

## Why Five Eyes should now become six – Japan Times

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LONDON – In September 2018, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, Arthur Herman, wrote a fascinating piece for this page saying it was time for Japan to join the Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

Moves to align Japan (and Germany) more closely with the Five Eyes framework have since begun but now is the time for a formal and completely full tie-up. The present five members of this long-standing alliance are the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. So Japan, with its very advanced communications technologies, would be the sixth full member. The alliance gives mutual access between members to intelligence activities, as well as promoting further military interoperability, creating powerful ties that the digital age both allows and encourages.

Behind this whole issue lies, of course, the overarching question of how best to deal with China, the rising giant – a matter that is troubling not just Asian neighbors but nations in every region, large and small.

Is it to be cooperation or containment? Collaboration or confrontation? It's an increasingly vigorous debate, leading to deep internal divisions of views in many countries and regions.

You can see the visible ambiguity in American thinking as Washington zigzags from warm handshakes with Chinese President Xi Jinping and greetings one minute to trade wars and denunciations of Huawei the next, not helped by "who is to blame" arguments about COVID-19, quarrels about an inquiry and quarrels about what kind of inquiry.

You can see it, too, in Europe where various members of the European Union have taken completely different stances toward China, both in regard to geopolitical issues like Hong Kong's future or China's distinctly aggressive posture in the South China Sea, to more bread-and-butter matters like inward investment, technology transfer and 5G, not to mention, transport, ports, nuclear power and a dozen other areas where China has stepped in. In Britain, too, there are sharp divisions on all these aspects, Huawei and 5G in particular.

What has all this got to do with Five Eyes or Six Eyes? The answer is that super intelligence, cyber maneuvering and every kind of soft power messaging are the weapons of the future. If the goal is containment of mighty China on security fronts, but sensible cooperation on others, such as on trade, investment, scientific research and – especially just now – health and environmental issues, then it is precisely in these areas that this balanced formula can work and needs to work. This becomes increasingly obvious as China itself resorts to the dark and subtle world of cyberattacks and hacking.

The headlines may be filled with reports of warships, new aircraft carriers, unwelcome drilling rigs and artificial islands in the South Seas claimed by China (the infamous "nine-dash line"), complete with runways and combat aircraft — although some are said to be now crumbling back into the sea. And there is also now a thoroughly nasty, indeed horrific, spat going on between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh, not to mention scary talk of Chinese military invasion of Taiwan, which would of course trigger a world war and leave all sides in ashes.

But Sun Tzu's "Art of War" is always the big influence when assessing Chinese longer-term strategy, and it states clearly that China's strategic goals can best be achieved by non-frontal means, by spying and deceit, and by subduing without fighting.

As to what those longer-term Chinese goals are you can take your pick. Listen to some Beijing voices and you hear shrill demands for China to become a global superpower, eyeball to eyeball with an American-led West in a world too long dominated by Western institutions and laws — an ambition which sounds distinctly imperial, more suited to past centuries and from pre-nuclear and pre-digital times.

This is a scenario helped on its way by American commentators and academics, who love to talk about the coming clash of civilizations, the Thucydides moment and other apocalyptic scenarios. This is the path of broken agreements, endless border violations, stolen intellectual property, cavalier disregard for human rights and the rules-based international order — in short, where might will prove to be right.

Listen to other wiser and more cautious voices in Beijing and you hear the more moderate goal being merely to achieve some balancing up against long-standing domination by Western institutions, to keep foreigners out of what is deemed to be China's historic sovereign areas and to share with other nations in peace and friendship — win-win all round with the "Belt and Road" initiative binding East and West, and even an eventual convergence of political systems and philosophies of governance rather than inevitable conflicts.

The strategic interest of the democracies is to make China see the wisdom of the second path, pursued moderately and lawfully, and the self-harming futility of the first one. And here the existence of an ever-more watchful ring of "eyes" to match and expose Chinese subterfuge, and to check China's habit of soothingly saying one thing and ruthlessly doing another, is the best curb.

What the world needs is for China to prosper but not to bully. Now more than ever global economic recovery and international trade revival will be hugely dependent on an early return to healthy Chinese growth. But it also needs to guard against "overmighty subjects" to use William Shakespeare's phrase, who could fatally disrupt the delicate balances of today's network world on which peace and restored prosperity rest.

And to guard we need guardians. The Five Eyes alliance expanded fully to six would be ideally fitted to do the job.

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