

# The US Is Fanning the Flames of War with China.

## Prof. Marjorie Cohn

U.S. actions intensify the danger of nuclear war in the Asia-Pacific.

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*The United States is gunning for war with China. By cozying up to Taiwan and arming it to the teeth, **President Joe Biden** is undermining the "One China" policy which has been the cornerstone of U.S.-China relations since 1979.*

*The Biden administration is enlisting South Korea and Japan to encircle China. The U.S. military is conducting provocative military maneuvers that exacerbate the conflict in the South China Sea. Biden is escalating tensions with China and intensifying the danger of nuclear war in the Asia-Pacific. And Republican presidential candidates are also [fanning the flames](#) of war with China.*

In March, U.S. Director of National Intelligence **Avril Haines** called China the "[leading and most consequential threat to U.S. national security](#)." Chinese **President Xi Jinping** stated,

"Western countries — led by the U.S. — have implemented all-round containment, encirclement and suppression against us."

The Biden administration has "doubled down on the most insanely bellicose aspects of Trump administration policies, especially over Taiwan, which the U.S. had long recognized as part of China," Peter Kuznick, professor of history and director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University, told *Truthout*.

More than 90 percent of the most advanced microchips in the world are manufactured in Taiwan. The chips are used to power our smartphones, train artificial intelligence systems and guide missiles. The Trump administration imposed heavy tariffs on Chinese imports to cut off China's access to the software technology and equipment required to build the advanced chips.

Biden has maintained and dramatically expanded Trump's coercive economic measures and imposed a blockade on advanced semiconductors. "Official U.S. policy is to make a nation of almost a billion and a half people poorer," [David Brooks wrote in \*The New York Times\*](#).

In 1979, the United States declared that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was "[the sole legal Government of China](#)." That policy was consistent with UN General Assembly Resolution 2758, which recognized the PRC as the only legitimate government of China and one of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

"But now the 'One China' policy seems a relic of a foregone era and the U.S. seems hellbent on militarizing the Pacific in order to contain China," Kuznick, who is coauthor with Oliver Stone of the *New York Times* best-selling book and documentary film series *The Untold History of the United States*, said. "This reckless policy will, if we are lucky, lead to a new Cold War. If we are unlucky, it portends a third world war — one that our species might not survive."

Biden has repeatedly stated that the United States would use military force to defend Taiwan if it is attacked by China. The Biden administration has provided Taiwan with [\\$619 million worth of high-tech arms](#).

Then-House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** visited Taiwan in August 2022, angering China, which staged extensive war games around Taiwan in response.

In April, Taiwanese **President Tsai Ing-wen** met with a bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation in Simi Valley, California, the most high-profile meeting between U.S. and Taiwanese leaders on U.S. soil since 1979. The Chinese Embassy called the encounter a "[serious mistake](#)." The foreign ministry responded by pledging to "take resolute and forceful measures" to defend its territorial integrity.

At the G20 summit in Indonesia in November 2022, [Xi told Biden in no uncertain terms](#):

"The Taiwan question is at the very core of China's core interests, the bedrock of the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and the first red line that must not be crossed."

## **The U.S. Is the "Most War-Making Country" in the World**

Speaking on a panel at the Veterans For Peace (VFP) annual convention on August 25, Kuznick remarked that China has not been at war with any country since 1979. By contrast, the United States has had only 16 years of peace in its 247 years. "The U.S. is the most war-making country" in the world, Kuznick said.

K.J. Noh, an activist scholar who writes about the geopolitics of the Asian continent, also spoke on the VFP panel. Noh described South Korea as key to the U.S.'s escalating war on China. "The United States has operational control over South Korean troops," Noh said. The U.S. is also "weaponizing Taiwan into an imperial outpost for war."

The third panelist was Simone Chun, a researcher and activist specializing in inter-Korean relations and U.S. foreign policy on the Korean Peninsula. She echoed Noh's comments, calling South Korea a "pawn in Washington's march to war against China." South Korea, Chun said, is a "subcontractor in the new Cold War."

In an article for *Truthout* in March, Chun [characterized](#) “[t]he U.S. military encirclement of China” as threatening “to escalate into an Asia-Pacific war, with the Korean Peninsula at the focal point of this dangerous path.” South Korea has 30,000 combat-ready U.S. troops on 73 U.S. military bases in the small country.

Since the Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia” in 2012, 60 percent of U.S. naval forces have been transferred to the Asia-Pacific, and 400 of the 800 U.S. military bases worldwide and 130,000 troops “are now circling China,” Chun wrote. The U.S.’s “goal is to force China’s hand by triggering and escalating a hybrid war on multiple fronts, including military, [technology](#), economy, information and media.”

South Korea and Japan are encircling China from the north, and Australia and Indonesia are surrounding China from the south. South Korea’s right-wing president, **Yoon Suk-yeol**, welcomes the deployment of U.S. tactical weapons to South Korea and intends to arm his country with nuclear weapons, [according to Chun](#).

The U.S., U.K. and Australia (“AUKUS”) announced in March that Australia would buy three nuclear-powered submarines by the “early 2030s.” The Chinese mission to the UN condemned the deal, [tweeting](#), “The irony of AUKUS is that two nuclear weapons states who claim to uphold the highest nuclear non-proliferation standard are transferring tons of weapons-grade enriched uranium to a non-nuclear-weapon state, clearly violating the object and purpose of the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty].”

The nuclear submarine cooperation plan released today by [#AUKUS](#) is a blatant act that constitutes serious nuclear proliferation risks, undermines international non-proliferation system, fuels arms races, and hurts peace and stability in the region.

— Chinese Mission to UN (@Chinamission2un) [March 13, 2023](#)

In October 2022, the U.S. announced it would deploy as many as [six nuclear-capable B-52 bombers](#) to northern Australia, within striking range of China.

## **U.S. Promotes Expansion of NATO Into the Asia-Pacific**

The United States is promoting the expansion of NATO into the Asia-Pacific “to close the military circle around China,” Chun writes. The U.S. seeks to extend the influence of NATO to Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Chun identifies three significant aspects of [the U.S. strategy](#): 1) stepped-up remilitarization of Japan; 2) “revitalization of extremist hardline North Korea policies” in Washington and Seoul and 3) escalation of “belligerent wargames targeted at China and North Korea.”

After World War II, the United States imposed a “peace constitution” on Japan but later pushed aggressively for Japanese rearmament to further the U.S.’s strategy to dominate the Asia-Pacific. The United States considers the remilitarization of Japan “the linchpin of U.S. security interests in Asia,” Chun notes.

The U.S. policy on North Korea is aimed at magnifying the purported “North Korea threat” and using it as a pretext to enlist South Korea and Japan in its scheme to contain China.

Moreover, the joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea are dress rehearsals for an attack on and occupation of North Korea and the “decapitation” of its leadership — a “plan for regime collapse and occupation,” Chun writes.

## **The South China Sea Is a Flashpoint**

There are competing claims of sovereignty over bodies of land and their contiguous waters in the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei oppose China’s historical claim to 90 percent of the South China Sea. This has led to tensions that have been exacerbated by U.S. military maneuvers in the sea.

The [South China Sea](#) is one of the busiest maritime shipping routes, connecting it with China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Singapore, the Strait of Malacca and the Pacific Coast of the U.S. In 2016, more than 21 percent of global trade, totaling \$3.37 trillion, transited through the South China Sea.

In July 2016, the Arbitral Tribunal in The Hague [ruled](#) for the Philippines in its case against China. The tribunal determined that China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea and its actions toward the Philippines did not comply with international law. China refused to abide by the ruling.

“American warships regularly move around the restricted area of China’s major islands under the range of Chinese guns, and at any time, due to some incident, military conflict between the two powerful superpowers could explode,” Professor Dmitri Valentinovic Mosiakov [wrote](#) in the *International Review of Contemporary Law* of the *International Association of Democratic Lawyers*. “US military expeditions, which are supposed to demonstrate the US commitment to the defense of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, in fact only reinforce and justify such activities of China’s military preparation.”

Mosiakov added that in July 2022, “the United States decided that it was necessary to remind the People’s Republic of China who was to determine the rules of navigation in the South China Sea. Another US destroyer sailed into waters where China had declared a ban for military ships.”

The U.S. military does not belong in the South China Sea and its provocative actions compound the danger of an already tense situation.

“The greatest threat to peace and stability in northeast Asia is the U.S. Indo-Pacific military encirclement of China,” Chun [wrote](#).

Likewise, Kuznick told *Truthout*, “U.S. policy makers seem so terrified by China’s extraordinary growth and challenge to U.S. hegemony in the Pacific that they are willing to risk nuclear annihilation to prevent it.”

We must heed [Daniel Ellsberg’s admonition](#) shortly before he died. He implored us to pursue “the urgent goal of working with others to avert nuclear war in Ukraine or Taiwan (or anywhere else).”

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Featured image: The U.S.S. Nimitz conducts routine operations while transiting the South China Sea on February 4, 2023. (Source: [NAVY PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS DAVID ROWE](#))

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