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Emerging World Structure: Polarization Driven by Washington as well as Beijing

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ABSTRACT

Primarily because of the China-US interactive rivalries defined both structurally and situationally, together with the enormous stimulating impacts imposed by the global coronavirus pandemic, a structure of the confrontation and rivalry between two coalitions headed respectively by China and the United States has begun to surface with its initial symptoms, promoted first of all by the Biden Administration. In other words, a bipolarization of the world power politics has started its evolution process, which probably would be aggravated and increasingly intensified in short and mid-terms.

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Emerging World Structure: Polarization Driven by Washington as well as Beijing

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ABSTRACT

Primarily because of the China-US interactive rivalries defined both structurally and situationally, together with the enormous stimulating impacts imposed by the global coronavirus pandemic, a structure of the confrontation and rivalry between two coalitions headed respectively by China and the United States has begun to surface with its initial symptoms, promoted first of all by the Biden Administration. In other words, a bipolarization of the world power politics has started its evolution process, which probably would be aggravated and increasingly intensified in short and mid-terms.

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I. THE US AND JAPAN AND OTHER QUAD PARTNERS

As the confrontation and rivalry between China and US rapidly intensifying, Japan has become the ally in chief in the American strategic camp in world political structure. Especially closely connected with the severe military and political tensions over Taiwan, Tokyo remarkably strengthens strategic association with Washington, critically impacting and even devastating the bottom line on Taiwan which had for many years constituted the political base as Beijing strongly asserted and Tokyo implicitly agreed for China-Japan relations. Moreover, the massive joint military intervention with the United States, in the scenario of war breaking out across the Taiwan Strait, is becoming a fundamental Japanese national policy.

The joint statement issued by the Japan-US “2+2” conference of March 16, 2021 declared in

particular the importance of the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Explicitly based on the sources of the Japanese government, Kyodo News reported that Nobou Kishi, the Minister of Defense of Japan, and Lloyd Austin, his US counterpart, agreed in the conference that when military conflict breaking out across the Taiwan Strait the armed forces of the two countries would closely cooperated with each other, and Japan would probably sent its Self-Defense forces to protect US warships and aircrafts engaging in military intervention.¹ On April 4, the Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga delivered a national television speech, saying that the peace and stability of Taiwan is a key of the region, “It is important for Japan and the United States to cooperate and use deterrence to create an environment where Taiwan and China can find a peaceful solution”.² On April 15, Suga arrived in Washington D.C. to have a Japan-US summit with Joe Biden, with the joint statement of them issued after the summit declaring they “underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.”³ This is the first time to refer to Taiwan issue in any joint statement by the US President and the Japanese Prime Minister since that by Richard Nixon and Eisaku Sato in 1969.

¹ “US, Japan Agree to Work Together in Event of Beijing-Taiwan Military Clash, Sources Say”, *South China Morning Post*, March 31, 2021.

² Japan’s PM Aims to Calm China-Taiwan Tension on US Visit, Associate Press, April 4, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/japans-pm-aims-calm-china-taiwan-tension-us-76863596>

³ U.S.-Japan Joint Leaders’ Statement, April 16, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/16/u-s-japan-joint-leaders-statement-u-s-japan-global-partnership-for-a-new-era/>

Based explicitly on Japanese government sources, Kyodo News reported on April 24 that the Japanese Cabinet was studying the ways of possible responses by Japan's Self-Defense Forces in the situation of military conflict breaking out between the United States and China, responses within the limits of existing national security laws. The study focused on three kinds of the situation: when a security crisis emerges with the potential to affect its security if left unchecked, when a close partner is attacked and threatens Japan's own survival or when Japan is under a direct attack.⁴ Probably, the speech delivered by Yasuhide Nakayama, Japan's deputy defense minister, at the Hudson Institute reflected most Suga Cabinet's true intention or even position: it was necessary to "wake up" to China's pressure on Taiwan and protect the island "as a democratic country."⁵ More than that, Aso Taro, Japan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, said one day before in a public speech that Japan country needed to defend Taiwan with the United States if the island was invaded, because "If a major problem took place in Taiwan, it would not be too much to say that it could relate

⁴ Japan Gov't Studies SDF Response in Event of Taiwan Strait Conflict, Kyodo, April 24, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/04/983deef11264-japan-govt-studies-sdf-response-in-event-of-taiwan-strait-conflict.html>. "A close partner" here in fact means Taiwan in the first place. See footnote 35 below. Up to now, there may be possible indication of the direct military cooperation between Japan and Taiwan. Satellite images dated May 1 revealed a Taiwanese destroyer appeared to be in the vicinity of the Japanese warships seemingly monitoring PLAN destroyer *Binzhou* as it returned to the East China Sea, at the narrow waters between Taiwan and Yonaguni, Japan's westernmost inhabited island. Taiwan and Japan Track China Warship Together in Apparent Team-up at Sea, Newsweek, May 4, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/taiwan-japan-track-china-warship-together-apparent-team-sea-1588410>

⁵ Japan Minister Says necessary to "Wake Up" to Protect Taiwan. Reuters, June 29, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-06-28/japan-minister-says-necessary-to-wake-up-to-protect-taiwan>. Yasuhide Nakayama even questioned in this speech the correctness of maintaining "one China" policy and its sustainability over time. Ibid.

to a survival-threatening situation (for Japan)", and "We need to think hard that Okinawa could be the next".⁶

The Biden Administration has made Indo-Pacific as the most critical concept for its strategy toward China and even for that of whole US foreign policy, conforming and declaring the Quad coalition composed of US, Japan, Australia and India plays the essential and cornerstone role in US Indo-Pacific policy.⁷ Quad, together with Great Britain and Canada, two major maritime advanced industrial nations beside US, Japan, and Australia, have constituted the primary hard core of the US strategic camp.

Foreign Ministers of the four Quad members held a meeting online on February 18. After the meeting, the Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters that the four Foreign Ministers unanimously opposed strongly any attempt of China to change the status quo in Indo-Pacific by force.⁸ On March 12, a Quad summit proposed by the Biden Administration was held online. Its joint statement claimed that Quad would facilitate cooperation "to meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas". It also targeted China in the case of COVID-19 "vaccine diplomacy" to promise help India to greatly increase its capacity of production for delivering enormous amounts of vaccine to Southeast Asia and the developing countries in other areas of the world.⁹

⁶ Japan Deputy PM Says Need to Defend Taiwan with U.S. If Invaded-Media. Reuters, July 6, 2021. <https://www.metro.us/japan-deputy-pm-says/>

⁷Biden Security Adviser: US Must Be Prepared to Impose Costs for What China Is Doing, Newsmax.com, January 29, 2021. <https://www.newsmax.com/politics/biden-jake-sullivan-us-china/2021/01/29/id/1007817/>

⁸ Secretary Blinken's Call with Quad Ministers, Readout, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-call-with-quad-ministers/>; US, Japan, Australia, India Foreign Ministers Meet Online, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210218/p2g/oom/ona/040000c>

⁹ Quad Leader's Joint Statement, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spiri>

A very significant concept of “economic coercion”, for condemning China and adjusting global supply chains first of all targeting China, has been launched initially for Quad member Australia. On March 16, Kurt Campbell, US National Security Council’s Indo-Pacific Coordinator, received an Australian newspaper interview and declared that the United States would not improve relations with China if China had not stop economic coercion against US close ally Australia.¹⁰ Since then, economic coercion has become one of the major attacks against China. On May 5, G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting issued a communique, declaring “We will work collectively to foster global economic resilience in the face of arbitrary, coercive economic policies and practices. We urge China to assume and fulfil obligations and responsibilities commensurate with its global economic role.”¹¹ After the Chinese government declared on May 6 to suspend indefinitely the

t-of-the-quad/

¹⁰ U.S. Tells China to Improve Ties with Australia: U.S. Official, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-03-16/us-tells-china-to-improve-ties-with-australia-us-official> For the emergence of economic coercion as a major instrument of China’s foreign policy, the chief expert on Japan affairs at Council of Foreign Relations wrote: “Today, Tokyo and Washington must also consider how their trade with and investment in China increasingly feels like a vulnerability rather than a benefit. China has not hesitated to use its considerable economic clout either, turning what was once seen as a ‘win-win’ economic interdependence with the advanced industrial economies into a more coercive instrument of leverage. For the smaller economies in the region, this reality has been difficult to avoid, but increasingly Chinese leaders have chosen to demonstrate their pique with Japan, Australia and potentially the European nations by withholding trade and other economic benefits.” Sheila A. Smith, “The Biden-Suga Summit: A Full Agenda for An Uneasy Era,” Kyodo, April 17, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/04/590711831e0f-opinion-the-biden-suga-summit-a-full-agenda-for-an-uneasy-era.html>

¹¹ G7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting: Communique, London, 5 May 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-foreign-and-development-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communicue/g7-foreign-and-development-ministers-meeting-c-ommuniquelondon-5-may-2021>

Strategic Economic Dialogue with Australia, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken repeated on May 13 what Campbell said two months ago: “I reiterated that the United States will not leave Australia alone on the field”, “we’ve made clear to the PRC how such actions targeting our closest partners and allies will hinder improvements in our own relationship with China.”¹² By the way it can be noted that for persuading New Zealand, which has a relatively moderate attitude toward China for maintaining and developing its free trade relations with the latter, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison fled to Queenstown to meet New Zealand’s counterpart Jacinda Ardern, perhaps with Washington’s encouragement or support. Ardern after the meeting claimed that her country kept a strong and principled position toward China on human rights and trade, very similar with that held by Australia.¹³

The most important function of Quad is strategic military one, against China, with increasing, deepening and more prominent military cooperative activities. On April 28, Morrison declared that the Australian government would spend USD 580 million for completing before 2026 rebuilding and upgrading four military bases in the northern part of the country, and for expanding joint drills with US marines.¹⁴ Much more important, President Biden declared on September 15 that the United State is developing a new security partnership with Australia and Great

¹² U.S. Will Not Leave Australia Alone to Face China Coercion—Blinken, Reuters, May 14, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-will-not-leave-australia-alone-face-china-coercion-blinken-2021-05-13/>

¹³ Down Under Leaders Minimize China Split, Urge Virus Probe. Associate Press, May 31, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/down-under-leaders-minimize-china-split-urge-virus-probe/ar-AAKYmuV> Ardern claimed also that New Zealand remained a committed member of Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance with Australia, US, Britain and Canada, “That is not in question, not in doubt.” Ibid.

¹⁴ Australia to Upgrade Military Bases, Expand Wargames with U.S., Reuters, April 28, 2021, <https://news.yahoo.com/australia-upgrade-military-bases-expand-233448046.html>

Britain (AUKUS), permitting the latter two to share US's advanced military technologies, including those in AI intelligence, cyber security, submarine capability and long range strike weaponry. The most prominent is US and UK will help Australian construct nuclear-powered attack submarines.¹⁵ Immediately after, the Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton who visited Washington announced on September 16 that more US marine troops will rotate through the nation's Darwin port base and that the two allies will cooperate on development of missiles and explosive ordnance, amid shared concerns about China's increasing assertiveness in the region.¹⁶

India is increasingly valued by the United States, first for strategic military function. In mid-March, US Secretary of Defense Austin visited India and reached a consensus with his Indian counterpart Raj Nath Singh to deepen US-India "strategic partnership" and cooperation in defense, intelligence and logistics, for the purpose of being "able to offer credible deterrence to China or anybody else who would want to take on the U.S." as Austin said.¹⁷ On February 3, a B-1B strategic bomber accompanied by an Indian fighter arrived at Bangalore International Airport, the first of American bombers arriving at the Indian sub-continent since 1945.¹⁸ On July 28, Blinken

¹⁵ U.S. to Form Security Partnership with Australia, U.K., Including Australia Developing Nuclear Submarine. USA Today, September 16, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/15/national-security-u-s-australia-u-k-form-security-partnership/8349082002/https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Australian-PM-rejects-Chinese-criticism-of-16466041.php>

¹⁶ Australia Says More US Troops to Come, Plans Missile Project. News Daylight, September 17, 2021. <https://newsdaylight.com/2021/09/17/australia-says-more-us-troops-to-come-plans-missile-project/>

¹⁷ Austin, Blinken Trip All About Partnership with Asian Allies, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2536551/austin-blinken-trip-all-about-partnerships-with-asian-allies/>

¹⁸ B-1B Makes First US Bomber Visit to India since 1945. Air Force Magazine, February 8, 2021. <https://www.airforcemag.com/b-1b-makes-first-us-bomber-visit-to-india-since-1945/#:~:text=The%20bomber%20landed%20and%20went%20on%20static%20>

meet India's top diplomat Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in New Delhi. According to Associate Press' report of the meeting, "Washington has made no secret of the U.S. desire for India's help in isolating China. The two countries have steadily ramped up their military relationship and signed a string of defense deals"; "The meeting sought to strengthen a regional front against Beijing's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and their cooperation in Afghanistan."¹⁹ As a major mark of India's military role in Indo-Pacific, Ministry of Defense in New Delhi declared on August 2 to deploy four warships within a week in South China Sea for two months, and they would engage in joint drills with US, Japanese and Australian navies, besides with those of Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines. This was called by a naval expert as "India's most visible 'show of flag' naval presence east of the Malacca Strait."²⁰ Between October 12 to 14, four Quad navies conducted the above-mentioned joint drills Malabar, with US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Carl Vinson and several other warships from Japan, Australia and India.²¹

US Indo-Pacific Command in March was requesting US Congress to authorize USD 27.3 billion to fund a new program the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, spending this huge amount of money to (1) strengthen missile defense in Guam, (2) fund joint drills between US Indo-Pacific forces and those of other Quad members, (3) upgrading information technology for preventing China block allies' communication

isplay%2C,highlight%20growing%20ties%20between%20the%20U.S.%20and%20India.

¹⁹ U.S., India Reach Agreement to Expand Multilateral Security Partnership. Associate Press, July 28, 2021. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-india-reach-agreement-to-expand-multilateral-security-partnership-01627487131#>

²⁰ India to Deploy Naval Task Force into South China Sea and Beyond. CNN, August 3, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/03/asia/india-warships-south-china-sea-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

²¹ U.S., Japan, Australia, India Begin Joint Naval Drill Amid China Rise. Kyodo, October 13, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/10/4a33ffe422fe-u-s-japan-australia-india-begin-joint-naval-drill-amid-china-rise.html>

in Indo-Pacific after breaking out of conflict.²² By the time of Pentagon's formal request for Congressional authorization in early June, the amount of money requested has surpassed USD 50 billion, the proposed items to be funded added with new radar defense system in Hawaii, increase of naval, air force and marine troops in the Pacific, and more assets of intelligence and reconnaissance.²³

II. QUAD'S FLEXIBLE EXPANSION TO UK, EU POWERS, NATO, AND ROK

Quad is promoting its expansion, with a rapid effectiveness. It is striving to include directly or indirectly Great Britain and EU major powers, to connected closely with NATO, and even to have a partially participation in it of Republic of Korea. It is demonstrating that it is expanding the coverage of its flexible functional areas, making them include various non-strategic military and para-strategic military aspects. If one would like to use a concept shaped by the Obama Administration, one might define that as Quad's "smart power".

It is obviously a Biden Administration's objective to increase Quad's major power members and expand its connection with at least some other Western major ones. As to this *The Times* reported as early as January 29 that the British government under Boris Johnson responded very positively, making that as a major part of the British post-Brexit strategic foreign policy.²⁴ On March 16, the Cabinet presented to the Parliament a planning document on foreign policy orientation

²² U.S. Commander Seeks \$27 Billion Master Plan to Hold Back PLA in Indo-Pacific, *South China Morning Post*, March 3, 2021; U.S. Admiral Calls for Ground-based Offensive Weaponry in Western Pacific, <https://wtaq.com/2021/03/09/u-s-admiral-calls-for-ground-based-offensive-weaponry-in-western-pacific/>

²³ US Military Gets "Laser Focused" on Keeping Up with China. CNN, June 11, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/11/asia/us-military-focus-china-intl-hnk/index.html>

²⁴ Boris Johnson Considers Join "Asia Nato" to Resist China, *The Times*, January 29, 2021. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/boris-johnson-considers-joining-asian-nato-to-resist-china>

after Brexit, defining two foreign policy priorities: working with the United States and deploying the British strategic military forces to Indo-Pacific, a region becoming "increasingly the geopolitical centre of the world"²⁵ Six months later Biden announced as mentioned above that the United States is developing a new sort of security partnership AUKUS, sharing advanced military tech, and helping Australia to develop a fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarine. Moreover, before the emergence of Australian nuclear submarine which must be many years later, AUKUS would probably promote the operational combination of the three navies in various ways. This was declared as an envisaged principle by Campbell, the Indo-Pacific Coordinator of the US National Security Council, at the US Peace Institute on November 10. "I would think, in the next little while, we will have more British sailors serving on our naval vessels, Australians and the like, more of our forward-deployed assets in Australia" ; "This leads to a deeper interconnection and almost a melding, in many respects, of our services and working together on (a) common purpose that we couldn't have dreamed about five, 10 years ago."²⁶

More or less resulted from coordination with Quad, Britain, France and Germany have declared to demonstrate their military power in South China Sea and even beyond within 2021. France is the most active therein. A French nuclear-powered attack submarine has already

²⁵ U.K. Seeks to "Moderate" China with Push for More Influence in Indo-Pacific, Reuters, March 16, 2021, <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/939271/UK-seek-s-more-influence-in-Indo-Pacific-as-moderating-impact-on-China>

²⁶ US Navy "Melting" with United Kingdom and Australia in Race to Counter China Threat. *Washington Examiner*, November 19, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/us-navy-melding-with-united-kingdom-and-australia-in-race-to-counter-china-threat/ar-AAQV6KX>. Campbell said also that "Each of our countries has certain areas of deep innovation — whether it's in cyber, whether it's in undersea capabilities, whether it's military AI" , "And so I think there's a desire to engage to see what we can learn from each other, to see what can be harvested from that in applicable ways that will help engender a more effective security and deterrent approach." Ibid.

gone across South China Sea in early February, while an amphibious assault ship and a frigate of France would go across twice the water claimed by Beijing there;²⁷ As part of the annual mission of Jeanne d'Arc, French warships will participate in the massive joint drill conducted by the navies of all Quad members. Moreover, France associated with Japan and US conducted a ground operation exercise named ARC 21 in Japan's southwest prefectures Nagasaki, Miyazaki and Kagoshima, with 100 Japanese soldiers of the Ground Self-Defense Force, 60 of the French Army, and 60 of US marines engaged, as well as relating warships and military aircrafts. The Japanese Defense Minister Kishi claimed on the eve of the exercise that France France "is the only European country with a permanent military presence in the Indo-Pacific region. It is also a like-minded country that shares with Japan the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific."²⁸

The Royal Navy's action is featured by supermassive scale, allied-collecting, and extra-pompous. On May 22, the most advanced aircraft carrier Queen Elizabeth, electronic powered with tonnage of 65000 tons, led its massive strike group set sail from Portsmouth to Indo-Pacific, a strategic journey including sailing across South China Sea and visiting Singapore, ROK, Japan and India, conducting several joint exercises with fleets from allies and partners, marked by British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace as "the most significant Royal Navy deployment in

a generation".²⁹ Toward the end of May, this strike group reached Portuguese coast and started joint drill with a NATO naval force including 18 warships and 5000 soldiers. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, an ardent and persistent advocate of NATO's strategic involvement in Indo-Pacific, came on deck of Queen Elizabeth and declared "We face global threats and challenges, including the shifting balance of power with the rise of China," adding that the joint drill "sends a message of NATO's resolve".³⁰ Around June 21, several US Marine F-35B fighters took off Queen Elizabeth accompanied by that of the British to strike over the Middle East Islamic State (IS)'s targets, as the first launching of American aircrafts for a combat mission from foreign warship since 1943.³¹ On July 27, as soon as Queen Elizabeth entered into South China Sea via Singapore strait, it at one rallied with two British warships and one for US and the Netherlands each within its strike group

²⁹ HMS Queen Elizabeth's Indo-Pacific Deployment to Boost U.K.-Japan Cooperation, February 4, 2021. <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/02/hms-queen-elizabeths-indo-pacific-deployment-to-boost-uk-japan-cooperation/> Besides Queen Elizabeth, this strike group composed of two guided missile destroyers, two frigates, two supply ships and one submarine, all British, together with one US guided missile destroyer of US navy and one Dutch frigate. Queen Elizabeth was armed with 18 F35B fighters, among which 10 coming from US Marine conducted by about 100 American soldiers on board of that aircraft carrier. US Marine Corps F35B Flew over 5000miles for A Deployment Aboard UK Aircraft Carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. April 28, 2021. <https://news.yahoo.com/us-marine-corps-f-35s-182643750.html>

³⁰ Battleship Diplomacy: Britain's New Aircraft Carrier Joins NATO, Has Messages for China. Reuters, May 28, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-05-28/battleship-diplomacy-britains-new-aircraft-carrier-joins-nato-has-message-for-china>

³¹ HMS Queen Elizabeth: US F-35B Fighter Jets Fly First Combat Missions off Foreign Aircraft Carrier Since World War II. CNN, June 23, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/hms-queen-elizabeth-us-f-35b-fighter-jets-fly-first-combat-missions-off-foreign-aircraft-carrier-since-world-war-ii/ar-AALkDz1>

²⁷ France Sends Navy Mission to South China Sea As Tensions Build in Beijing's Back Yard, *The Telegraph*, March 7, 2021; France Wades into South China Sea with A Nuclear Attack Submarine, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/france-wades-south-china-sea-155309089>

²⁸ Japan Ground Troops Begin Joint Military with U.S., France, Kyodo, May 11, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/05/51e31fa1344b-japan-us-french-troops-begin-joint-military-drill-in-japan.html>

to conduct a joint drill with three warships of Singapore.³²

It would be too lengthy to list all the other exercises this strike group engaged with other national naval forces in its first transoceanic journey but only two the most significant. On October 2 and 3, Queen Elizabeth rallied with two US nuclear-powered aircraft carriers Ronald Reagan and Carl Vinson and the Japanese helicopter carriers capable of launching F-35B, as well as warships of the Netherlands, Canada and New Zealand, conducted a massive drill southwest to Okinawa, adjacent to both Taiwan and East China Sea.³³ During November, before or after China-US visual summit, USS Ronald Reagan and Carl Vinson, HMS Queen Elizabeth, and JMSDF Kaga and Ise capable of F-35B launching conducted several joint exercises in Indo-Pacific including the western Pacific, surely relating to Taiwan in the first place.³⁴

There are also other major player in Europe and elsewhere engaging in the same sort of activity. The German government announced in early March that a German frigate would sail to Asia in August, sailing through South China Sea without touching 12 nautical mile water around isles

controlled by China.³⁵ On August 2 this German frigate Bayern sailed from Wilhelmshaven off North Sea, with a statement from German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer that the first such deployment in almost 20 years was meant to uphold freedom of navigation in international waters, protect “open societies” and express support for regional partners sharing Germany’s values.³⁶ EU as a collectivity has also launched diplomatic interference over South China Sea. It issued a statement on April 24 to condemn China’s behavior, including the protracted staying of a Chinese fishing fleet composed of about 200 vessels at Whitson Reef, had hurt peace and stability of South China Sea, and to urge all disputing parties to abide by the ruling of the Hague Tribunal on the Philippines’ lawsuit, which denies all claims of China on its maritime rights and sovereignty in South China Sea.³⁷ Pleasure to US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael Gilday, allied navies expressed great interest to him for spending more time and resources to joint training with US navy, especially for hunting Russian and Chinese submarines. In fact, during 2021 Canadian, Australian, Japanese and India navies have practiced that, and Australia, India, ROK and New Zealand bought Boeing P-8 Poseidon anti-submarine patrol aircraft.³⁸

At the present and in the predictable future, in most of the major issue areas they concern, EU and its major powers adopt and will continue to adopt positions same or similar with the United

³² China Media Says U.K. Still in “Colonial Days” as Navy Enters Contested Waters. Newsweek, July 28, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/china-says-uk-still-colonial-days-navy-enters-contested-waters-1613549>

³³ China Mounts Largest Incursion Yet Near Taiwan, Blames U.S. for Tensions. Reuters, October 4, 2021. <https://news.trust.org/item/20211004144313-afbyb; Taiwan Says China Military Plane Incursions Hit Record 56 on Mon. Kyodo, October 4, 2021. https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/10/8acc90e70e5b-taiwan-says-china-military-plane-incursions-hit-record-56-on-mon.html#>. 参见 China’s Xi Instructs Army to Increase Military Pressure Near Taiwan. Kyodo, October 5, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/10/6786aa355c92-chinas-xi-instructs-army-to-increase-military-pressure-near-taiwan.html#>

³⁴ US, UK, and Japanese Aircraft Carriers Are Training Together in the Pacific. Here’s How Their “Big Decks” Stack Up. Insider Asia, November 29, 2021. <https://visionnewspapers.com/us-uk-and-japanese-aircraft-carriers-are-training-together-in-the-pacific-here-s-how-their-big-decks-stack-up/>

³⁵ Beijing to Berlin: Respect South China Sea Sovereignty during Frigate Visit, *South China Morning Post*, March 3, 2021.

³⁶ German Warship “Bayern” Heads to the Indo-Pacific. DefenseNews, August 3, 2021. <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/08/02/german-warship-bayern-heads-to-the-indo-pacific/>

³⁷ EU Blames China for Endangering Peace in South China Sea, Reuters, April 25, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/eu-blames-china-endangering-peace-south-china-sea-2021-04-25/>

³⁸ US Allies Want to Spend More Time Practicing to Hunt Russian and Chinese Subs, Top Navy Admiral Says. Insider Asia, July 1, 2021. <https://www.businessinsider.com/allies-want-more-training-with-us-navy-top-admiral-says-2021-6>

States and its maritime allies, or in other words having more agreements than disagreements. This results from their independent decisions, American influences, and the interactions between either. What are these issue areas or “big spots” or structural confrontation or rivalry? They are Taiwan, South China Sea, US-Japan military alliance and East China Sea, Quad as well as its connection with NATO, arms race, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, trade disputes and industrial policy, high tech decoupling and containment, realignment of supply chains, ideological competition, claimed cyber attack and disinformation, international independent investigation on the origins of COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Belt and Road Initiative.³⁹ On these, the position and behavior taken by EU and its major powers are criticizing, confronting or competing China, only somewhat milder than US and its maritime allies. Let alone that they have been quite pleased to see a Washington under Biden much valuing, respecting and “hooking in” them, so it is inevitable for them to be more susceptible to its influence.

Indeed, EU and its major powers has adopted positions similar with those of China and engaged in cooperation with China on a few issue areas, i.e., trade, investment to China, committing in principle to multilateralism and global governance, and Iranian nuclear problem. These

³⁹ On BRI, EU Foreign Ministers Conference on July 12 passed an infrastructure construction principle plan titled “A Globally Connected Europe”. According to Reuters’ report of that, “The EU has already signed partnerships with Japan and India to coordinate transport, energy and digital projects linking Europe and Asia. Both Tokyo and Delhi are worried about Chinese largesse that officials say makes poorer countries beholden to Beijing because they are forced to take on such large debts.” German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told reporters on that in Brussels: “We see China using economic and financial means to increase its political influence everywhere in the world. It’s useless moaning about this, we must offer alternatives.” “It is important that the European Union... coordinates them very closely with the United States,” he said. After G7 Pledge, EU Seeks to Rival China’s “Belt and Road” with Own Infrastructure Plan. Reuters, July 12, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-china-idUSKBN2EI0XY>

are of course important to both China and Europe. However, they will not have, or at least not be likely to have, a decisive and sustainable role in China-Europe relations, and remarkably block Europe’s approaching to US in attitude toward China.

The Biden Administration pushes NATO to connect with Quad or its members beside the United States, with a paramount associate in NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg who has persistently promote NATO’s military involvement in Indo-Pacific.⁴⁰ At NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting online on June 1, Blinken put much emphasis on NATO’s requirement to strengthen ties with Japan, Australia, ROK and New Zealand, and supported Stoltenberg’s efforts to make NATO more resilient and more capable to deal with comprehensive challenges from China and Russia.⁴¹ On the even of Biden’s visit to Europe in mid-June, Amada Sloat, the senior director on European affairs at National Security Council, said that it was important for Nato “to take action to ensure that it is appropriately postured to deal with newer threats”, “China is one of those, and I think leaders (of NATO members) are going to be taking stock of the need to adapt to the strategic challenge that Beijing poses to our collective security, prosperity and values.”⁴²

⁴⁰ The most loud cry of Stoltenberg on this is his public appealing to liberal democracies in Europe, Asia and Oceania on June 8, 2020. He called them to unite to “to defend the global rules and institutions that have kept us safe for decades”, to “stand up for a world built on freedom and democracy. Not on bullying and coercion.” He particularly emphasized that looking forward the next decade “we need to work even more closely with like-minded countries, like Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea”. NATO Chief Urges Allies Not to Go It Alone. Associate Press, June 8, 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/fdc9b798df5559d1c22b5662bo096dde>

⁴¹ U.S. Calls on NATO to Deepen Ties with Japan Amid China’s Rise. Koyodo, June 2, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/06/bdf40f7c1c09-u-s-calls-on-nato-to-deepen-ties-with-japan-amid-chinas-rise.html>

⁴² China the Spectre at the Feast As Biden Aims to Rally Democracies on Europe Trip. *The Guardian*, June 10, 2021.

On June 14 in Brussels, NATO members summit was held in which President Biden himself participated. The communique of the summit claimed that “China’s stated ambitions and assertive behavior present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to alliance security”, declared that NATO planned to strengthen “political dialogue and practical cooperation” with Japan and Australia, as well as New Zealand and ROK to promote cooperative security and support the rules-based international order. Jack Sullivan, Biden’s National Security Advisor said that the United States had made other NATO members at the summit to agree to revise NATO’s “Strategic Concept” or its strategic general principles in the next year’s summit, incorporating in it meeting challenges posed by China.⁴³

Washington has also looked to Seoul in striving to integrate various alliances working together against China. It has two leverages to force ROK to move in this direction: the uncertainty to provide COVID vaccines and the uncertainty to continue to permit the use of high tech for production of semiconductor chips. By April, American efforts at last achieved significant effect. *Chosun Ilbo*, the biggest ROK newspaper reported on April 30 that, according to the presidential Blue House sources, President Moon Jae-in had decided to formerly inform President Biden during his forthcoming visit to Washington a “partial participation” in Quad by ROK, in the aspects of high tech, especially that for semiconductor products, delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and addressing of climate change.⁴⁴ On May 21, in press conference after the summit with Moon, Biden said “This is what I like about this

⁴³ NATO Says China Poses “Systemic” Challenges, to Enhance Japan Ties. Kyodo, June 15, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/06/1bda276ef812-urgent-nato-says-china-poses-challenges-to-cooperate-with-japan-s-korea.html>. NATO’s existing “Strategic Concept” issued in 2010, in which Stoltenberg said “China is not mentioned with a single word.”

⁴⁴ Korea to Support U.S.-Led Anti-China Alliance, *Chosun Ilbo*, April 30, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/05/4c29d1355688-japans-suga-holds-talks-with-eu-leaders-on-vaccines-indo-pacific.html>

President: He’s not just talking about any more than I’m just talking about the United States or just Korea, he’s talking about the Indo-Pacific. He’s talking about the world”.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Moon declared that ROK and US agreed to working together to constitute stable supply chains of semiconductor, electric vehicle (EV) batteries and pharmaceuticals.⁴⁶ On the same date, four Korean mega-businesses including Samsung Electronics and LG declared US-directed investment plan in amount of USD 39.4 billion, in which Samsung Electronic would spend 17 billion for constructing a foundry plant, LG Energy Solutions and SK spend 14 billion for innovations, and Hyundai Motor spend 7.4 billion for EV production and charging infrastructures.⁴⁷

Surprisingly and possibly ominous, President Moon said in the joint statement with Biden that South Korea would work with the United States on “peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait”.⁴⁸ Also quite worthy to be noted that according to the continuing reports since October 2019, Moon’s government has been engaging in the largest strategic buildup South Korea ever has for many years, for constructing one aircraft carrier capable of launching F-35B and two nuclear-power attack submarines. The purpose is claimed to increase the capability of long-range power projection to participating in protection of the Middle East sea lanes which is vital for oil

⁴⁵ Biden Announces US to Vaccinate 550,000 South Korean Service Members against Covid-19. CNN, May 22, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/biden-announces-us-to-vaccinate-550-000-south-korean-service-members-against-covid-19/ar-AAKeP4W>

⁴⁶ Moon Jae-in: ROK and US Will Constitute Together Supply Chains of Semiconductor, Batteries, and pharmaceuticals (in Chinese). YNA, May 22, 2021. <https://cn.yna.co.kr/view/ACK20210522001200881?section=politics/index>

⁴⁷ Four Korean Mega-business Groups Announced Plan of USD 39.4 Billion Investment in US (in Chinese). YNA, May 22. <https://cn.yna.co.kr/view/ACK20210522000200881?section=economy/index>

⁴⁸ S. Korea’s Moon Heads for G7 Summit Overshadowed by China. Reuters, June 11, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skoreas-moon-heads-g7-summit-overshadowed-by-china-2021-06-11/>

supply.⁴⁹ Perhaps in the future, the similar vital sea lanes to be participated by ROK in protection protected might be also in South China Sea. Moreover, Moon declared at the press conference on May 21 that the United States agreed to abolish the limitations imposed on ROK-made missiles (Prohibiting more than 800 kilometers in range and 500 kilograms in weight of warhead). So ROK is believed to prioritize the development of intermediate missiles with 1000 to 5000 kilometers in range, enabling it to strike target far beyond the Peninsular; It is also possible that ROK may try to develop longer range submarine missiles and hypersonic weaponry.⁵⁰ In fact, immediately after that abolition, ROK's high tech strategic buildup at one trends to in full swing. Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) announced on August 19 to establish a task force to further develop space capabilities for military, aimed at launching 110 dual-use satellites, while endorsed to invest nearly \$13 billion over the next decade for that.⁵¹ *DongA Ilbo*, the second biggest ROK newspaper, reported on September 7 that Agency for Defense Development recently conducted successful two test launches of an submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) from Dosan Anchangho, the first 3000-ton submarine commissioned in August. On September 15, with the President Moons attending, SLBM was again launched successfully from that

⁴⁹ As Tension Rise in Asia Pacific, South Korea Is Building Its First Aircraft Carrier...Complete with US-Made Fighter Jets. CNN, August 12, 2020. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/08/12/asia/south-korea-aircraft-carrier-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>; South Korea Navy to Acquire Two Nuclear Power Submarine, Navy Recognition, October 14, 2019. <https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/2019/october/7585-south-korea-navy-to-acquire-two-nuclear-power-submarine.html>

⁵⁰ US Lifts Missile Restrictions on South Korea, Ending Range and Warhead Limits. DefenseNews, May 25, 2021. <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2021/05/25/us-lifts-missile-restrictions-on-south-korea-ending-range-and-warhead-limits/>

⁵¹ With Restrictions Lifted, South Korea Launches \$13B Space Power Scheme. DefenseNews, September 7, 2021. <https://www.defensenews.com/space/2021/09/06/with-restrictions-lifted-south-korea-launches-13b-space-power-scheme/>

submarine. The large scale production and deployment is expected to start soon.⁵²

What South Korea has done demonstrates that “partial participation” in Quad is an important way to expand that strategic coalition pushed by the Biden Administration, enabling it to expand the functional fields it covers, covering in addition various non-military or para-military ones. Campbell on May 26 in effect announced it as a principle in an event at Stanford University. He said said the “operating system” the United States had helped build in Asia remained intact but was “under substantial strain” in the face of China's rise. “It's going to need to be reinvigorated in a number of ways”, he said, “not just by the United States, but other countries that use the operating system and that means Japan, that means South Korea, Australia, countries in Europe that want to do more in Asia and across the board.”⁵³

III. TEAMING UP WITH ALLIES OR PARTNERS ON THE PART OF CHINA

Starting from the Trump Administration, then continuing and much aggravating by the Biden one, the United States almost constantly strengthens and upgrades its precaution, threats, containment, isolating and rollback against China. Though international politics has been so often interactive in intensifying its dynamics for confrontation, rivalry and conflict, it is indeed that those US behavior has forced China to team up with allies or partners. So has been emerging there a structure of confrontation and rivalry between two coalitions, at least since late March 2021.

Russia, just because its raw strength, especially military, as well as its extra-hardline posture

⁵² South Korea Virtually Completes the Development of SLBM. *DongA Ilbo*, September 7, 2021; S. Korea Successfully Tests Submarine-launched Ballistic Missile. Kyodo, September 15, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/09/15...submarine-launched-ballistic-missile.html>

⁵³ U.S. Says Looking at Quad Meeting in Fall Focused on Infrastructure. Reuters, May 26, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-05-26/us-says-looking-at-quad-meeting-in-fall-focused-on-infrastructure>

toward the West, is overwhelmingly important to China's external strategy, far surpassing the values other allies and partners combined. The foreign ministers of the two countries met on March 22 to 23 in China's southwest city Guilin, with the Russian minister appealed for reduction of the reliance of both on US Dollars and the western payments institutions, as well as for joint counterattack against the western ideological condemnation and for cooperation against American hegemony, while the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that the both sides by their joint statement resulted from the meeting "expounded the correct inner contents of the concepts of human rights, democracy, international order and multilateralism, demonstrated the firm will of both China and Russia to defend the international fairness and justice."⁵⁴ After three summits in Europe attended by Biden himself, Russia conducted the largest naval drill in Pacific ever since the end of the Cold War, away from Hawaii only a few hundred miles in distance, while the Chinese Foreign Ministry declared significantly that there would be no ceiling imposed on China-Russia strategic partnership.⁵⁵ On June 28, Presidents Xi and Putin held a virtual summit, resulting a joint statement to declare a renewal of China-Russia Good Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and mutual support of each other's domestic and international policies without reservation. Russian state's Novosti (RIA) claimed at the same day that US's behavior could lead to

⁵⁴ Russia, China Push for U.N. Security Council Summit, Lash Out at West. Reuters, March 22, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-china-un-idUSKBN2BF0GO>; Foreign Ministry's response to the Chinese and Russian Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Guilin (in Chinese), People's Daily's Client, March 23, 2021. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1695010133231417174&wfr=spider&for=pc>

⁵⁵ Russia Conducts largest Pacific Naval Exercise Since Cold War. CBS NEWS, June 16, 2021. <https://news.yahoo.com/russia-conducts-largest-pacific-naval-193100111.html>; Foreign Ministry spokesperson: China-Russian Cooperation Has no ceiling and practical (in Chinese), International Online, June 15, 2021. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1702640139140172801&wfr=spider&for=pc>

the creation of Russia-China military alliance.⁵⁶ It is really what seems to be: The Foreign Ministers of the two countries met in Tashkent, then the Russian Foreign Ministry announced that both Ministers "stated that the existing bilateral ties surpass such a form of interstate interaction as military-political alliances of the Cold War era." This definition of the relationship was repeatedly emphasized by Russian Foreign Minister and Russian embassy in Beijing.⁵⁷

In early and mid-August, China-Russia joint military exercise began to escalate to a new level: establishing joint command of joint drill, co-operability of each other's military equipment in the drill, and conducting it for the first time within the Chinese mainland.⁵⁸ From October 14 to 17 the Chinese and Russian navies conducted a joint exercise in Sea of Japan, during which for the first time their warships (10 on the occasion) sailed through Tsugaru Strait, an international waterway between Sea of Japan and the Pacific (also between Honshu and Hokkaido).⁵⁹ For the first time too, about October 23 the same Chinese and Russian warships sailed through Osumi Kaikyo, an international waterway south of Kagoshima, to enter into East China Sea.⁶⁰ Then,

⁵⁶ Russia-China Military Alliance Talk Grows to Counter U.S. Pacific Plans. Newsweek, June 28, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-china-military-alliance-talk-grows-counter-us-pacific-plans-1604604>

⁵⁷ Russia Says Its Ties to China Are Now Closer Than Any Cold War Military Alliance. Newsweek, July 16, 2021. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2021/07/16/2538923/russia-says-its-ties-to-china-are-now-closer-than-any-cold-war-military-alliance>

⁵⁸ Cf. Chinese and Russian Militaries Link Up, But Analysts Say Both Sides Have Differing Objectives. CNN, August 16, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/16/asia/chinese-russian-military-ties-in-tl-hnk-ml/index.html>

⁵⁹ Chinese, Russian Warships Pass Through Tsugaru Straits 1st Time. Kyodo, October 19, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/10/b22862b9c8c8-chinese-russian-warships-pass-through-tsugaru-strait-for-1st-time.html>

⁶⁰ Chinese, Russian Warships Pass Through Osumi Strait for 1st Time. Koyodo, October 23, 2021. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/10/9f5893987869-chinese-russian-warships-pass-through-osumi-strait-for-1st-time.html>

on November 19, four nuclear-capable strategic bombers of China and Russia (two of each) conducted “joint patrol” in Sea of Japan for longer than 10 hours, resulting in emergent alert flights of the Japanese and ROK fighters.⁶¹ On November 23, the Chinese and Russian Defense Ministers signed online a bilateral “roadmap of military cooperation” for the period to 2025. The Russian signer emphasized that the interaction between the two countries was particularly relevant today in increasing tumultuous geopolitics and aggravating potential for conflict in various parts of the world.⁶²

However, delicate or making one have a queer feeling, when China’s military aircrafts drastically made the highest record in entering adjacent airspace over Taiwan in early October, and when the Chinese military deterrence and squeeze have had overwhelming priority in policy system toward Taiwan, President Putin received an interview of American media CNBC on October 13 and said “China does not need to use force (to realize reunification across the Taiwan Strait). “China is a huge powerful economy, and in terms of purchasing parity, China is the economy number one in the world ahead of the United States now” ; So “China, with its growing economic potential, was capable of implementing its national objectives.” Does this mean that as there is a really severe military tension, Putin would not agree with using force as the last resort for solving the Taiwan problem as the Chinese government has repeatedly declared for decades? At the same time Putin said something on South China Sea disputes which does not shown full agreement with China’s fundamental position.⁶³

⁶¹ Defense Chief reports to Putin on Successful Patrol of Russian, Chinese Strategic Bombers. Tass, November 19, 2021. <https://tass.com/defense/1363797> ; China and Russia Vow Not to Let West Divide Them. Washington Examiner, November 20, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-and-russia-vow-not-to-let-west-divide-them/ar-AAQVaj4>

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ President Putin on Taiwan: “China Does not Need to Use Force”. CNBC, October 14, 2021. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/13/president-putin-on-taiwan-china-does...>

The Ukraine Crisis! For China, it happened also in an immediate context that in spite of a few concrete instances of cooperation - all quite limited, indecisive and likely temporary – the 16 November 2021 online summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden demonstrated how difficult it is for both countries to achieve a lasting shared understanding in any major issue area, and even how easily several of them can deteriorate further from an already high level of tension. The issue of Taiwan of course continues to be the most prominent and significant hot spot. Biden Administration strongly pursues a situation in which the US can safely broaden and deepen the almost comprehensive support it gives Taiwan, including military support, together with broadening and deepening the rivalry against China in the Indo-Pacific region and even beyond without risk of military conflict. Moreover, during the short time span of only about one and half months, Washington has displayed a very hard line approach, harder than almost ever before, on issues as Xinjiang, realignment of supply chains mainly against China, high tech “containment” , and Indo-Pacific regional rivalry.⁶⁴

Because of their respective increasingly intensive rivalries with the US, and to a somewhat lesser degree with the rest of the world, China and Russia have become now by way of the simple arithmetic of international politics what resembles a sort of para-alliance. But the arithmetic still has a complicated element, namely up to now there is no indication that the Russians commit in any degree to give military support to the Chinese in a potential conflict over Taiwan, and vice versa the Chinese are unwilling to commit to assisting Russia militarily over Ukraine.

The Chinese government and its top leader have just repeatedly declared that Russia’s legitimate

⁶⁴ Discourse with Shi Yinhong, “US and China Neck-and-neck in a New Cold War,” *The Korea Herald*, January 11, 2022; Shi Yinhong, “The Continued Downturn of US-China Relations and Beijing’s Approach to the Ukraine Crisis,” JOINT, February 2022. <https://www.jointproject.eu/2022/02/11/the-co....-approach-to-the-ukraine-crisis/>

security concerns should be paid attention to and solved, and furthermore, Putin's demand that the security framework in Europe should be reorganized to guarantee the security of every European country (that means, one can believe, the eastern European members of NATO should withdraw from that alliance and their military connection with US and other western powers should be cut off) has been supported by China.⁶⁵ All these can be read as quite pro-Russian. But such a declaration of support has been immediately mitigated by another statement by the Chinese government according to which all parties should remain calm and not do anything to increase the tension further and aggravate the crisis.⁶⁶ Taking Russian President Vladimir Putin's strong resolve to challenge Europe's security order into account, one can doubt that Beijing is willing or even able to mitigate his intentions towards Ukraine.

Iran? Of course. The signing in Tehran of a China-Iran agreement toward the end of March for China's investment of 400 billion USD in Iran in 25 years, including those for military cooperation.⁶⁷ On January 21, 2022, in the process of escalation of the Ukraine crisis, the navies of Iran, Russia, and China began to conduct a joint drill in a sea area of 17000 square kilometer from the north Indian Ocean to Gulf of Oman.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁵ Top U.S., Chinese Diplomats Fail to Agree on Ukraine Situation. Kyodo, January 27, 2022. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/01/ac445ad39b86-top-us-diplomat-tells-china-of-global-risks-over-ukraine-situation.html>; Xi and Putin Urge NATO to Rule Out Expansion as Ukraine Tensions Rise. The Guardian, February 4, 2022. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2022...a-russia-tensions-grow-west>

⁶⁶ Top U.S., Chinese Diplomats Fail to Agree on Ukraine Situation. Kyodo, January 27, 2022. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/01/ac445ad39b86-top-us-diplomat-tells-china-of-global-risks-over-ukraine-situation.html>;

⁶⁷ China and Iran Sign Agreement of Comprehensive Cooperation for 25 Years, Involving Political, Strategic, and Economic Cooperation (in Chinese), CGTN, March 28, 2021. https://www.guancha.cn/international/2021_03_28_585519_s.shtml

⁶⁸ Iran, China and Russia Hold Naval Drills in North Indian Ocean. Reuters, January 21, 2022. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-01-21/ir>

related developments could be skipped off for brevity. So too China's rejection of any public criticism against the behavior of Myanmar's Junta in overthrowing civilian parliamentary government and its bloody suppression against the massive protest movement.

Changes in the relations between China and North Korea could be said as the most remarkable in the context here. On March 22, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong En exchanged oral messages, via respectively the head of the international department of the CCP Central Committee and newly appointed DPRK ambassador to China. Xi, according to Xinhua News Agency, stated that "China is willing to work with DPRK and other related parties, insists the direction of political solution of the Peninsular problem, maintains peace and stability of the Peninsular, and makes new positive contributions to regional peace, stability, development and prosperity." An omission was the most important and extraordinary: Denuclearization of the Peninsular, a consistent major position expressed in every statements of the Chinese government on the Peninsular since 2003, was impressively not referred to.⁶⁹ Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on July 11 that for 60th anniversary of China-DPRK treaty of alliance, Kim sent a telegraph to Xi to say that the bilateral "comradely mutual trust and militant friendship increasingly strengthened" in front of "hostile forces", while Xi telegraphed to Kim to express the resolution of "constantly leading the bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation to enter into a new stage."⁷⁰ At the end of the same

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⁶⁹ Secretary-General Xi Jinping exchanged oral messages with Kim Jong En, Secretary-General of Workers' Party of Korea (in Chinese). Xinhua Network, March 22, 2021. https://www.guancha.cn/international/2021_03_28_585519_s.shtml Cf. Xi, Kim Share Messages Reaffirming China-N. Korea Alliance, Associate Press, March 23, 2021. <https://news.yahoo.com/xi-kim-share-messages-reaffirming-032853453.html>

⁷⁰ Leaders of N. Korea, China Vow Greater Cooperation in Face of Foreign Hostility: KCNA. Reuters, July 11, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-07-10/leaders-of-nkorea-china-vow-greater-coope>

month, also according to KCNA, telegraphs were exchanged again between these two leaders, emphasizing that “both China and DPRK are socialist state led by Communist party.” In summary, China and North Korea have restored the alliance discourse and the expression of ideological commonality, while denuclearization of the Peninsula has no longer been an element of China’s position and policy toward North Korea.

All in all, like but later than the United States, China is also building up its “core coalition”. Great power rivalry has been so often symmetrical, rallying with allies and partners a major instrument available for strengthening China’s “position of strength”. Whether it could have this effect lastingly, of course, would be tested with vicissitudes in the future.

IV. CONCLUDING NOTE

A New Cold War has been at least emerging between the United States and China, if it has not yet definitely emerged. It is a New Cold War, of which one’s perception depends on whether one puts emphasis on the word “New” or on the phrase “Cold War”. If one emphasizes “New”, of course one could find numerous differences between U.S.-Chinese relations and the former U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cold War, though so many people today incline to overstate those. On the other hand, if one emphasizes “Cold War”, one is so easy to find that the current rivalry and confrontation between Washington and Beijing have already had some major and essential features of the old Cold War between Washington and Moscow, and even more so of that in the world history between two antagonistic greatest powers. We already have between Washington and Beijing severer and severer geopolitical and geo-strategic hostile actions, intensifying arms race, intensifying ideological rivalry, increasingly severe struggle in the areas of high tech, aggravating hostile and more nationalistic public opinion in either country against each other, driven by while restraining each other’s political leadership.

From this perspective respecting both current situation and historical experiences, what “New” are mainly the critical “decoupling” from those critical economic interdependence, making more and more critical areas fragmented and group-oriented separated, together with the strategic stalemate in Europe before 1980s has been replaced by the ominous strategic dynamics and fluidity now in East Asia and the Pacific and beyond, a situation sharply challenges intellectual and other capabilities of the present political and strategic leaderships in every major powers, let alone the pandemic and other imaginable climate-change related disasters that complicated things much further and often stunt leaderships’ talent in broad sense. Also “New” is the much more high- teched way of great power warfare or para-warfare that dramatically increases the dynamics of rivalry, making it so difficult to control. The “remnants” of economic interdependence and liberal globalization are likely not stronger than all the forces against stabilization.

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