

# NATO Takes on China

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World leaders attend the NATO Summit in Washington on July 10, 2024. (Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)



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## *Commentary*

During the NATO Summit in Washington on July 10, member nations became irreversibly involved in countering communist China's

adventurism around the world by declaring and identifying Beijing as the enabler and sustainer of Russia.

This was an extraordinary move by NATO, which, until this date, was reserved on China issues and nominally involved outside of the immediate European region with exceptions, such as involvement in Afghanistan that was done under a [United Nations mandate](#), not necessarily an “[Article 5](#)” invocation where an attack on one is an attack.

In [Section 26](#) of the July 10, 2024, communiqué, NATO was clear in its view on the People’s Republic of China (PRC): “The PRC has become a decisive enabler of Russia’s war against Ukraine through its so-called ‘no limits’ partnership and its large-scale support for Russia’s defence industrial base. This increases the threat Russia poses to its neighbours and to Euro-Atlantic security.”

NATO has established a red line, and there is now little ambiguity that the bloc views the PRC as the instigator of world tensions and conflict.

## **China Is Identified as the Reason Russia Is Still Standing**

NATO came out swinging at China and said further in the communiqué:

“We call on the PRC, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with a particular responsibility to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, to cease all material and political support to Russia’s war effort. This includes the transfer of dual-use materials, such as weapons components, equipment, and raw materials that serve as inputs for Russia’s defence sector. The PRC cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation.”

In response, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pushed back and called NATO’s statements “groundless accusations.” He warned NATO

against creating tension with Beijing.

The reality is that China is the largest maker of 152mm and 122mm artillery ammunition, 7.62x39 machine gun ammunition, drones, spare parts for all Russian aircraft, missiles, and other vital war material Russia needs to continue the Ukraine war effort. No one else makes the common equipment, ordnance, and supplies Russia needs.

The succor provided by China to Russia has been immense, according to [National Intelligence Director Avril Haines](#).

Iran and North Korea are part of this satellite of defense industrial production and provide much support, including the opportunity for China to feign non-involvement. Still, the machine tooling and production resources and expertise in [these Chinese “colonies”](#) are rendered by Chinese advisers.

## **Chinese Ships Sail Through US Territory; Beijing Sends Troops to Europe**

NATO's statement was based on the concern that the Chinese regime was becoming directly involved in the affairs of NATO member nations. Beijing wasted little time adding to this perception by two provocative actions.

Almost immediately upon release of the NATO statement on China, naval forces of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) conducted an “innocent passage” through U.S. territory, the Aleutian Islands chains. Four PLAN ships passed through two points in the chain and then departed.

“Innocent passage” is defined in [Article 19 of the U.N. Convention on Laws of the Seas \(UNCLOS\)](#) and is allowed with certain restrictions. The PLAN is wily and pushes the envelope of Section 2(d) of the Convention, which prohibits transits for the sake of propaganda.

In one of the first projections of Chinese military power directly into Europe and the immediate zone of combat in Ukraine, [China deployed](#) a Special Operations Task Force into Belarus by mid-July to support “Assault Eagle 2024.” Belarus has been a primary staging and operating base for Russian forces waging war on Ukraine and is the closest point to the Russian-held sovereign territory of Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea.

A grave concern is that Russia could push through the “[most dangerous place on Earth](#)”—the Suwalki Gap—to create a land bridge across Polish and Lithuanian territories to Kaliningrad. This would trigger broad conflict across Europe. The Chinese contingent was a strategic message. They may be there to support such a Russian thrust in an attempt to replay—this time successfully—the daring but ultimately unsuccessful [Russian raid on Hostomel Airport](#) in the opening days of the Ukraine war.

## 4 Asian Nations Brought Closer Into the NATO Fold

An outcome of the NATO conference was [the elevation of four countries](#) as NATO partner nations. NATO announced “enhanced political dialogue and engagement” with Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. This does not necessarily mean these nations are on a pathway like Sweden and Finland to join NATO as full partners, but their elevated relationship with NATO is a strategic counter-message to the Chinese regime. The four nations issued a communiqué admonishing North Korea because of its dependence on China for machine tools and factory equipment, but it was really a barb at Beijing.

“New Zealand, Japan, the Republic of Korea [South Korea], and Australia strongly condemn the illicit military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the DPRK [North Korea], which undermines peace and stability in both the Indo-Pacific and European region,” the [statement](#) reads.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg laid down a further marker aimed at the Chinese regime by saying: “We must work even more closely together to preserve peace and protect the rules-based international order. ... Our security is not regional. It is global.”

NATO’s resolve in responding to communist China’s worldwide malign campaign efforts has now been established.

*Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*

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