Today, in Oceania, the most extensive region in the world, located in the Pacific Ocean, there is an ongoing geopolitical confrontation between the People's Republic of China on the one hand and the United States, Australia and New Zealand on the other. The two conflicting parties are vying for influence in the 12 island states of Oceania.

Every year, China is doing everything possible not to stop building up its presence in this region, calling into question the dominance of Washington and its allies in Oceania. The growth rate of the Chinese economy exceeds that of its competitors, while the presence of pro-American forces in Oceania continues to steadily decline. The security agreement signed in April 2022 between the People’s Republic of China and the Solomon Islands, which neither Australia nor the United States has managed to prevent, demonstrated as clearly as possible who could gain political power over Oceania in the foreseeable future.

On June 1, 2022, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that the Chinese leadership strongly condemns New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and American President Joe Biden for spreading false information about China’s policy in Oceania, as well as for interfering in China's internal affairs.
The Chinese diplomat stressed that the Chinese authorities are seriously concerned about the rhetoric of the leaders of New Zealand and the United States about China’s actions in Xinjiang, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the South China Sea. According to Zhao Lijian, politicians are discrediting their countries with their words, inflaming global tensions, and also showing the highest level of irresponsibility, openly condemning the domestic policy pursued by a sovereign nation.

As for the interaction between the Solomon Islands and China, the representative of the Chinese Foreign Ministry noted that it was aimed at the “comprehensive development of Oceania”. The diplomat reminded that China has never set itself the goal of starting a military confrontation with anyone, so the construction of military facilities on the territory of the Solomon Islands is not part of China’s plans.

Biden and Ardern have repeatedly expressed their concern about the Solomon Islands-China security partnership. According to the leaders of the United States and New Zealand, the development of relations between Beijing and the Solomon Islands may lead to significant changes in the balance of power in the region, which will not benefit the United States and New Zealand.

Despite the growing tension in Oceania and the struggle for spheres of influence, China is the main export destination of the New Zealand economy. New Zealand supplies large quantities of its food products to China, as well as wool products, which are in high demand among Chinese consumers.

Not so long ago, in January 2021, representatives of New Zealand and China expanded the bilateral free trade agreement by signing an additional agreement, the terms of which contribute to the increase of New Zealand exports to China.

It is New Zealand that became the first developed country to sign a free trade agreement with China: it concluded this agreement with China back in 2008. Today, the media present the results of this agreement as a clear example that the economic cooperation of a Western country with China can lead to favorable consequences.

After the start of the special military operation of the Russian Federation in Ukraine in February 2022, the New Zealand leadership imposed a number of anti-Russian sanctions, including against Gazprom, as well as other Russian organizations and defense enterprises. Thus, the New Zealand authorities supported Western countries in their attempts to undermine the Russian economy in order to weaken the intensity of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

According to representatives of New Zealand, sanctions against Russian state-owned companies, which have a large share in the gross domestic product of the Russian Federation, should have hurt Russia’s well-being and undermined its strategic plans. The New Zealand leadership is confident that by limiting the capabilities of Russian enterprises in the energy and military-industrial sectors, it thereby makes its relations with the United States and its allies stronger.

To date, New Zealand sanctions are in effect against over 650 citizens of the Russian Federation, in particular, against members of the State Duma, members of the Federation Council and the head of the Russian state, Vladimir Putin. Also, more than 90 Russian companies have been subjected to New Zealand sanctions.

By such actions, New Zealand actually demonstrates its diplomatic incompetence and political short-sightedness. Every year, Russia is becoming an increasingly influential country, whose opinion is listened to by all the major geopolitical players in the world arena. New Zealand sanctions and hostile rhetoric will not change the Kremlin’s foreign policy course, since New Zealand lacks the proper influence on Moscow. It should be noted that New Zealand and Russia could have very warm relations. Thanks to the rational decisions of the Russian authorities, the economic situation in the Far East continues to improve every year, and the expansion of dialogue with Russia would bring New Zealand a lot of benefits.

At the moment, the United States is experiencing a protracted domestic political crisis, which is caused by the inept policies of President Joe Biden and his predecessors. Washington is also losing its former influence in all regions of the world. For instance, the Middle East confidently looks towards Russia against the background of its military successes in Syria. In Oceania, China is gradually including an increasing number of previously pro-American island countries in its sphere of influence, and it also does not stop increasing its presence in the states of Southeast Asia.

It should be remembered that developing countries are actively catching up with the United States in the field of high technology. Consequently, New Zealand’s pro-American policy is absolutely irrational and will lead to the fact that New Zealand will find itself in a very unfavorable economic and political situation if the country’s authorities do not reconsider their foreign policy course.
Private companies play a crucial role in the economy of New Zealand, and they increasingly prefer cooperation with Chinese enterprises. If current trends do not change, then China’s share in the New Zealand economy will steadily grow, which may ultimately affect the state’s foreign policy course.

In the event that the volume of trade between New Zealand and China increases, sooner or later it may significantly affect public life in the country, which will tend to believe that China does not pose any external threat. The image of China as an enemy created by the pro-American media will be destroyed. There is no denying that political parties may appear in New Zealand, whose goal will be to withdraw from American sphere of influence and change the country’s foreign policy course. If such political parties receive proper public support, then New Zealand will stop considering China as its geopolitical rival and will begin to act in a more rational manner. Also, this turn of events can be facilitated by the growing percentage of ethnic Chinese people, who choose New Zealand as their second home year after year and do not have the desire to hear negative things about their historical homeland every day.

As a result, New Zealand and China will be able to demonstrate once again that economic cooperation can produce much better results than ideological confrontation. And, having accepted the Chinese position, New Zealand leaders will be able to adopt a different look at the situation in the world, especially since new elections of the country’s Prime Minister will be held very soon, in 2023, which may lead to a change of course currently being conducted by Jacinda Ardern.

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