self-develop the technology and protect intellectual property rights.

In fact, competition between the US and China in the field of technology is not new. However, from 2015 onwards, this issue has gradually become "the focal point" in the strategic competition between the two countries, stemming from a number of reasons:

The fact that pioneering countries take the lead in core technology areas of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, such as: 5G, AI, big data, internet of things (IoT), etc. strategic significance to national power. History shows that science - technology has always been the decisive factor that changes the balance of global forces. Moreover, in the Industrial Revolution 4.0, technological competition also affects the military power correlation between the US and China. Robotic and AI technologies can create automatic weapons, reconnaissance/damage machines with outstanding self-combat ability.

The technology gap between the US and China has been narrowed significantly, in some areas, such as: 5G, China's AI is even equal to or superior to that of the US. According to statistics of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2017, the US invested 484 billion USD in research and development (R&D), accounting for about 25% of global R&D, China invested \$443 billion, accounting for about 22% of global R&D. From 2016 to 2018, China's R&D investment was continuously at 2% of GDP. This poses an urgent requirement for the US to take action to maintain its technological superiority, as well as maintain its position as a global superpower when the US has a relative technological advantage over China. Country.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power, China has switched from a strategy of "hiding oneself and waiting for its time" to "trying to achieve achievements" with the ambition of becoming the world's leading technology power. The "Made in China 2025" plan (MIC 2025) announced by China in 2015, aims to form an autonomous technology-

creative capacity that will lead the world in 10 years in 10 fields including industry and technology. Technology-information, robotics, space technology, pharmaceutical chemistry. Thus, China has publicly announced its goals to go global in science and technology, directly creating challenges for the US.

## 2.2 Results of the role of the AUKUS alliance to counterbalance China

### Results for Australia and China

On May 18, 2020, the Ministry of Commerce of China imposed anti-dumping duty of 73.6% and anti-subsidy tax of 6.9% on barley imported from Australia. This decision takes effect from May 19 and has a term of 5 years.

From November 28, 2020, China started imposing tariffs on Australian wines with tariffs ranging from 107% to 212%.

In addition to Australian barley and wine, Beijing has also targeted Australian imports including coal, sugar, beef and lobster.

China suspended "indefinitely" its key economic dialogue with Australia in May 2021.

Chinese investment in Australia fell 61 per cent in 2020, hitting a six-year low, according to the Australian National University's 'Chinese Investment Database in Australia'.

### Results between the US and China

When the US imposes a 25% tariff on nearly \$200 billion of goods imported from China, starting on May 10 and is preparing to increase taxes on all Chinese goods from the end of this year. In response, Beijing imposed a retaliatory tax policy, starting from June 1.

The US administration is planning to limit Chinese investment in some important US industries. Through the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS - an interagency body chaired by the US Treasury Department), the US government seeks to prevent foreign companies from acquiring US companies.

In June 2021, US President Joe Biden issued an executive order, amending sanctions on Chinese companies that the previous administration of Donald Trump issued banning investment in nearly 60 businesses related to the military or operating in the surveillance field such as Xiaomi, offshore oil corporation CNOOC, Digital Technology Corporation specializing in Hikvision surveillance cameras, Huawei smartphone group.

China can use various administrative measures to make it difficult for American companies in China. For example: causing difficulties in the licensing process. Most businesses in China require a license. Chinese licensing authorities could delay the licensing process, or even revoke the licenses of US companies. Apply discriminatory rules. China has used corruption investigations, tax inspections, and even daily health and safety checks to impede the operations of foreign companies, even shutting down businesses this facility, for minor breaches of Chinese regulatory compliance. China could use similar measures to make American companies pay higher prices for manufacturing or retailing facilities in China. Delayed customs clearance. China has used such a measure against many US imports, causing goods to back up during times of strained bilateral relations.

### United Kingdom (UK) with China

The EU opened "sanctions day" with travel restrictions and asset freezes with 4 officials in Xinjiang and 1 entity in China.

Beijing immediately responded with similar sanctions targeting 10 European individuals and four entities, accusing them of infringing upon China's interests and sovereignty.

## 3: Solutions for the aukus alliance in dealing with china

- In order to reduce tension between the two sides, Australia and China proposed solutions.
- Abolish the imposition of tax assessments on each other.
- This year is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia, Mr. Xiao Qian said it was an opportunity to "relieve tensions". "China is willing to work with Australia so that the two sides meet in the middle of the road," Xiao Qian said, adding that the two governments should "joint efforts to promote the return of friendly relations to normal". review the past and look to the future.
- The Chinese side should allow all people in the Chinese territory to enjoy human rights (Hong Kong, Taiwan,...)
- Stop causing tension on the military side, such as not shining lasers on Aus spy planes, releasing students who are studying abroad in China, and the Aus side too to reduce the tension to bring the legal status to life. Diplomatic cooperation back to the original grow together
- China stops its actions in the South China Sea (Pacific).
- And freedom in Hong Kong, no high tax on international goods when entering the Chinese market.
- Stop causing tension with Aus, as well as with Taiwan, etc.
- Together towards prosperous development together in the present as well as in the future.
- In order to affirm the pressure on China in all aspects in terms of economy in recent years, the US has shown the world the strongest dominance.

Want to reduce tension in the East Sea in recent years. The US had a big voice during the period when China raised tensions in the East Sea

- The US and China are both the world's second largest economic partners, both sides do not have many conflicts, so most only apply sanctions to the economy. So there shouldn't be too much of an impact.

The AUKUS Security Alliance was announced on September 15, 2021, AUKUS is an alliance that encompasses a wide range of diplomatic and technological cooperation, from cybersecurity to artificial intelligence. The alliance is an institution. the new security regime of the world. This mechanism not only creates the foundation for extensive security and defense cooperation projects between the three countries in the coming time.

For the US, this is the strongest move in its resolve to counter what it sees as a growing threat from China, especially the maritime challenge Beijing poses in the Pacific. The United States not only shares the "jewels" of military technology, nuclear-powered submarine propulsion, with a second ally in 63 years (with Britain before that), but is also announcing strong signal of long-term commitment to the "free and open Indo-Pacific". The administration's idea of working with allies to counter the challenge from China is understandable. For Britain, the treaty represents its changing role on the global political chessboard, in line with efforts to promote a "global Britain" in the post-Brexit era and lays the groundwork for "the pivot to the Indo-Pacific" was outlined

in an overview of foreign and defense policy published in March.

For Australia, the development of a modern nuclear submarine fleet will help the country assert its military power and be able to patrol the sea longer.

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