

America's Military Deployment in the Asia-Pacific Region. "Deter China from Invading Taiwan"

Is the era of US's undisputed dominance in the seas around China is coming to an end?

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USA's Asia-Pacific policies undoubtedly underwent a tactical change with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that broke out in Gaza and has a tendency to spread to the region. However, it is not possible to talk about a change of direction strategically or geopolitically.

The change in the US's strategy to surround Russia first through Ukraine and then China through the Taiwan tension can only be described as a change in calendar.

The US occupation of Gaza and the necessity of deploying warships around the Middle East necessitated a new initiative against China in the diplomatic field. We saw this during the visits of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to the United States. It should also not be overlooked that these visits started with the Beijing visit of Henry Kissinger, the architect of the Chinese initiative in the 1970s (against the USSR).

However, neither America nor China are aware that the real struggle is the struggle for leadership on a global scale and they continue their preparations accordingly.

The Pentagon is in the process of deploying new medium-range missile systems to the Asia-Pacific region. The deployment is officially scheduled for next year and is intended to "deter China from invading Taiwan," according to General Charles A. Flynn, Commander of U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC). Flynn also announced that the US Army will deploy a launch platform for land-based versions of medium-range "Tomahawk" missiles.

"We tested them and we have one or two batteries today," General Flynn said. "We plan to deploy this system in 2024. I won't say where or when. But I will just say that we will deploy them."

Land-based missiles were banned under the 1987 US-USSR “Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.” The agreement banned land-based missiles with a range between 500 and 5,500 km. However, the USA unilaterally withdrew from this agreement in 2019.

The calculation behind this withdrawal was a possible war against China rather than Russia. The missile that the USA continued to develop, even though it was banned for this purpose, was the GLCM (Ground Launched Cruise Missile) called BGM-109G “Gryphon”. Gryphon is a subsonic cruise missile with a range of 2780 km and a single W84 thermonuclear warhead (capacity up to 150 kilotons).

Their ability to carry W80 thermonuclear warheads means that the old “Gryphon” has effectively been resurrected; the only difference is that its target is not Russia, but China and most likely North Korea. It is estimated that the missiles will be deployed in Japan, Philippines and Guam.

This includes the deployment of similar “Tomahawk” launchers by the US Marine Corps (USMC), while the US Navy already has multiple sea-based “Tomahawk” launch platforms. All of this clearly indicates a concerted effort to surround China with hostile military bases and infrastructure, forcing it to respond accordingly. Although Beijing prioritizes peace talks and détente, it continues to prepare for war and calculate superiority. Asia-Pacific and its busy sea routes are vital to the Asian giant’s predominantly export-oriented economy. In addition to being a nuclear power, China is also a country with hypersonic missile capability, along with Russia. It will not tolerate or leave unanswered any US-based deployment that could endanger its interests.

The USA’s strategy to surround China is based on the seas. However, the number of active US warships has decreased significantly since the end of the Cold War. Still, the USA relied on its underwater superiority with its advanced submarines.

The USA may now be losing this superiority. China is making advances in submarine technology and undersea detection capabilities.

US spy satellite images showed China earlier this year launching a nuclear-powered attack submarine with a pump-jet propulsion system instead of propellers. The noise reduction technology used in US submarines was seen for the first time in a Chinese submarine. Carlson, a former U.S. Navy officer, predicts the new Chinese submarines will be as quiet as the Russian Akula I-class attack submarines commissioned in the 1990s. The bulk of China’s current submarine technology comes from reverse-engineered diesel-electric submarines purchased from Russia. The ever-strengthening military ties between Moscow and Beijing suggest that Russia may be willing to share some of its advanced submarine technologies with China. The Western Pacific is becoming increasingly dangerous for US submarines.

A Chinese destroyer used sonar pulses to target and injure Australian navy divers a few months ago, Australia claims. Although a spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Defense denies it, the encounter suggests Western governments are taking a more active stance against foreign militaries that conduct maritime surveillance and other activities near China’s borders.

China is also making significant progress in submarine surveillance. China has nearly completed several underwater sensor networks, known as the “Underwater Great Wall,” in the South China Sea and other areas off its coast. According to Chinese military and

academic texts, the networks provide a much better ability to detect enemy submarines. In August, China conducted a more than 40-hour submarine-hunting exercise in the South China Sea involving dozens of Y-8 anti-submarine patrol aircraft. In October, the Chinese and Russian navies held a joint anti-submarine warfare exercise in the Bering Sea off the coast of Alaska.

All these developments mean that the final US-China showdown is still on the agenda and the era of the US's undisputed dominance in the seas around China is coming to an end.

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