**A powerplay in the backyard**

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n September 15, 2021 the United States and United Kingdom announced that under a new ‘security agreement’, they will help Australia build nuclear-powered submarines. This agreement will make Australia only the seventh country in the world to join this select club of countries that possess this technology. Presently, the US, UK, China, France, Russia and India are in this ‘club’.

This power-posturing on the international scene by the United States is not only a message to China in the context of the South China Sea and the ongoing uneasiness between both these two countries, but also it is a signal by the United States to stand with Australia, whose relations with China have been somewhat unpleasant for a year and a half now. In March 2020, when the coronavirus began to unleash unprecedented, incomprehensible and unimaginable havoc on business, trade, industries, economic activity and nearly all forms of commerce on the entire planet, Australia was no exception.

[Belgium slightly relaxes coronavirus measures](https://nation.com.pk/02-Oct-2021/belgium-slightly-relaxes-coronavirus-measures)

China should not be underestimated for a second when it comes to its pride, independence, national honour and sovereignty. From the time of the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who was the architect of the industrial and commercial reforms in China in the 1980s to date, China has become the second biggest economy in the world, surpassing Japan and Germany. Such a phenomenal economic and industrial achievement, and complementing it with maintaining a highly modern and sophisticated armed forces is definitely the product of miraculous determination and solid focus.

In the year 2019, the total Australian exports to China were worth US$ 102,996 million. China’s displeasure towards Australia’s demand in April 2020 led it to put tariffs, or in some cases, outright banning some Australian products. Australian coal, wine, barley, beef and cotton exports to China suffered. This was an enormous setback for the Australian economy. Australia also came under diplomatic pressure, and thus moved to utilise its connections at the global level. This alliance between the US, UK and Australia known as AUKUS, is spearheaded by the United States.

[TTP militants desiring to shun militancy be given chance to join mainstream: Fawad](https://nation.com.pk/02-Oct-2021/ttp-militants-desiring-to-shun-militancy-be-given-chance-to-join-mainstream-fawad)

For some time now, the United States has been observing China’s colossal economic, financial, commercial and industrial growth with trepidation. But credit goes to the Chinese workforce, businesses and entrepreneurs who have shown exceptional hard work, continued improvisation and sharp business skills. Here, one must also recognise the business, trade and investment friendly policies of the Chinese government over the last three decades. These policies boosted the confidence and morale of businesses, private companies and foreign investors, enabling them to carry on their commercial activities in a secure business environment.

AUKUS has sent shockwaves across the world. In 2016, Australia signed a deal allowing France to build twelve conventional submarines. This deal was worth US$ 37 billion. After AUKUS, Australia announced it was not going ahead with that deal. France is absolutely furious and understandably so. France recalled its ambassadors from the United States and Australia. Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, France has adopted an independent foreign policy and it takes great pride in its relations and actions around the world which have given priority to French interests. France has never forgotten its defeat at the hands of Germany in the Second World War. France remained under German occupation from 1940 to 1944. After the Second World War, France did join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) but withdrew from it in 1966. The core thinking behind that move was to maintain absolute focus and attention towards French sovereignty and independence. In 2009, France returned to NATO but has continued to maintain foreign policy and international relations on its terms. France’s relations with the United States and Australia will normalise with the passage of time, but a new arms race will begin, including inside Southeast Asia. Other regions in the world will follow this trend; a testimony of the extraordinary times the world is going through.