

Militarism and Diplomacy in the South China Sea: The Propaganda Machine Is Mobilized

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Global Research, February 14, 2023

[CovertAction Magazine](#) 11 February 2023

Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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A recent Pentagon conference on psychological warfare [noted](#) that the forces of indoctrination "cannot wait until a crisis begins." A high-ranking chief at the Department of Defense suggested a model for propaganda, in no way new: "Look at marketing...What makes people drink Coke, what makes people drink Pepsi?" In short, public "marketing." "I think," the chief lauded, that "the private sector has used the information domain through marketing to the Nth degree...And I think we as a department and in the national security enterprise, need to be able to pull some of those lessons."

In fact, the "lessons" of effective indoctrination and public persuasion have been perfected in the domain of U.S. government propaganda, in conjunction with a servile free press. A natural prediction of this is that in discussions of war, peace, diplomacy, violence and so on, essentially any fact that is unfit for U.S. and Western goals will be either ignored, distorted or falsified, and Western geopolitical ambitions will be revered to the point of almost being beyond what words can describe. In the case of Western imperialism in today's Asia, this is precisely verified.

I. Aggression in Fact and Fiction

The Biden administration [declared](#) early in 2022 that official American policy in Asia and the Pacific sought domination and control over "every corner of the region," while deploring Chinese "coercion and aggression" which "spans the globe"—a statement which is too ludicrous to comment, and was in fact ignored by the media, though presumably not for that reason. The military branch is usually [quite honest](#) about intentions: "This grand strategy uses," quite effectively, "security and financial institutions to both bound and reshape China's power within the system to bolster U.S." imperial power (U.S. Air Force's journal). Putting all euphemisms aside, the West must ensure that "all nations can benefit"—that is, all nations that obediently serve the U.S.—"from resource-rich" assets in Southeast Asia, as the Chief of Naval Operations, Michael Gilday, [put it](#). Surely actions confirm the urgency among elites of achieving this.

Thus, the U.S. has [stationed](#) about 375,000 troops in the Indo-Pacific, of which 80,000 are in South Korea and Japan—while conducting constant offensive large-scale military operations aimed at China, through what is an offensive “global NATO” in Asia, to use the [phrase](#) of Liz Truss.

Throughout 2021, **U.S. and European “warships and planes carried out more than 2,000 close spying operations aimed at China,” including at the “coastal area of the Chinese mainland.”** Although lavishly funded Western news agencies mysteriously found minimal opportunity to report on the incidents, the reader of the Asian press could have learned that Western “strike groups” in “the South China Sea” nearly [doubled](#) their activity since 2020—repeatedly to the protest of the Chinese and in fact [most of Asia](#), though to the enthusiastic celebration of the Western liberal and humane press.

This is virtually a continuation of the policy of the Trump administration, from which Biden is scarcely different—insofar as not being more hawkish, which the one-party-two-factions military oligarchy in Washington ensures. **Therefore, the U.S. government [declared](#) in mid-2020 that the West must mobilize against the “Marxist-Leninist regime” and its “desire for global hegemony of Chinese communism,” which threatens “freedom everywhere.”**

Finally, we became [aware](#) of the “threat they pose to our very way of life.” The “ambitions for ideological control” of “Joseph Stalin’s successor” (Xi Jinping) are “not limited to his own people,” and violent Chinese global control “is well under way.”

Predictably enough, this was met with not a horse laugh, but rather a deluge of awe. However, liberal critics had their reservations: This policy “is meaningful only if it is accompanied by a firm commitment by the Trump administration to a robust and coordinated policy” ([NYT](#)). “China’s strategy also aims to encircle the West” (naturally, no map depicting stationed military forces was presented in the article), and so the West must strike back “in the decisive battle,” “hopefully led once again by the United States” and its “enlightened leadership,” to [quote](#) the former director of national intelligence, Dan Coats.

However, not everyone was satisfied, since confrontation with China had to be conducted with “unalterable counterforce at every point,” as *New York Times* columnists [demanded](#). Crucially, the Trump administration [escalated](#) the provocations against China—both maritime and by air— setting new [records](#) of daily U.S. military operations and aircraft spying raids against China, and stationing tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel in the Asian region.

Of course, nothing comparable is done by Chinese vessels and aircraft off the coast of Miami, London, Normandy and so on. It is simply taken for granted that we have the right to do anything we feel like, and that this has to be received with stoic equanimity by those who we deem as the Enemy.

Needless to say, the European satellites—convinced that the Boss will share a piece of the cake—have happily joined in on the one-sided military confrontation off the shores of China. Thus, the main Asian diplomatic journal, *East Asia Forum*, [noted](#):

Since 2016, France has mobilized support for a European presence with annually rotating forces which have expanded with participation from a growing number of countries...The German frigate Bayern was deployed in the Indo-Pacific from August

2021 to February 2022 to conduct operations...and exercise with the navies of Australia, Singapore, Japan and the United States. Germany's contribution was considered a key decision in forging French-German unity on building a permanent and effective European military presence in the Indo-Pacific. The United Kingdom has also delivered significant contributions to Indo-Pacific defense, decoupling a carrier strike group in 2021 and two warships permanently in 2022.

The Free press insists on the Chinese leader being "the modern-day emperor he has now become," and China now "hunkering down" in a position of hostility toward the West—that is from David Ignatius at *The Washington Post*, who [concedes](#) that the Chinese perceive "bullying" from "America" with their massive military build-up along China's borders, aiming to "win the 21st century."

In short, to "make it harder for Beijing to maintain growth," as the technical Asian press [openly](#) points out. However, he neatly left the last parts out, naturally. In fact, they are "driven by the leader's vision of an ascendant and uncompromising China," unwilling to give the West any chance of respite from its overwhelming confrontational stance—unquestionably "a combative approach," [informed](#) *The Wall Street Journal*.

Incidentally, in that same day, international wire services (*Agence France-Presse*) [published](#) an official declaration by Xi Jinping, **who noted that the U.S. and China have to "find ways to get along" through diplomacy, and invited Washington to increased "cooperation."** China is "willing to work with the U.S. to give mutual respect, coexist peacefully" and "find ways to get along." That went unreported in the major press, though the vast Western readership of, for example, *The Hindu* had access to the statements.

The very fact that the Western powers are openly and explicitly provoking China with massive military infrastructure in order to stifle its progress through a military coalition of powerful Western and Asian countries, constantly building new military bases in the South China Sea, is unmentionable in the Free press. However, as one moves away from the typical propaganda channels, and closer to the military strategists, official diplomatic documents and so on, one can discern the obvious.

Thus, a study conducted by the U.S. Air Force [observed](#) that

"There is an abundance of evidence that documents China's discontent with US SRO," military reconnaissance operations off China's coast, and that the country is "extremely prickly about sovereignty-related issues."

The study points out that "China's sensitivity in this area is further aggravated by 'ever-present aerial reconnaissance aircraft off the coast,'" conceding that such action "compels Beijing to 'defend their sovereignty,'" including "with military means." Consider this report [published](#) in perhaps the most respected international Asian journal, *South China Morning Post*:

As one senior naval officer put it, [constant American and European military operations in the South China Sea] are "an in your face, rub your nose in it operation that lets people know who is the boss." The Donald Trump administration increased the tempo of U.S. military activities in the South China Sea...The situation became so fraught that

Beijing feared an attack against its installations. Yet President Joe Biden's administration has continued fervently down this path and even worsened the situation ... **The U.S. now undertakes an average of four [military ship] missions a day over the South China Sea. That is about 1,500 a year.**"

That is done in combination with large-scale offensive attack exercises by NATO and its regional allies against China, rarely causing any raised eyebrows at home.

Notice that it is not perceived as relevant, then, to stop these military campaigns, or that any question could arise regarding the justness of such calculated provocations, which once again illustrates the shared consensus in an obedient culture. Rather, we must learn "the hard lessons about hard power" in order to not "succumb to the utopian path of disarmament," and we must not "allow the fear of escalation to dominate our decisions," as Representative Mike Gallagher (R-WI) [noted](#) in a *Wall Street Journal* piece.

Speaking of which, the same *Journal* [warned](#) us the next day that the West now faces an "uncompromising China that challenges" us, and has "championed a combative approach in dealing with the West." You will notice that this was printed as a news article, not an opinion piece, thus exposing the paper's actual role as a servile tool of state propaganda.

Another window of opportunity for diplomacy [opened](#) itself in mid-November, when the Chinese president noted that the West and China "should respect each other, coexist in peace, pursue win-win cooperation" and avoid a "collision." We do not know whether this was seriously meant, principally because the call was rejected by the West, which responded by saying that it will "continue to compete vigorously"—"compete," meaning militarize and massively provoke near the shores of China. As we will discover, this sort of response to diplomacy generalizes.

II. The concocted nuclear peril and the predictable response

Using the Chinese "threat" to keep the domestic population in line, the military sector now has free access to unlimited welfare funding to high-tech industry, known in Newspeak as "defense spending." "The imperative to innovate is back," as military journals [celebrate](#). Consider in this context the concern over alleged mindless Chinese "nuclear militarism," a topic of extreme furor and concern in both Western press and government agitprop (essentially the same thing). The media has been saturated with headlines pointing out all kinds of threats to nuclear non-proliferation and expansion. As with every depoliticized and indoctrinated culture, the usual suspects are always fit for attack. In our case: North Korea, Iran and, crucially, China.

Thus, the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review warns of the "PRC" and its ever-increasing ability to conduct "nuclear coercion," [repeated](#) by Pentagon and State Department officials, who regularly decry "China's nuclear modernization and its rapid expansion."

That is a staple in government propaganda and, hence, the Free press, which refuses to expose it as the obvious fraud that they in fact know it to be. The best grasping at the straw to illustrate the global intent of the "rogue regime brandishing nuclear weapons and threatening its neighbors" (WSJ editorial [commenting](#) on both China and NK I) was in the summer of 2021, in which *The Washington Post* [claimed](#) that "China is building more than 100 new missile silos" to be armed with nuclear warheads. That number later increased, though that cannot be said about the presenting of evidence. The entire thing was quickly

[exposed](#) as falsification, as these “turn out to be wind turbines” (e.g., *TFI Global* and *Council on Pacific Affairs*). However, that lie was simply too useful to let go of, and the actual facts of the matter are yet more or less literally unreported in the West, and the ploy has now been forgotten after having properly served its propaganda function.

The intelligentsia [made sure](#) to not miss this splendid opportunity of showing complete loyalty to the state disinformation system. Former CIA agent and Atlantic Council propagandist **Matthew Kroenig** warned that America “should continue with bipartisan plans to modernize U.S. nuclear weapons. In addition, the Pentagon” has to be able to “meet its deterrence requirements with existing stockpile numbers,” and beyond.

The CIA’s and State Department’s favored China analysts declared that “China is now shifting to war-fighting mode.”

“Beijing’s refusal to talk and its insistence on secrecy about its arsenal means Washington has no choice but to believe Beijing intends to build a bigger nuclear force than America’s” (Gordon Chang)—that is, to build 14-20 times that of their existing amount of nuclear weapons. The falsifications continued well after the entire episode had been exposed, with media pretending not to know, while [describing](#) the “explosive growth” of Chinese nuclear arms as “breathtaking, and frankly, the word ‘breathtaking’ may not be enough” (*The Sun*, U.S. edition).

Incidentally, had the free press actually been concerned about “explosive growth” of nuclear arms, they would certainly have had no difficulty finding and reporting material documenting such “breathtaking” developments. Just prior to the carefully orchestrated furor about Chinese windmills purported to be “nuclear silos,” the UK *openly* [declared](#) that it would “expand” its “nuclear warhead stockpile by over 40%,” closer to 300 warheads in total.

This fact, too, was totally useless for the purposes of ideological warfare, and was therefore quickly forgotten in the ever-expanding memory hole. However, this is marginal compared to the nuclear escalation that by far puts in the shade other countries’ combined such. Namely, the dramatic American nuclear expansion program—which, of course, also happens to be the one never mentioned in the Free press. It consists of new nuclear missiles, strategic bombers (the newly revealed B-21), submarines and so on, which in total will cost \$1.7 trillion, according to [congressional numbers](#)—all in all an impressive escalation.



The new B-21 bomber. [Source: [military-today.com](https://www.military-today.com)]

Biden’s Nuclear Posture Review calls for “Modernizing U.S. nuclear forces,” and an openness to a first nuclear strike, which is in order with earlier policy of the only country to have used the nuclear bomb on a population.

The Union of Concerned Scientists [deemed](#) the Review to be “a terrifying document” that “not only keeps the world on a path of increasing nuclear risk, in many ways it increases that risk.” Somewhat of an understatement.

Not everyone agrees, however. **Nuclear weapons producers and retired military generals [inform us](#) that nuclear bombs must serve “as a mainstay of deterrence,” and defense**

“is based on our demonstrated capabilities and the will power to use nuclear weapons.” A no-first-use policy of nuclear bombs must, therefore, be regarded as “narcissistic, self-indulgent, dangerous and destabilizing” (C. Robert Kehler, retired general and board member of Maxar Technologies).

You will notice that the entire publication about the alleged threat posed to us by China from which we have to defend ourselves is complete hypocrisy; apparently the West is not obliged to non-proliferation.

That is reserved for our adversary—a funny thought, given that China has about the same number of nuclear weapons as countries such as France, Israel or the UK. The U.S., on the other hand, has 14 times the amount China does, is spending close to two trillion dollars on nuclear weapons modernization, and is carrying out massive provocation off the Chinese border. Though this militarism and nuclear arms proliferation is off the agenda, for reasons obvious enough, while the media goes along.

No sane person would like China, or any other nation for that matter, to have a nuclear arsenal, let alone for them to expand it. Therefore the first thing one who is seriously concerned about Chinese nuclear armament would do, naturally, is to not act in such a way which is known to advance it. **In fact, there is a perfectly clear way to stop China from arming itself, and everyone in the government knows it. That is: for the West to stop carrying out massive military provocations against the Chinese.**

Thus, military experts, in Senate hearings, [note](#) that U.S. nuclear bombs and military infrastructure established in southern Asia “pose threats to China’s ability to retain an assured retaliation capability” and to its ability “to deter” a “first strike by the United States.” “So what accounts for this pattern of change and continuity in China’s strategic posture?” the Senate asked—“Several external drivers play important roles. Foremost among them are developments by the United States [and its allies],” deploying their military forces in China’s backyard, and massively increasing their already overwhelming nuclear capacities.

In the technical diplomatic literature it is [conceded](#) all the time that “China” is merely sending “a response to the gratuitous, unrestrained nuclear policies” of the U.S. and its allies. “Massively outgunned, China is acting rationally and predictably...By modernizing its nuclear force, the United States is giving China every reason to expand its own” (*Foreign Affairs*). Or to [quote](#) military analysts in *Forbes*: The (exaggerated) Chinese modernization of its military and nuclear forces “is a rational response to decades of American provocations. And if those provocations don’t end, rivals such as China are sure to develop even *more* capable nukes.”



Source: historyproject9.weebly.com

“China” does this, notes Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, one the leading arms-control experts, “because they want to be able to have a secure second-strike capability” were the U.S. to attack—as

it regularly simulates in military exercises off China's borders, together with a hostile alliance of nuclear-armed nations. And so the technical military analyses go, all in virtually the same tune and all equally unreported to the general public.

With the U.S. knowingly acting precisely to increase the Chinese nuclear threat against itself, we can discard the alleged concern and fear over Chinese nuclear arms. **The trivial truism that the U.S. is knowingly and actively driving the Chinese to the path of militarization, is far beyond what can be perceived in the Free press.** Although the person who fanatically reads the entire press can learn about these facts, one will likely not read the very plausible reality that U.S. policy is in fact designed to induce this Chinese response, as a cover for further aggressive military escalation and renewal. Though all of this is inaudible among the current jingoist blast, favored by hawks and doves alike.

Reaching a frenzied pitch in the fall and winter of 2022, a media barrage sought to inform that, on nuclear talks, there is “zero give on Beijing's side,” noting “the fact that Xi” will not “negotiate on any of the contentious issues...because of his long record of deception,” to [quote](#) *The Washington Post's* Josh Rogin.

A few days earlier, the same *Post* [warned](#) in an editorial that “the United States faces” a menace “who might prove far less willing to sign up for new treaty limits”—that is, “China, which has refused to engage in negotiations about its nuclear forces.” Obviously the West has to respond accordingly, and so it “is time for diplomatic rock ‘n’ roll. Let's prevent whining from isolationists,” to use [advice](#) given in *The Wall Street Journal* by John Bolton.

The record of diplomatic proposals is clear and easy to discover, had there been an interest to do so. But the actual facts are entirely unacceptable to Western government propaganda, and are therefore simply not facts. Namely, that China on multiple occasions has signaled its willingness to establish a nuclear weapons settlement.

Let us pick just a few examples. In 2020 and 2021, there were concerns over how to “bring the Chinese to the negotiating table” to be held between the U.S. and Russia in the START talks in early 2021, as then U.S. top arms negotiator Marshall Billingslea, [put it](#).

Shortly after this announcement, the Chinese leadership [declared](#) that it would be “happy” to participate to reach a settlement on the nuclear issue, “happy to participate the next day.” But on one condition: The U.S. dramatically reduces its nuclear arsenal—a perfectly sensible condition, given the astronomical discrepancy between China's and the U.S.'s arsenals. It is not as if the U.S. ignored the proposal. It responded. Namely, it responded by totally rejecting the diplomatic proposal, boasting that it would outspend China “into oblivion”: “We know how to win these [arms] races and we know how to spend the adversary into oblivion,” Billingslea [trumpeted](#).

Last year, in November 2021, Xi Jinping informed, that “China supports ASEAN's [Southeast Asia's intergovernmental body] efforts to build a nuclear weapon-free zone, and is prepared to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone as early as possible.” “Beijing's demand for a nuclear-free Southeast Asia comes as the U.S. and UK empower their ally Australia with nuclear-armed submarines,” as the Asian press [noted](#).

But none of this can be reported in the West, since it would give the game away, and would render unusable the inversion of fact suggesting that the West is hopelessly trying to reach a settlement, facing “Chinese unwillingness to join any arms-control regime in the

foreseeable future” ([Global Asia](#)). That is not allowed to happen, since the cover for aggression against China would be exposed for what it plainly is.

One could extend the discussion beyond merely the questions of militarism and diplomacy in Western conduct toward China, though very little unexpected is to be discovered. It was once observed by leaders of the early modern PR and propaganda industry that “it is as impossible to imagine a genuine democracy without the science of persuasion,” namely propaganda, “as it is to think of a totalitarian state without coercion.”

This never ceases to be verified. In short, the behavior of the intellectual classes in their analysis of Western imperial policy in Asia is yet another illustration of how close we are to reaching “the ideal of a propaganda-managed democracy.”^[1]

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Note

1. Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy: Corporate Propaganda Versus Freedom and Liberty* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 19, 82.

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