

► Sensitive three-way deal triggers fear of arms race: experts

Widened AUKUS cooperation includes AI against China

By Liu Xuanzun

Using the “China threat” as an excuse to build hegemony, the US, the UK and Australia are reportedly expanding their AUKUS military cooperation from nuclear-powered submarines to anti-submarine systems featuring drones and artificial intelligence (AI) as well as space tracking, all of which are sensitive fields that risk triggering an arms race, experts warned on Sunday.

Defense chiefs from the US, the UK and Australia on Friday met at the US military’s defense technology hub in Silicon Valley to forge a new agreement to increase technology cooperation and information sharing in the next step toward widening the AUKUS partnership among the three countries, the AP reported on Saturday.

The enhanced cooperation has been “driven by growing concerns about Chi-

na’s burgeoning defense spending and rapidly expanding military presence in the region,” the AP claimed.

In addition to nuclear-powered submarines in the original AUKUS deal, the new agreement will set up a series of military exercises involving the use of undersea and surface maritime drones and improve the ability of the three countries to share intelligence and data collected by their sonobuoys, which are used to detect submarines and other objects in the water, the AP report said.

Applying AI technologies will enable the US, the UK and Australia to integrate their anti-submarine systems, including data gathered by their submarines, anti-submarine aircraft, surface vessels and others, and make faster, more accurate judgments in searching for and attacking hostile submarines in joint anti-submarine operations, said Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military expert.

The three countries will establish new radar sites to beef up their ability to detect and track objects in deep space, according to the AP report.

In essence, the goal of such cooperation is to build a small military clique of hegemony under the excuse of the “China threat,” so the three countries can strengthen defense cooperation, expand military power and make provocative moves, Wei told the Global Times.

Another Chinese military expert, who requested anonymity, told the Global Times on Sunday the original AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine deal has already threatened nuclear nonproliferation, and now the three countries are adding very sensitive projects like military-purposed AI.

These projects among the AUKUS countries could not only lead to a dangerous arms race, but also set up a bad example in the world, the expert said.

Western leaders intensify pressure on Israel amid resurgence of hostilities in Gaza

By Deng Xiaoci

Western leaders, including US Vice President Kamala Harris and French President Emmanuel Macron, intensified their pressure on Israel over the weekend amid the resurgence of hostilities between Israeli forces and Hamas militants after a weeklong cease-fire faltered. Chinese analysts on Sunday noted that despite growing vocal concerns from the US and Europe, their impact on the conflict might be limited due to the significant differences that persist between the conflicting parties.

The US vice president, who was in Dubai for the United Nations COP28 climate conference, said that “too many innocent Palestinians have been killed. Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering, and the images and videos coming from Gaza are devastating,” Bloomberg reported on Sunday.

Macron also warned explicitly on Saturday on the sidelines of the COP28 talks that Israel’s aim of eliminating the Palestinian militant group Hamas risked unleashing a decade of war.

The Western leaders’ messages of concerns come after the resurgence of intense fighting between the conflicting Israeli army and Hamas militants on Friday and the Israeli side’s indications that it intends to expand ground operations in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted on Saturday that Israel’s ground operation in Gaza, which has resulted in fatalities, must continue to ensure the release of hostages. Netanyahu’s remarks followed the withdrawal of his negotiation team from cease-fire talks with Hamas in Qatar.

The resurgence of intense fighting has laid bare just how huge the divergences are between the conflicting sides, and this gap will remain a major barrier toward peace in the foreseeable future, Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times on Sunday.

Chinese observers noted that the US and Europe are intensifying their pressure on the Israeli authorities in pursuit of a complete truce, however they believe the efforts are unlikely to reverse the short-term situation.

► Vucic rallies support

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic gestures during a political rally of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) at the Stark Arena in Belgrade on December 2, 2023, ahead of the December 17 elections. Along with parliamentary elections, Serbian citizens will cast ballots in 65 municipalities, including the capital Belgrade.
Photo: AFP



Philippines’ new coastal station in South China Sea serves to consolidate its illegal control

By GT staff reporters

The Philippines’ new coastal station in the South China Sea serves as a base to monitor foreign vessels for the purpose of consolidating its illegal control of China’s Zhongye Dao (or Zhongye Island), as well as to cater to the interests of the US in the region, Chinese analysts said on Sunday, saying that Manila’s recent proactive acts have gone “off course.”

The new three-story facil-

ity is furnished with advanced technology including radar, automatic identification, satellite communication and coastal cameras, Reuters reported.

A new coast guard station on China’s Zhongye Dao serves to monitor foreign vessels passing by, including China’s, as part of Manila’s preparations to conduct cognitive warfare against China, Chen Xiangmiao, director of the world navy research center at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies,

told the Global Times.

Mao Ning, spokesperson of China’s Foreign Ministry, said at a press briefing on October 16 that Zhongye Dao is China’s territory. The Philippines has illegally occupied Zhongye Dao, which seriously violates China’s sovereignty.

Chen believes the Philippines’ act of building a new coast guard station on Zhongye Dao must have been backed by the US, as it serves the overall US Indo-Pacific Partnership for

Maritime Domain Awareness.

Regardless of the already mounting tensions, the Philippines recently has been actively inviting countries to beef up defense cooperation in the region. Philippines and France agreed to commence discussions for a defense agreement that would enable troop visits, according to Bloomberg on Sunday.

More countries which are seeking to assert their own geopolitical interests and contain China’s influence in the region

are likely to join the Philippines’s initiative, Wu Shicun, president of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, said recently.

“The Philippines has gone off course and is a bit naive,” Wu said, adding he predicts that the Philippines is likely to continue its risky behavior for a while.

