

OZUSUKISH CHARADE

(October 2021)

October 21st, 2021

On September 29th I wrote that it seemed Australia did not really need or want the submarines at all and was intent on leaving the responsibility and cost mostly to the U.S., and possibly to the United Kingdom.

As always, it doesn't hurt to look at the marine charts.

The press refers to HMAS Stirling as the submarine base.

It states that it would take 20 days at 4 knots to reach an area of operations, so I understand the distance to be under 2,000 nautical miles. That happens to be the distance to Darwin only. It is also the distance to just past the Sunda Strait, a probably impassable bottleneck in case of Chinese occupation.

Sailing to just the Luzon Strait at the entrance of the South China Sea, whether through the Torres Strait or the Bass Strait is a 6,500 nautical miles affair, two weeks at 20 knots or ten at 4 knots.

However, although the reason for the Chinese agitation is that they feel (and are) trapped inside the China Seas, it is a feature of the trap that it works both ways and that trying to penetrate a Chinese blockade through the only two points of entry, north and south of Taiwan, would be quite suicidal. As we all know, or should know, offense is much costlier than defense.

So the submarines would just be guarding the straits. So would the Americans, Koreans, Japanese, Indians, Indonesians, Malays, Filipinos, etc. It is unclear why the presence of Australian units should be required so far from her bases, while she would leave her own shores unprotected.

As a consequence, if the only purpose of the submarines is to defend access to Australian ports, then Australia has no need for very long range submarines indeed. Furthermore, an attack from the north would first require that China take control of Indonesian archipelagic waters, but even so the Strait of Malacca and the Sunda Strait are also two-way traps.

If an unreasonable Mr. Xi attempted to invade Taiwan in a Falklandian fashion, that would surely be the end of China as we know it, and certainly of Mr. Xi. A blockade of the South and East China Seas would undoubtedly ensue, and marine traffic from Korea and Japan to and from all points west would be safely redirected through the Macassar Strait and the Mindanao Passage for example, at the cost of an additional

couple of days of transit. That's if Mr. Xi did not preemptively attempt to invade and occupy Indonesia and her extended waters (at the cost of the massacre of all the Chinese diaspora).

Commerce with China would be blockaded, which would certainly be seriously hurtful and disruptive to all, but unquestionably much more so to China than to the rest of the world. China's exports would come to a standstill, and also imports, including of petroleum products.

I'm not saying that Mr. Xi will not be foolish and crazy enough to try, but he won't succeed, if only because his own people will stop him. He and his acolytes are probably well aware that their dictatorship over the vast populations of China will be doomed eventually, and their recourse to nationalistic pride is only a tired stratagem to buy time.

It's been tried elsewhere, but was always short-lived, for the masses only enjoy populist nationalistic pride when it comes free of charge.

Another interesting topic is how Mr. Xi intends to justify his purely imperialistic claim over Taiwan, since:

1. The 25 million inhabitants of Taiwan strongly reject him;
2. The Chinese empire only loosely controlled a rebellious Taiwan between 1683 and 1895, a loose control that ended 126 years ago;
3. Then, for 50 years Taiwan was Japanese, only to be returned to Chinese Nationalists;
4. The Chinese Communist Party never controlled Taiwan;
5. A Taiwan under Chinese Communist Party's rule would be about as morally justifiable as Leopold's Congo Free State;
6. How many would die in the process?

September 29th, 2021

I think the French young puppy of a president has possibly jettisoned his political future by reacting like a petulant child and throwing a preposterous but universal temper tantrum.

Since it is common lore in France that "*la perfide Albion*" (that includes anyone whose mother tongue is English) not only has always been the epitome of hypocrisy, but also

commands an absolute international monopoly over it, one wonders why the French were not better prepared contractually for what happened.

Also, it seems our modern Napoleon's feelings were hurt because France was not invited to be party to the new alliance. For one thing, he should remember that what was called the United Nations during the last world war, when France was collaborating with Mr. Hitler, was the alliance of the U.S., the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. France was not a member. For another, he must realize that the credibility of his country's commitments has been somewhat eroded since France refused to join the Iraq War in 2003, whether the decision to invade Iraq was right or wrong. France was free to join or not, but by abstaining she lost at that moment any reliability as an unconditional and trustworthy ally.

Other than that, the whole new Ozusukish charade is quite significant:

1. The French-designed diesel-powered submarines have an endurance of 80 days, a range of 18,000 nautical miles (83.33% of Earth's circumference), and a top underwater speed in excess of 20 knots;
2. The distance from Darwin to the contested islands of the South China Sea is 1,650 nautical miles only, not even one tenth of the range;
3. Since all the waters along the route from Australia to the South China Sea are Indonesian archipelagic sovereign internal waters, Indonesia would necessarily have to be an ally;
4. If Indonesia were an ally, surely resupplying the submarine with bunkers and stores from Indonesia once in a blue moon would hardly be a problem;
5. However, Indonesia has expressed some misgivings regarding the nuclear deal and would likely not tolerate nuclear-powered submarines in her internal waters, which leads to the following question:
6. If Australian submarines are prohibited from sailing through Indonesian waters, how are they expected to reach the South China Sea, which so far is claimed by a multiplicity of local Asian countries, including China?
7. It is understandable for a nation to use nuclear propulsion on submarines that prowl very far from their base and for extended times to the other side of the planet, but here one could say that the South China Sea is one of Australia's suburbs;
8. For the sake of proportion (as always), the sailing distance from Sydney to Darwin is nearly twice the distance from Darwin to the South China Sea;
9. The delivery timeline for the French-designed submarines was 2030 to 2050;

10. The timeline for the nuclear-powered submarines is unclear, but is probably longer than for the diesel option;
11. The South China Sea menace is quite overblown, as I have attempted to show in several studies;
12. In view of the above, one could question the requirement for nuclear propulsion, especially in a country that has so vehemently opposed French nukes in the past;
13. However, it is quite possible that the Australian government realized of late that there was no real need for a large fleet of submarines, be it diesel or nuclear-powered;
14. In such a case, how could they exit the French deal without losing face, if not by claiming that diesel was not chic enough for their social status and they needed nuclear if they had any self-respect?
15. In the end they will quite likely purchase neither French nor U.S. or U.K. submarines, but will either lease a few retired U.S. units, of which there are about 30, or facilitate the use of U.S. Navy submarines, of which there are about 50 in commission;
16. In other words, the whole charade may be a formula to efficiently (some would even say perfidiously) save \$4,000 for each and every Australian citizen.
17. Hypocrisy, or good common sense?
18. At any rate, again, the French have always clamored that the English language carried inherent perfidy in its native speakers, so why were they not a little more cautious?

In another department, I have read again the Wikipedia account of the so-called "[Australia–East Timor spying scandal](#)" but I still fail to find any logic in it whatsoever.

You don't need to read further than the first paragraph:

"The Australia–East Timor spying scandal began in 2004 when the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) clandestinely planted covert listening devices in a room adjacent to the East Timor (Timor-Leste) Prime Minister's Office at Dili, to obtain information in order to ensure Australia held the upper hand in negotiations with East Timor over the rich oil and gas fields in the Timor Gap. Even though the East Timor government was unaware of the espionage operation undertaken by Australia, negotiations were hostile."

Other than wondering why they feel compelled to write “*East Timor (Timor-Leste)*” but not “*The Hague (A Haia)*”, or “*Germany (Deutschland)*”, I would comment again that I still wonder in which way the spying could have been orchestrated “*to obtain information in order to ensure Australia held the upper hand in negotiations with East Timor*”, **since East Timor obtained much more than her share of the fields**, thus demonstrating that it was either East Timor that held the upper hand, or, alternatively, that Australia behaved again like the Saintly Good Samaritan she is well known to be whenever the well-being of destitute Asians is concerned.

Also, those negotiations were about Sunrise mostly, since Bayu Undan had already started production at the time, in a deal that was excellent for East Timor (Восточный Тимор, পূর্ব টিমুর, or 東ティモール民主共和国). However, Sunrise can hardly be still considered one of the “*rich oil and gas fields in the Timor Gap*”, since:

- a. only 20% of Sunrise is in what used to be the Timor Gap,
- b. East Timor continues to neglect it as a rich field and has stubbornly done everything in her power to **not** develop it, including through her avoidance of negotiating boundaries with Indonesia, without which there can be no development anyhow,
- c. and, last but not least, the East Timorese moribund development plan would lead to billions of dollars in **losses**.

Incidentally, how do you characterize an “*espionage operation*” of which the subject is not “*unaware*”? And how would you possibly “*plant covert devices*”, if not “*clandestinely*”?

The article seems to be quite a joke.

Regarding the Australian withdrawal from the maritime jurisdiction of the ICJ, in retrospect she probably did the right thing since:

- A. Most serious world powers don’t care a bit about the ICJ;
- B. The court has not demonstrated much impartiality or even competence so far when it came to maritime matters;
- C. The maritime issue in the South China Sea can only regard Exclusive Economic Zones, not the occupation of land, or *terra firma*;
- D. I agree that occupying tiny uninhabited islets militarily is an affront to international law (whatever significance those two words carry) and I don’t condone it at all (seriously, I don’t care much for nationalistic bullies), unlike the military conquests of Indonesia by the Austronesian, of Formosa by the Chinese,

of the Siberian Far East by the Russian, of the Pacific Islands by the French and the American, of all of South America by the Spaniard and the Portuguese, and of course of the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia by the British, all of the above being formerly inhabited by people hailing from Asia. In the eye of the Chinese, the proverbial pot calling the kettle black.

Besides, the real danger of the South China Sea issues still needs to be ascertained and demonstrated.

And of course the parties need to mature somewhat from their kindergarten state of mind.

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