

French warship joins US-UK-Japanese fleet threatening North Korea

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Amid the US military escalation and growing nuclear war tensions in the Korean peninsula, the French Socialist Party (PS) government has sent a Mistral-class warship to join exercises led by the US military alongside the Japanese Navy. The Mistral are amphibious assault helicopter carriers that participated in the Libyan War in 2011.

On Saturday, the ship reached the Sasebo naval base in Japan's western island of Kyushu to join with US armada threatening North Korea and China. It will participate in joint military exercise from the second to the third week of this month, alongside the US, Japanese and British navies near islands including Guam and Tinian in the western Pacific, around 2,400 km from Japan.

This deployment is an unambiguous threat to North Korea and China. Reuters News commented that the move is intended send "a clear message to China."

France's Socialist Party (PS) government and its political ally, PS-backed presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron, are accomplices in the war drive led by billionaire US President Donald Trump. After its unprovoked bombing of Syria on April 7, Washington turned its attention back to North Korea and Trump recently threatened the nuclear-armed country with "major, major conflict."

Behind the backs of the French people, the French army and the ruling elite are threatening countries that have carried out no military action against France. As the media demands voters back Macron to keep Marine Le Pen of the neo-fascist National Front (FN) from coming to power, voters are not being told that Macron's militaristic program is part of an imperialist offensive taking the world to the brink of nuclear war.

The PS government has spent years developing its ties to Washington's main allies in its "pivot to Asia"

aimed at China, including Australia, India, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan. Echoing US and Australian officials' rhetoric that the encirclement of China is aimed at maintaining "freedom of navigation," PS Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian pledged last year that France would be "sailing its ships and flying its planes wherever international law will allow, and wherever operational needs request that we do so."

In order to carry out this dangerous foreign policy, the Hollande administration plunged billions of euros into defense spending increases and ordered the construction of a new "Hexagon" command center for the military in Paris. At the same time, it imposed tens of billions of cuts in essential social programs, devastating the working class.

To carry out this reactionary agenda in the face of explosive social anger, the PS imposed and maintained a state of emergency, deployed the army inside France, and invited Le Pen to the Elysée palace. The PS's rush to join the war drive in Asia makes clear that, overseas no less than at home, Macron is just as great a danger to workers as Le Pen.

Macron proposes to bring back the military draft in France and to massively boost military spending. Like his predecessors in the First and Second World Wars, Macron and the French ruling elite want to use the youth as cannon fodder to expand France's imperial reach.

France's war posture underscores the correctness of the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste*'s (PES) call for a boycott of the French presidential elections. There is no lesser evil in this election. Both presidential candidates are representatives of a tiny financial elite, preparing dictatorship and wars that pose mortal dangers to the working class.

The only way forward for the working class, as the

PES has explained in its statement, is an active boycott of the French presidential election. This requires encouraging political opposition in the working class and youth and supporting strikes and protests to mobilize the working class in revolutionary opposition to whichever reactionary candidate wins the elections.

The demands for peace and social equality that underlie deep popular anger with the French elections will bring the working class into an explosive collision with the war agenda being pursued by the entire ruling class, its social-democratic factions no less than the neo-fascist ones.



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