

Joe Biden: Nuclear Sorcerer Apprentice

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President Biden announced the birth of AUKUS, a strategic-military partnership between the United States, Great Britain and Australia, with “the imperative of ensuring long-term peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific”, the region that in Washington’s geopolitics extends from the West coast of the United States to the coast of India. The purpose of this “strategic mission” is “to take on the threats of the 21st Century just as we did in the 20th Century: together”. It is a clear reference to China and Russia.

To “defend against rapidly evolving threats,” the AUKUS launched a “key project”: the United States and Britain will help Australia acquire “nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines.”

The first reaction to the announcement of the AUKUS project was that of France: it thus lost a 90 billion dollars contract, stipulated with Australia, for the supply of 12 Barracuda attack submarines with conventional propulsion. Paris, complaining of being stabbed in the back, has withdrawn its Ambassadors from the USA and Australia. The political-media attention has been focused on the dispute between Paris and Washington, leaving in shadow the implications of the AUKUS project.

First of all, it is not credible that the United States and Great Britain provided Australia with the most advanced technologies to build at least 8 nuclear submarines of the latest generation with a unit cost of about 10 billion dollars to equip them only with conventional (non-nuclear) weapons. It is as if they were to provide Australia with aircraft carriers unable to carry aircraft. In reality, the submarines will have launch tubes suitable for both non-nuclear and nuclear missiles. Prime Minister Morrison has already announced that Australia will rapidly acquire, through the U.S. “long-range strike capabilities” with Tomahawk and hypersonic missiles that can be armed with both conventional and nuclear warheads.

Certainly, Australian submarines will also be able to launch US Trident D5 ballistic missiles which US and British submarines are armed with. The Trident D5 has a range of 12,000 km and can carry up to 14 independent thermonuclear warheads: 100 kt W76 or 475 kt W88. The Columbia nuclear attack submarine, whose construction began in 2019, has 16 launch

tubes for Trident D5s, so it has the capacity to launch over 200 nuclear warheads capable of destroying as many targets (bases, ports, cities and others).

On this background, it is clear that Washington cut off Paris from the submarines supply to Australia not simply for economic purposes (favouring its own war industries), but for strategic purposes: to move on to a new phase of military escalation against China and Russia in the Indo-Pacific, maintaining absolute command of the operation. After cancelling the supply of French submarines with conventional propulsion, obsolete for this strategy, Washington has started what Ican-Australia denounced as *"the increased nuclearization of Australia's military capability"*.

The Australian nuclear submarines, once operational, will actually be placed in the US chain of command, which will decide their employment. These submarines – no one will be able to control their real armament – approaching in depth and silently to the coasts of China and also Russia, could strike in a few minutes the main targets in these countries with a destructive capacity equal to more than 20 thousand Hiroshima bombs.

It is easily predictable what the first consequence will be. China, which according to Sipri possesses 350 nuclear warheads compared to the US 5.550, will accelerate the quantitative and qualitative development of its nuclear forces. The economic and technological potential that it possesses, allows it to equip the country with nuclear forces comparable to those of the US and Russia. The merit goes to the apprentice sorcerer Biden who, while launching the "key project" of nuclear submarines to Australia, exalts *"the longstanding leadership of the United States in global non-proliferation"*.

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