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# China feels threatened after Camp David - an excuse to divert attention from troubles at home



After the US, Japan, and South Korea summit at Camp David, China has been feeling threatened. In reaction to unanticipated economic and demographic setbacks, the leadership will use the Trans-Pacific Alliance's strengthening to increase regional aggressiveness while homogenising the country.

Beijing was not talkative ahead of the meeting between US President Joe Biden, South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. However, Beijing rectified this several times after the meeting was concluded and the agreement published.

China used military rhetoric in an effort to take specific actions in response to the trilateral coalition's rise to a historically unprecedented level.

Shaping the reaction to purely military activities shows that Beijing experienced the US, Japan and South Korea summit as a meeting with an exclusively military and security background.

## Beijing's military response

First, just a few days before the Camp David summit, Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu was in Moscow at a conference on international security, demonstrating China's commitment to an alliance with Russia, particularly regarding the military.

As soon as the summit ended, China carried out a new, sudden and threatening military action in the waters around Taiwan in response to the short stay of Taiwanese Vice President Lai Ching-te in the US.

However, this "exercise", as Beijing officially

described it, with the participation of aviation and the navy close to Taiwan, was part of the response to the just-finished summit at the residence of the US president.

Also, during the Camp David summit, Chinese and Russian warships, including destroyers, were spotted in the southern Japanese islands' waters north of Taiwan.

Japan sent aircraft to escort two Russian patrol planes as they flew over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea as part of China-Russia naval exercises.

## Indo-Pacific NATO

Even though this is only one but the most significant part of the Camp David agreement, Beijing makes little effort to observe it beyond its security and military dimensions.

The rhetoric used to describe the US, Japan, and South Korea summit has been tailored in advance and confirmed after the summit's conclusion that its objective was to establish a 'mini-NATO' or "Indo-Pacific NATO."

Chinese commentators change the nuances of the official state position regarding the agreement between the US and two of its most significant Asian allies. But the bottom line is that it is an alliance directed against China.

The line has been set by the Chinese Minister of Defence Li, warning at the beginning of the week in Moscow about "playing with fire" when it comes to Taiwan and that attempts to "use Taiwan to contain China will certainly end in failure".

Continuing on that course after the Camp David summit, "China Daily", which is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, concluded that the final declaration mentioned the word peace 10 times but that it "cannot hide the nature of the meeting to form a 'mini-NATO' military alliance to endanger peace in the Asia-Pacific".

## A new cold war as an excuse

According to a Chinese expert on the state Chinese media, the reference to a "new cold war" was introduced in the state-controlled rhetoric during the Camp David summit, but at a lower level than the official.

This element of a new cold war has a significant chance of becoming the backbone of Beijing's official positions after the Camp David summit.

Beijing will emphasise it as a confirmation that the US, not China, has left the framework that the two leaders - Joe Biden and Xi Jinping - set at the G20 summit in Indonesia almost a year ago.

They then agreed that neither nation wanted a new cold war between them, marking with that meeting a thawing of relations that would last for the next few months until the last February crisis caused by a Chinese spy balloon over US territory.

"This summit was not about China. This was not the purpose. But obviously, China came up", US President Biden said on the occasion of the Camp David summit. There was no mention of China in the final statement.

However, Beijing will not be able to hold back and avoid responding without a strong military-tinged reaction to one of the most significant

meetings for the future of the Indo-Pacific region ever.

## Beijing worries about its declining influence in the region

China has emphasised the military dimension of the Camp David agreement and consciously ignored other aspects because by using an adequate military reaction to the presumed military threat of 'mini-NATO', it would seek a new justification for continuing its aggressive policy in the region, particularly regarding Taiwan.

By consciously ignoring the economic, technological, and in particular, aspects of increased influence on other countries in the region, which the allies agreed on at Camp David, after the summit, China will get a far more organised counterbalance to its regional influence than it had until now.

China has no answer to the complex and multidimensional response of the US, Japan and South Korea, and that is why it sticks to the military and security level in which it will be easier to express its ambitions regarding regional superiority.

Opposing the strengthened "enemy" came at the right time for the Chinese leadership to divert the attention of the domestic public from poor economic trends by warning about the security threat.

Feeding domestic nationalist appetites, which have grown in the era of Xi Jinping, by calling for resistance to the new security threat, Beijing wants to homogenise the population regarding the alleged increased vulnerability of the country.

On the other hand, China's behaviour fully supports the decisions made at Camp David, particularly the desire of Tokyo and Seoul to improve relations with one another before doing the same with the US.