

All that Sending a Flotilla Bristling with Weapons into the South China Sea Can Do Is Escalate Global Tensions

By [Chris Nineham](#)

Global Research, April 27, 2021

[Stop the War Coalition](#) 26 April 2021

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#) and [WMD](#)

All Global Research articles **can be read in 51 languages by activating the “Translate Website”** drop down menu on the top banner of our home page (Desktop version).

No one can say that the BBC takes its role as state broadcaster lightly. On Monday, its flagship radio news show The Today Programme was partly presented from on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, Britain's new hi-tech aircraft carrier.

The ‘story’ behind this move was that in around a month’s time the HMS Queen Elizabeth is leading an armed flotilla on a 28-week cruise more than halfway around the world. The mission’s purpose, which will involve stopovers at more than 100 ports, is to show that Britain is still a global power to be reckoned with. In the words of Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, the aim is ‘projecting our influence, signalling our power.’

The carrier strike group’s mission will be Britain’s biggest deployment of UK naval and aerial military firepower since the Falklands war in 1982. [It will include](#) a squadron of 10 US Marine Corps F35 jets, an attack submarine armed with Tomahawk missiles, 2 destroyers, a number of other battleships and the greatest quantity of helicopters assigned to a single UK Task Group in a decade.

What [the Ministry of Defence is describing](#) as the “largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation” will visit more than 40 countries for more than 70 engagements, including an exercise marking the 50th anniversary of the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

The last leg of the voyage will take the strike group into the South China Seas, close to Taiwan and end with military exercises with Japan. [As the MOD admits](#) the deployment has been organised as part of the “UK’s tilt to the Indo-Pacific region” to “bolster deep defence partnerships” in the region. In other words, a central part of the operation is to back the US’s increasingly hostile posture towards China.

The aircraft carrier and its sister ship HMS Prince of Wales cost more than £6bn but with all the connected operating costs and support the total price will be in the tens of billions. This is an extraordinary allocation of resources at a time when public services are in such a desperate state and the NHS is at breaking point.

It will of course do nothing to enhance our 'security', the military buzzword of the moment. Re-forging links with former colonial outposts across Asia, aspiring to global military pretensions 'East of Suez' is a policy based on a Tory post-colonial fantasy. Even some of the commentators on the Today Programme had to admit that it would be very difficult for Britain to get involved in any serious foreign fighting after the 'controversial' wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. All that sending a flotilla bristling with weapons into the disputed waters of the South China Seas can do is escalate tensions and even risk an accidental confrontation with another nuclear armed state.

As we get nearer the 23 May launch date expect more flag waving and banging drums from the government, the BBC and the rest of the media. Stop the War is working with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to protest against this futile and dangerous exercise. Please get on board with our campaign.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Featured image: Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning II fighter jet takes off from HMS Queen Elizabeth (Source: Stop the War Coalition)

The original source of this article is [Stop the War Coalition](#)
Copyright © [Chris Nineham](#), [Stop the War Coalition](#), 2021

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Chris Nineham](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca