



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 2, 2023

U.K. Wants Japan, South Korea to Join AUKUS to Counter China

In a [report](#) published August 30, Britain's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee suggested that Japan and South Korea be incorporated into the trilateral security pact among Australia, the U.K., and the United States — known as AUKUS — to collaborate on military technologies.

“AUKUS is not purely about Australia acquiring a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines,” the report declared. “There is a cyber and advanced technology sharing and joint development component that could be equally, if not more, significant.”



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In the report, the committee called for a tougher stance on China than the U.K. government has adopted in recent years. Moreover, the report proposed that China be designated as a “threat” rather than a “competitor,” and urged the government to “proactively challenge” Beijing’s sovereignty over Taiwan, China’s place in the semiconductor industry, and its alleged human-rights abuses in places such as Tibet, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang.

Apart from enlarging AUKUS, the report recommended that the U.K. join the ranks of the Quad, officially known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and comprising countries such as the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, “at such time as the existing members feel is appropriate.”

Notably, the committee published the report amid U.K. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly’s visit to Beijing for discussions with Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi and Vice President Han Zhen. Based on a statement from the U.K. Foreign Office, Cleverly grilled his Chinese counterparts over alleged human-rights abuses and “malign cyber activity.” In turn, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin declared that “affairs relating to Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet are China’s internal affairs, where other countries have no right to interfere.”

Recommendations from the aforementioned report would likely irritate Beijing, where officials have denounced the AUKUS alliance as an “Asia-Pacific version of NATO.”

Under the AUKUS treaty, the United States and the U.K. agreed in 2021 to help Australia obtain nuclear-powered submarines and jointly develop various military technologies such as undersea drones and hypersonic missiles.

China has frequently dismissed Western claims of its human-rights abuses, and has lambasted the Quad alliance as a return to a “Cold War mentality.”

Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir Putin posited at the 21st International Security Conference in Moscow on August 15 that NATO may eventually integrate with AUKUS, as Washington attempts to influence the Asia-Pacific region for its own interests.

The Russian leader asserted that “the United States seeks, among other things, to reformat the system



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of inter-state interaction that has developed in the Asia-Pacific region.” He then elaborated, saying calls to enhance “Indo-Pacific strategies are “essentially aimed at creating military-political associations that are controlled by Washington.”

“We do not rule out that things are leading to the full integration of NATO forces with the structures being created by the AUKUS bloc,” Putin highlighted, cautioning of a “neo-colonial West,” spearheaded by Washington to impede the development of a multipolar world by destabilizing and inciting strife in many parts of the globe.

“Most countries are ready to defend their sovereignty and national interests, traditions, culture and way of life. New economic and political centers are being strengthened,” Putin pointed out, stating that this trend can become a vital foundation for stable and productive global development.

Nonetheless, “pockets of old conflicts are being swelled and new ones are being provoked” in various parts of the world, the Russian leader warned.

“The goal of those who do this is obvious: to continue to profit from human tragedies, to pit people against each other, to force states into vassal obedience within the neo-colonial system and to exploit their resources mercilessly,” Putin proclaimed.

Besides, the Russian leader said that NATO member countries continue to bolster and overhaul their offensive capabilities and are even trying to expand military confrontation to outer space via military and nonmilitary methods.

He also maintained that while security issues in various parts of the world have their distinct features, “in fact, all of them are generated by geopolitical adventures, [by the] selfish, neo-colonial actions of the West.”

Putin also reinforced Russia’s contributions in decreasing regional and global conflict toward the establishment of a multipolar world order, according to the principles of international law and trust.

Meanwhile, American officials have expressed worries that Russia and North Korea, both adversaries of the West, have been enhancing bilateral military ties.

During a [press conference](#) on August 30 at the UN headquarters in New York City, U.S. ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, along with representatives of Japan, South Korea, and the U.K., claimed that Russia and North Korea were “actively advancing” talks for arms that would be used in the conflict in Ukraine.

Castigating the development as new and “deeply troubling,” the ambassador declared that any arms deals between the two nations were “shameful” and would breach UN Security Council resolutions.

For their part, the North Korean and Russian delegations to the UN in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment, according to Reuters.

National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby also echoed similar concerns [that same day](#) during a press briefing. Kirby said that Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu had attempted, during a visit to North Korea, to persuade Pyongyang to sell artillery ammunition, a major weapon in the war, to Russia.

Additionally, the United States alleged that it had information that another group of Russian officials visited Pyongyang after Shoigu’s visit.

Kirby contended that North Korea had sent infantry rockets and missiles to Russia last year, and that



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Moscow had tried to obtain more ever since.

Subsequently, Kirby stated that the United States remained “concerned that the DPRK [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea] continues to consider providing military support to Russia’s military forces in Ukraine” and that it had “new information” that it was “able to share today that arms negotiations between Russia and the DPRK are actively advancing.”

Kirby also noted that “high level discussion may continue in coming months,” before claiming that Russia’s procurement of weapons from Iran (from which it received the [Shahed drones](#)) and North Korea reflected Moscow’s increasing “desperation and weakness.”

He proceeded to “urge the DPRK to cease its arms negotiations with Russia and abide by the public commitments that Pyongyang has made to not provide or sell arms to Russia.”

Later on, the Kremlin [confirmed](#) that it planned to boost its ties with North Korea, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that Moscow and Pyongyang “maintain good, mutually respectful relations” and that they “intend to develop them further.”

Earlier in August, Reuters also reported that Putin and North Korea’s authoritarian leader Kim Jong-un [had exchanged letters](#) pledging enhanced collaboration.

Officially, both Iran and North Korea have repeatedly dismissed allegations of their involvement in arms support to Russia.

On August 31, North Korea [confirmed](#) that it had fired two short-range ballistic missiles the previous day.

Having already attained its record of such missile tests, Pyongyang revealed that it was a “simulation of a tactical nuclear strike” on South Korea after Seoul’s joint exercises with the United States, reported North Korea’s state news agency KCNA.

Annually, South Korea and the United States stage joint military exercises, which further raise hostilities with Pyongyang. Nevertheless, Pyongyang regards this year’s drills as plans for a preemptive nuclear assault by the United States.



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