

Global Warfare: U.S. Consolidates Military Network In Asia-Pacific Region

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The United States has six naval fleets and eleven aircraft carrier strike groups patrolling the world's oceans and seas. The U.S. Navy is as large as the world's next thirteen biggest navies combined [1].

Washington has as many aircraft carriers as all other nations together. Russia has one; China has none. The U.S. and its NATO allies – Britain (2), Italy (2), France (1) and Spain (1) – account for 17 of 22 in service in the world. Ten of the eleven American carriers are Nimitz class nuclear-powered supercarriers, substantially larger than most all non-U.S. ones. The U.S. Navy has all ten supercarriers in the world at the moment. [2]

U.S. aircraft carriers contain 70-80 planes and are available for deployment in all the world's oceans and most of its seas. They are escorted in their carrier groups by anti-air and anti-submarine warfare guided missile destroyers, anti-submarine warfare frigates, missile cruisers with long-range Tomahawks, and nuclear-powered fast-attack submarines. The U.S. also maintains between ten and twelve naval expeditionary strike groups which include amphibious assault ships and AH-1 Super Cobra attack helicopters in addition to destroyers, cruisers, frigates, attack submarines and P-3C Orion long-range anti-submarine and maritime surveillance aircraft.

With the reestablishing of the Navy's Fourth Fleet – its area of responsibility includes Central and South America and the Caribbean Sea – two years ago after a 58-year hiatus, the U.S. has six fleets that can be dispatched to all five oceans.

The Seventh Fleet (there is no First Fleet), based in Japan, is the largest of U.S. forward-deployed fleets and consists of as many as 40-60 ships, 200-350 aircraft and 20,000-60,000 Navy and Marine Corps personnel. Its area of responsibility takes in more than 50 million square miles of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, from Russia's Kuril Islands in the north to the Antarctic in the south, from the South China Sea to the Arabian Sea, South Africa to the Korean Peninsula, the Strait of Malacca to the Taiwan Strait.

When on the occasion of accepting the Nobel Peace Prize last December President Barack Obama referred to himself as the Commander-in-Chief of the world's sole military superpower he was not guilty of hyperbole if he was of hubris. His defense budget for next year is almost half as large as world military spending for 2008, the last year for which the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has compiled figures.

The U.S. has mutual defense treaties with six nations in the Asia-Pacific area: Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. The Pentagon has bases in Japan and South Korea, troops and base camps in the Philippines, satellite surveillance sites

in Australia and the use of air bases in Thailand.

Australia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are included in the American global missile interceptor network with Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and ship-based Standard Missile-3 deployments in those four nations. Last December it was announced that the U.S. will supply Taiwan with 200 Patriot anti-ballistic missiles and the following month it was revealed that Washington will also provide Taiwan with eight frigates capable of being upgraded to fire Standard Missile-3 interceptors. [3]

Last week the head of the Missile Defense Agency, Lieutenant General Patrick O'Reilly, told the U.S. Congress that, as Reuters summarized it, "Japan remains fully committed to building a linchpin multibillion-dollar missile interceptor with the United States," despite hopes to the contrary entertained after the Democratic Party of Japan's Yukio Hatoyama became prime minister last September.

Referring to the current Standard Missile-3 enhancement program, O'Reilly said that Japanese government officials "have indicated that they are in full support and their commitments are solid."

In regards to the upgraded interceptor missile, the SM-3 Block IIA, he added, "Within the next year, we will begin our discussions on production arrangements between the United States and Japan." [4]

On April 27 the U.S. renewed a military logistics agreement with Australia "allowing deployed Australian forces to exploit the vast logistics capability of the American military" and permitting "U.S. forces on operations to make use of Australian logistics."

"Since its inception, the agreement had ensured supply support and services to Australian and U.S. forces deployed to all parts of the world wherever they were operating together....That included mutual support during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan." [5]

Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Marine General James Cartwright, is visiting New Zealand this week to consult with the country's top military commanders and defense minister.

Cartwright is "the first vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to visit New Zealand since the position was established...." [6] His visit comes two weeks after NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, U.S. Admiral James Stavridis, made similar trips to New Zealand and Australia.

Last month New Zealand's Defence Minister Wayne Mapp announced that joint military exercises with the U.S. would resume after 23 years, since the nation's 1987 ban on the docking of nuclear-powered warships and submarines.

New Zealand has been brought back into the fold in part by providing NATO with over 200 troops for the war in Afghanistan. Australia, with over 1,500 soldiers assigned to the International Security Assistance Force in the nation, is the largest non-NATO troop contributor for the war. Last year it unveiled plans for the most extensive military buildup in its post-World War Two history. [7]

On April 23 the U.S. and India launched the ten-day Malabar 2010 military exercises after “Ships, submarines and aircraft from the U.S. Navy’s 7th Fleet arrived in Goa” to engage in maneuvers which include training for “surface and anti-submarine warfare, coordinated gunnery exercises [and] air defense....” [8] The U.S. contribution consists of two guided missile destroyers, a guided missile frigate, a guided missile cruiser, a nuclear fast-attack submarine, P-3 Orion anti-submarine and surveillance aircraft, SH-60B Seahawk helicopters and Navy SEAL (Sea, Air and Land) special forces.

The Malabar war games have been conducted jointly by the U.S. and India since 1992 (except for 1998-2001 after India carried out nuclear tests), but last year included Japan, and Malabar 2007 was a five-nation operation held in the Bay of Bengal with the U.S. and India joined by Australia, Japan and Singapore, leading to suspicions of U.S. designs for an Asia-Pacific analogue of NATO.

As Malabar 2010 was underway, “warships, combat aircraft and soldiers” from Australia, Britain, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore (all Commonwealth nations) began Exercise Bersama Shield 2010 “on the Malaysian peninsula and in the South China Sea.” [9]

Malaysia is among a minority of maritime states not to have joined the U.S.-launched Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) whose architect was then U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton. Established in 2003 as “a global effort that aims to stop trafficking of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors,” [10], it has grown to incorporate over 90 of the world’s 148 coastal nations. [11]

China, Indonesia and Malaysia have refused to join, though South Korea did in May of last year, and the first three countries along with Iran and North Korea – the states used as justification for the PSI – view the U.S.-led global surveillance, interdiction and boarding operation with deep concern and doubts about its legality, as it operates without a United Nations mandate, can be argued to circumvent and violate international maritime law, and in effect grants the U.S. and its allies the self-arrogated right to conduct piracy on the high seas.

“Launched on May 31, 2003, U.S. involvement in the PSI stems from the U.S. National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction issued in December 2002. That strategy recognizes the need for more robust tools to stop proliferation of WMD around the world, and specifically identifies interdiction as an area where greater focus will be placed. President Obama strongly supports the PSI. On April 5, 2009 in Prague, the President called on the international community to make PSI a ‘durable international institution.’” [12]

The PSI has been effectively if not formally extended into the Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa with the U.S.-run Combined Task Force 150 and Combined Task Force 151 warship deployments. Recently the South Korean navy assumed command of Combined Task Force 151 from Singapore. Combined Task Force 150 contributing navies include those of the U.S., Britain, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, Spain and Turkey.

Last week it was announced that NATO welcomed South Korea as the 46th nation supplying it with troops for the war in Afghanistan. On March 29 Mongolia became the 45th. [13] Singapore also has troops serving under NATO and until this year Japan was providing naval

support to the U.S. war effort there.

On April 26 the China Daily reported that Rear Admiral Yang Yi, formerly in charge of strategic studies at the Chinese army's National Defense University, said, "The United States is the greatest perceived threat to the People's Liberation Army" and that "the US was the only country capable of threatening China's national security interests in an all-round way." [14]

Another Chinese news source on the same day wrote of U.S. Prompt Global Strike (PGS) plans to be able to strike any target on earth within sixty minutes and the Pentagon's recent test flights of the X-37B orbital space plane and the Falcon hypersonic spy plane, reporting that "Chinese space technology expert Pang Zhihao said the spaceship...aids the PGS program, which he said could be a potential threat to world peace." [15]

The previous day London's Sunday Times acknowledged that "Obama's interest in Prompt Global Strike (PGS)...has alarmed China and Russia...." [16]

U.S. fast strike and first strike global missile and space strategy and its expansion of military alliances and networks in the Asia-Pacific area are rightly seen as threats to China and Russia. And to international security and peace.

Notes

- 1) Measured by battle fleet tonnage.
- 2) A supercarrier is currently defined as an aircraft carrier displacing 70,000 or more tons.
- 3) U.S.-China Military Tensions Grow
Stop NATO, January 19, 2010

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/01/20/u-s-china-military-tensions-grow>

- 4) Reuters, April 21, 2010
- 5) Xinhua News Agency, April 27, 2010
- 6) Ibid
- 7) Australian Military Buildup And The Rise Of Asian NATO
Stop NATO, May 6, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/28/australian-military-buildup-and-the-rise-of-asian-nato>

- 8) Navy Newsstand, April 23, 2010
- 9) Agence France-Presse, April 26, 2010
- 10) U.S. Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c10390.htm>

- 11) Proliferation Security Initiative And U.S. 1,000-Ship Navy: Control Of
World's Oceans, Prelude To War
Stop NATO, January 29, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/26/proliferation-security-initiative-and-us-1000-ship>

[-navy-control-of-worlds-oceans-prelude-to-war](#)

12) U.S. Department of State, Ibid

13) Mongolia: Pentagon Trojan Horse Wedged Between China And Russia
Stop NATO, March 31, 2010

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/03/31/mongolia-pentagon-trojan-horse-wedged-between-china-and-russia>

14) China Daily, April 26, 2010

15) Global Times, April 26, 2010

16) Sunday Times, April 25, 2010

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