

# CANZUK: The New Union

## Introduction

CANZUK stands for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom and is a proposed union that has been discussed for the past decade to address various shared issues between the four nation states. This paper seeks to address CANZUK, the history behind it, the proposed plan that has been largely agreed on, the possible next steps and the positives/negatives of the proposed plan. This union aims to provide a unified nation-state that will be the world's economic powerhouse and allow for policy independence from the United States.

## What is CANZUK?

CANZUK is the movement to form a political and economic union state under Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, with varying political and military integration at their national discretion (CANZUK International, 2025; CGAI, 2021). The current CANZUK movement is rooted in rejecting any existing Imperial construct of empire. The goal is an economic and limited national integration of states that already share a standard system of government, goals, financial interests, threats, and similar immigration systems (CANZUK International, 2025; CGAI, 2021). The movement seeks to eliminate the American political and economic control over the current Anglo democratic world without eliminating cultural variation. All nations share similar values on multiculturalism and have indigenous populations, except England, which is also the least likely to join a political part of the union, but instead in a limited capacity of an economic union (CGAI, 2021; BBC News, 2021).

There is currently no detailed agreement on how decisions within the alliance would work to evaluate how the decisions in CANZUK would work, but the documents and think tanks that have proposed the ideas reference several existing organizations as likely examples to mirror (CANZUK International, 2025; CGAI, 2021). It's important to note that these are subject to change if CANZUK is enacted and not final until a treaty is signed, as they will have to go through many rounds of negotiation (BBC News, 2021).

The proposed CANZUK frameworks referenced are primarily based on a hybrid of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN) framework. The solution discussed generally seems to be ensure democratic viability and resilience

“At a strategic level the alliance needs to adopt, as a fundamental premise, a NATO-style principle of mutual defence-an attack on one member of CANZUK is an

attack on all... At a practical level, its crux is interoperability of resources: people, equipment, assets and ports/bases” (Greenwood & Greenwood, 2018).

The NATO framework is a council system with limited binding power, with differing councils handling different issues and scopes of operations (NATO, 2024; CGAI, 2021). The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the governing body that decides the member states’ political objectives, troop commitments, and general operational frameworks. For a resolution, all nations must agree often through private negotiations, but there are strict regulations to prevent coercion (NATO, 2024, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2006 pp. 33–69). The NAC rarely proposes initiatives or does direct planning, but instead passes decisions based on the lower councils’ discussions and plans that are broadly agreed on by the lower-level representatives, effectively acting as a final check before a national commitment is made. The lower-level councils are organized into specialized areas of NATO priority, which are determined before the meetings. Despite NATO being a military defensive alliance, these councils are made up of a mix of former military, political appointees, and industry experts who are appointed by their respective nations as deemed applicable (NATO, 2024).

The military command of NATO comprises a rotating group of generals and command staff, which facilitates the day-to-day operations of NATO, provides reports to NATO, and governs all NATO forces in certain theatres in case of war or invocation of NATO collective defence. NATO further funds various sub-organizations that work on the collective needs of the alliance, primarily for research under the Centers for Excellence system, which is staffed by a mix of civilian and military personnel (NATO, 2024). The NATO commands are then further broken down into operational zones that each nation influences, depending on troop commitment. National integrity of nation states is maintained by the democratic will of the respective countries, and even though NATO resolutions are binding, they are not on the same level as treaties. Treaties must go through the standard approval processes, though NATO can help facilitate this (NATO, 2024).

The structure of CANZUK is likely to mimic that of NATO, with a decentralized command structure in which each level of government committees is focused on different groups (CGAI, 2021). These groups could include things such as military, economic, labour, labour rights, immigration, trade, and natural resources. Military operations would likely be handled by a similar theatre command structure that respects interests. Multiple variable chains of commands with different national military commands at differing levels ensure all national interests are respected (CANZUK International, 2025; CGAI, 2021). NATO already has standardization of equipment; as such, this will likely occur without much issue. Additionally, military doctrine’s thought on the result is that the structure remains universal, with NATO writing, kit and standards all agining into effectively what becomes a singular mindset (NATO, 2024).

## Historical Context

This concept originates from Canada and dates back to the days of the British Empire, in which, until 1932, a quasi-union existed under British hegemony. The British held an empire of “white dominions” now as “settler colonies that were self-governing from 1850 until 1945, all based under the Westminster government structure” (Lloyd, 2006; Marx, 2017). These dominions aimed to provide economic and military allies to supplement the cost of maintaining the most extensive empire by population or land mass in history. The British determined by the 1840s that the current empire was unsustainable, with the Canadian rebellions of 1837–1838 fresh in British minds and the cost of ending slavery bankrupting the Empire; a model which did not favour economic dependence on England would be the only path that might be sustainable. The political motivation was simple, as the goal was to prevent another American-style revolution and the complete long-term collapse of the empire. The cost of maintaining the Empire even by 1840 was unsustainable, and the British predicted that a significant collapse would likely occur within an 80-year time frame if serious reforms were not taken (Lloyd, 2006). Africa was not yet colonizable, and as such, the British at the time had reached the end of their possible expansion without another major war, which Britain was both politically and economically unable to attain. The British Plan was formalized in forming the colony of Canada in 1841 and led to the creation of the latter confederation of Canada in 1867 (Marx, 2017).

As predicted, the Empire proved unsustainable, suffering from a lack of innovation and overextension that was finally broken following the victory in World War I. The British victory over the Germans saw the inclusion of new territories that could not be sufficiently manned to integrate their resources into the empire at a level that justified their cost. The British Empire collapsed after WWII, as over four decades of constant rebellion, cost, and political will led to its downfall (British Empire, 2025). WWI also led to the British colonies pushing for independence as their forces were slaughtered for minimal material gain; however, this collective suffering gave a new sense of national identity to the white colonies. The Canadians, with their Vimy, the ANZACS in Gallipoli, and both at Amiens, France, led to a complete loss of faith in the Empire's competence and a validation that total separation was possible. The fighting in Africa also proved that whites were very vulnerable to being killed by Africans, as all sides used African native brigades, which led to mass separatist movements across the continent (British Empire, 2025).

The English briefly became tied to the European continent for the first time in its history, and the Americans filled the role of Imperial protector for their sibling nations during the Cold War. The Americans largely replaced the role that the British had filled for over a century. However, the end of the Cold War saw the Americans forcing their sibling nations into increasingly bloody wars that once again soured their relations, in a similar manner to how the British did in World War I, with Canada, and Australia participating in varying capacities, in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq. The geopolitical threat of China has, until recently, kept the American grip on its siblings close despite these wars, but with the rise of Trump, this paradigm was obliterated (Lloyd, 2006).

# Party Politics

When discussing the political party histories of many of the CANZUK states, there is no guarantee that they are affiliated just because they share the same name, nor is there any guarantee of shared party values or policies (MIR, 2020). The political movements of each nation have vastly different histories and do not overlap in their similar values in most cases beyond a general position on the political spectrum (CANZUK International, 2025). Some parties do share similar policy positions regarding CANZUK, but their respective countries differ in terms of the boundaries of this debate. Most of these countries, however, use very similar Westminster parliamentary institutions, with usually only minor variations from one to the next (Long Finance, 2019; Mabley, 2022). The system of government is however mirrored with the same Westminster system and party system.

## Canada

### Conservatives and Liberals

The conservative and liberal movements, unlike in much of the world, have been divided based on imperial ties (British) and annexationist (pro-American), from 1867 to 2021 (Segal, 2004).<sup>1</sup> They are also defined by the Anglo-French divide over social movements until 1998. Both parties have repeatedly changed their positions between the Imperial and Annexationists, making the issues more challenging to understand (*British North America Act*, 1867; Conservative Party of Canada, 2025).

The Conservative movement started as an Empire party, its primary ideological plank was allegiance to the UK and suspicion of ties with the US. in direct opposition to the United States of America (U.S.), with Sir John A. MacDonald being a noted imperial loyalist (Conservative Party of Canada [1867–1942], 2025; Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 2025). The Conservatives maintained this position under Borden, which the Liberals and Conservatives switched. The author is aware that this is a vast oversimplification, but the nuance of this topic is far too great for this essay. Conservatives courted the Anglo-Saxon vote and largely ignored Quebec whenever possible. Through the 19th and early 20th centuries, they diverted most decisions to the Crown overseas when it was politically not palatable to take those decisions at home (Francophone-Anglophone Relations, 2006).

The Liberal Party dates back to the 1836–1837 Rebellion under King, the grandfather of Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and Louis Joseph Papineau in Upper and

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of this essay and to avoid belabouring this topic, the Confederation Party, Union Party, Progressive Conservatives, Reform Party, and Conservative Party will be viewed as one continuous entity as they share similar values and have overlap in membership (Segal, 2004). For a full explanation of the history, please see *The Right Balance: Canada's Conservative Tradition* (2004) by Hugh Segal.

Lower Canada, respectively (Rebellions of 1837–1838, 2025; Marsh, 2017/2008).<sup>2</sup> The motives for the Lower Canada rebellion differ from those of the Upper Canada rebellion, with the Liberal movement coming from Upper Canada (now Ontario), which advocated for integration with the U.S., and/or an American system of government and increased free trade with the Americans (Smith, 2023). The Liberals further backed Quebec sovereignty later on, going as far as to elect Canada's first French Prime Minister and working to secure French language rights (Neatby & de Bruin, 2023; Francophone-Anglophone Relations, 2006). The Liberals during WWI supported neutrality, a position Canada did not have the power to hold. They objected to conscription, which was popular in Quebec and led to the Conscription Crisis (Francophone-Anglophone Relations, 2006; Neatby & de Bruin, 2023).

In 1920, following the end of Borden's tenure as Prime Minister, the Liberals and Conservatives switched positions. Borden heavily favoured Canadian independence, which took many constitutional steps over the following decades and worked to facilitate it from Britain, leading to some policy overlap (Cook, 2014, pp. 37–38). The Liberals under Mackenzie King favoured Canadian sovereignty by further distancing themselves from the British while refusing to integrate with the Americans politically and opening the door to further American economic integration (Liberal Party of Canada, 2025). An important note is that Mackenzie King favoured what was generally popular and was pragmatic as policy, over ideological, leading to a lack of clear divides as the policies changed drastically under his tenure. King favoured the welfare state's first implementation in opposition to the conservatives, leading to Canada's first example of economic right-left formation (Liberal Party of Canada, 2025). King was a political pragmatist and did largely what was popular, without any real commitment to any ideological standpoint. The Conservatives in the post-war years would favour Canadian integration with the U.S. economically, a position that has generally been maintained until the 2021 election (Conservatism in Canada, 2025). The Liberals, in contrast, despite repatriating the Constitution, have favoured typically European and British economic ties (Liberal Party of Canada, 2025).

The Liberals have been largely silent on the concept of CANZUK. However, the idea was proposed under the Trudeau Government by the Conservatives, with some bipartisan support, but has failed to gain widespread support beyond economic discussions (CANZUK, 2025). Recent Liberal governments have favoured a de-integration of Canadian defence with American (Carnegie Endowment, 2025). The Conservatives were the first party to propose CANZUK formally to the Canadian voter in the 2021 federal election (Canadian Global Affairs Institute [CGAI], 2021). The Conservatives included an informalized concept of CANZUK in their election platform (Conservative Party of Canada, 2025). The content is primarily economic and has limited military integration with other possible CANZUK members (CANZUK, 2025). The Trump issue, in which the U.S. has made overtures for a formal annexation of Canada through military action, has led to increased palatability for any idea that may de-integrate Canada economically

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<sup>2</sup> Led as a peasant's revolt, rebellion was a resistance to the highly corrupt form of government in Upper and Lower Canada. The revolt was in direct opposition to the family compact and generally supported Canadian separatism. The various factions involved in the revolt generally disagreed on the level of separatism. The Rebellion was brutally crushed by the British colonial military, with the leaders fleeing to the United States or being summarily hanged.

and militarily from the U.S. (Trump Canada Annex, 2025; Carnegie Endowment, 2025). An option such as CANZUK that does not nuclearize Canada but does provide access to the nuclear umbrella while supplementing Canada's negligible Pacific naval presence is ideal, with the UK and Australia filling each respective role of protector (CANZUK, 2025).

## United Kingdom (UK)

The United Kingdom remains the most conceptually difficult member of the CANZUK discussion. While the Conservative Party has had individual Members of Parliament express strong support for CANZUK, it has never adopted the proposal as part of an official party platform. Support within the party has been vocal but fragmented, with a limited number of MPs citing CANZUK in speeches and op-eds — often framed more as a post-Brexit aspiration than as a grounded policy proposal (CGAI, 2021; CANZUK International, 2025). This selective engagement reflects a broader political hesitancy. Following the polarizing and economically disruptive experience of Brexit, the Conservative Party has grown increasingly cautious about embracing large-scale integration projects, particularly those that evoke notions of supranational governance. There is an acute fear of trading one union for another, especially one that may reignite sovereignty debates at home.

In particular, British resistance to defence integration stems from two distinct factors. First, the physical distance between the UK and the Pacific CANZUK states makes operational integration logistically difficult and politically unappealing, especially beyond naval coordination. Second, the United Kingdom is a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It maintains an independent nuclear deterrent through its Trident program and views strategic autonomy in defence matters as essential to maintaining its global posture. As such, formally tying its deterrence doctrine or rapid response capabilities to a broader military framework, especially one involving smaller states, is seen as potentially dilutive to its strategic standing (CGAI, 2021).

British foreign policy has subtly shifted toward a CANZUK-compatible direction despite this caution. Post-Brexit trade strategy has prioritized bilateral agreements with Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, including ratifying the UK-Australia and UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreements in 2023. These deals remove tariffs, streamline professional qualification recognition, and align digital and environmental standards—all key planks of the CANZUK economic platform. Additionally, the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in 2024, alongside all other CANZUK nations, signals a decisive pivot toward the Anglosphere and the Indo-Pacific, particularly amid strained relations with the European Union.

Under the current Labour government, no direct reference to CANZUK has been made. However, specific policy trajectories—including the expansion of Commonwealth trade ties, interest in Indo-Pacific naval cooperation, and domestic rhetoric on rebuilding Britain's global partnerships—echo CANZUK principles without naming them explicitly (CANZUK International,

2025). This suggests that while Labour is unlikely to formally embrace the term “CANZUK” due to its associations with Conservative foreign policy and post-colonial critique, the structural alignment continues to deepen. In this context, CANZUK may emerge not as a grand announcement but as a slow convergence, a coalition built less through fanfare and more through function.

## **Australia**

The Australian Conservatives have consistently expressed formal support for CANZUK in official policy platforms and through repeated public endorsements by sitting Members of Parliament (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). This support has moved beyond rhetorical alignment into actionable policy, particularly about New Zealand. The Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, which allows citizens of Australia and New Zealand to live and work freely in each other’s countries without visas, has long served as a functional model of mobility integration (Australian Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Defence integration has followed a similar trajectory; the Australian Defence Force and the New Zealand Defence Force regularly conduct joint training operations, participate in shared deployments, and maintain interoperable command structures (New Zealand Defence Force, NZDF, 2023; PACAF, 2017). This relationship has become a regional norm, with both countries participating in exercises such as Southern Katipo, Talisman Sabre, and RIMPAC, strengthening the capacity for joint operations across naval, air, and ground forces (NZDF, 2023; PACAF, 2017).

Australia has also shown increasing interest in expanding these defence and trade frameworks beyond the Pacific, viewing the UK and Canada as natural extensions of its strategic orbit (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement, ratified in 2023, marked a decisive step in reducing tariffs, harmonizing standards, and recognizing professional qualifications between the two nations (Government of the United Kingdom, 2023). In parallel, Australia has engaged with Canada on Indo-Pacific security, Arctic defence, and cyber-resilience, domains where Canadian capabilities complement Australian regional reach (Department of National Defence, 2024; Cyber Collaboration, 2025). Despite geographic distance, Canberra views Ottawa not only as a like-minded democracy but also as a counterbalance to Chinese influence in the Pacific and American unpredictability (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025).

The strength of Australia’s CANZUK position lies in its pragmatism. Rather than forcing convergence, it respects legal and constitutional differences while emphasizing common interests (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). Canberra’s approach reflects a deep understanding that alliances are not built on sentiment. Still, on strategic compatibility, the CANZUK framework offers a rare opportunity for Australia to expand its global partnerships without compromising sovereignty or regional focus (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025).

## **New Zealand**

New Zealand’s geopolitical posture has long been shaped in concert with Australia, functioning as a smaller but ideologically aligned partner within the Pacific sphere. In strategic

terms, Australia acts as New Zealand's big brother, setting the tempo for regional engagement, defence integration, and economic policy (Australia - New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations, 2024; Australia, New Zealand Strengthen Military Collaboration, 2025; Australia–New Zealand relations, 2025). While New Zealand retains a strong tradition of political independence and principled diplomacy, it rarely diverges significantly from Australian-led initiatives, particularly in security and financial alignment (Paik, 2024; Australia-New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations, 2024).

Unlike Australia or the UK, New Zealand has no formal party-level endorsement of CANZUK. The concept has yet to penetrate the national political agenda meaningfully. The major parties, Labour and National, have not committed to the idea, and CANZUK is absent from official manifestos (CANZUK, 2025). This lack of formal backing should not be interpreted as opposition. Instead, it reflects a cautious political culture that prioritizes sovereignty and legislative autonomy, particularly in treaty obligations with Māori and a strong civil society emphasis on multilateralism (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021a; 2021b).

Despite this, the economic and strategic logic of deeper integration is increasingly being discussed within academic and policy literature (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021c). New Zealand is already linked to Australia through the Closer Economic Relations (CER) Agreement, one of the world's most comprehensive bilateral free trade agreements. It includes mutual recognition of standards, freedom of movement, and coordinated customs procedures—a functional prototype of what CANZUK could look like in practice (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.). Moreover, New Zealand's accession to the UK–NZ Free Trade Agreement and participation in the CPTPP, alongside the UK, Canada, and Australia, further cements its economic compatibility with the CANZUK bloc (Department for Business and Trade, 2024/2021; CANZUK, 2025).

Given this trajectory, this paper assumes that there would be minimal political resistance if CANZUK were to emerge with evident respect for national integrity, particularly about New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi obligations and its independent foreign policy stance (Ministry of Justice, 2025; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021a). In this context, the absence of objection is as significant as endorsement. New Zealand may not lead the charge toward CANZUK. Still, it is unlikely to stand in the way, especially if the framework preserves national agency while delivering tangible trade, defence, and mobility benefits (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021c; CANZUK, 2025).

## **Existing CANZUK Integration**

Currently, many treaties encompass much of what CANZUK is proposed to encompass, but without a formal title. Canada has forces exchange programs with all CANZUK states; all nations participate in joint defence exercises and are bound by deep-rooted interoperability frameworks that stem from shared historical obligations under the Crown and NATO coordination (Canada-Australia Joint Defence Statement, 2024; Talisman Sabre, 2025). Canada



and Australia have forged an exceptionally close defence relationship, grounded in shared history, values, and a mutual commitment to global security. Recent joint statements by defence ministers from both countries highlight a deliberate effort to deepen this partnership, especially as both face an increasingly complex strategic environment. They have pledged to enhance interoperability, reduce barriers to collaboration, and reinforce cooperation in areas such as space, cyber, advanced military capabilities, and science and technology, all while remaining committed to the Five Eyes alliance (Canada Department of National Defence, 2024; Rehman, 2024). This partnership is further demonstrated by substantial investments in joint projects, such as collaborative research and development on emerging missile threats, with both nations contributing significant resources to fast-track next-generation defence solutions and address shared security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and beyond (Australian Department of Defence, 2024).

A particularly unique aspect of this relationship is the evolving personnel exchange and lateral transfer arrangements between their armed forces. Australia has recently launched a pilot program allowing eligible Canadians, as well as citizens from the UK, US, and New Zealand, to apply for service in the Australian Defence Force after living in Australia for at least one year. This initiative is designed to address recruitment challenges and aims to recruit 350 international candidates annually, providing a pathway to permanent residency and, ultimately, citizenship for those who meet the criteria (Dougherty, 2024). On the Canadian side, permanent residents, including those with foreign military backgrounds, are now eligible to join the Canadian Armed Forces, and those who serve can access a fast-track process for Canadian citizenship. Foreign military members on exchange with the CAF can also benefit from this streamlined path, reflecting a rare level of military-political integration between two sovereign states.

Moreover, the ABCANZ Armies Program (Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) ensures doctrine compatibility, officer interchangeability, and battlefield readiness through joint exercises such as Talisman Sabre (Australia-US-Canada), Pitch Black (Royal Australian Air Force or RAAF multilateral exercise), and Southern Katipo (New Zealand-led), all of which regularly include CANZUK participants (Talisman Sabre, 2025; NZDF, 2023). These exercises go beyond symbolic unity—they reflect synchronized command structures, logistical doctrines, and rules of engagement which have increasingly blurred operational divides (Talisman Sabre, 2025). CANZUK nations also share intelligence through the Five Eyes Alliance, forming the backbone of Western signals intelligence (SIGINT) capabilities. This level of trust is rarely seen outside of federal unions (Skinner, 2025).

## **CANZUK Economic Ties**

The economic ties between CANZUK states are equally robust in terms of trade and market integration. Canada exported C\$14.5 billion to the United Kingdom in 2023, making it Canada's third-largest export market after the U.S. and China (UK-Canada Trade Factsheet, 2025). Imports from the UK to Canada totalled C\$7.2 billion, with key sectors including

pharmaceuticals, aerospace parts, and motor vehicles (UK-Canada Trade Factsheet, 2025). Canada-Australia trade exceeded total bilateral merchandise trade was 6.4 billion in 2023, with Canadian exports to Australia valued at C\$3.2 billion, primarily in machinery, chemical products, and ICT services (Global Affairs Canada, 2024a). Imports from Australia included agricultural goods and rare minerals (Global Affairs Canada, 2024a). The trajectory is clear with Canada-New Zealand bilateral trade surpassing C\$1.4 billion and experiencing 3.2 billion growth in 2024 alone (Global Affairs Canada, 2024b). More importantly, the United Kingdom's accession to the CPTPP in December 2024 further solidified intra-CANZUK trade liberalization (UK CPTPP Accession, 2024). Now, all four nations share membership in one of the world's most advanced and ambitious multilateral free trade frameworks, with a combined GDP exceeding US\$13.5 trillion and a population of over 135 million (Global Affairs Canada, 2025; UK-Canada Trade Factsheet, 2025).

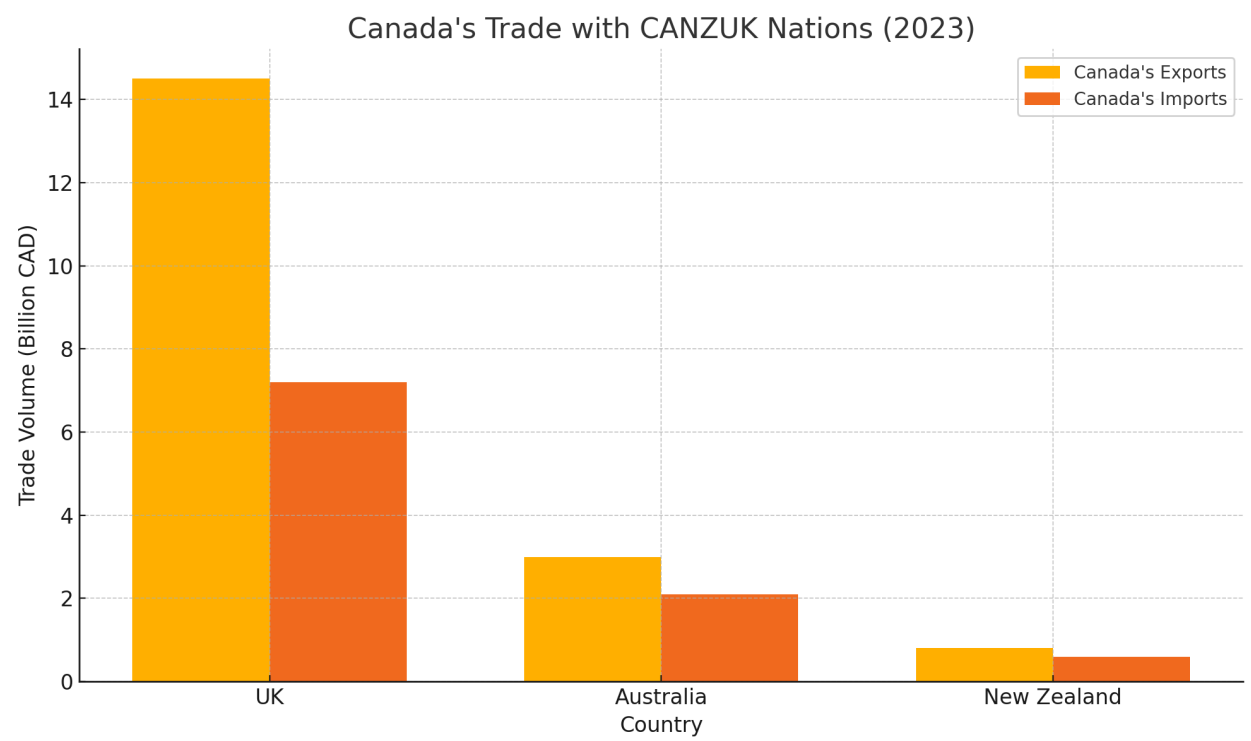


Fig 1.1  
Figure 1.1 demonstrates the current trade among the CANZUK nations with Canada as a focus.

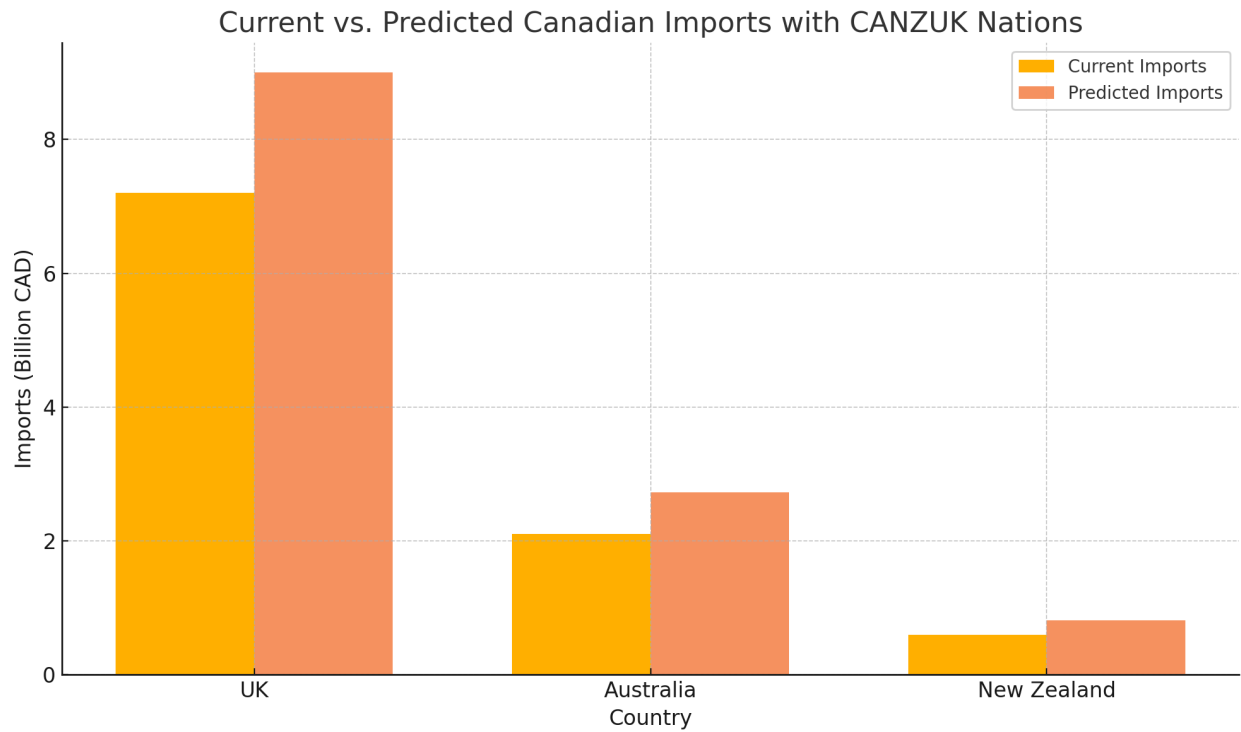


Fig 1.2

Fig. 1.2 provides the predicted increase in trade with Canada at the centre.

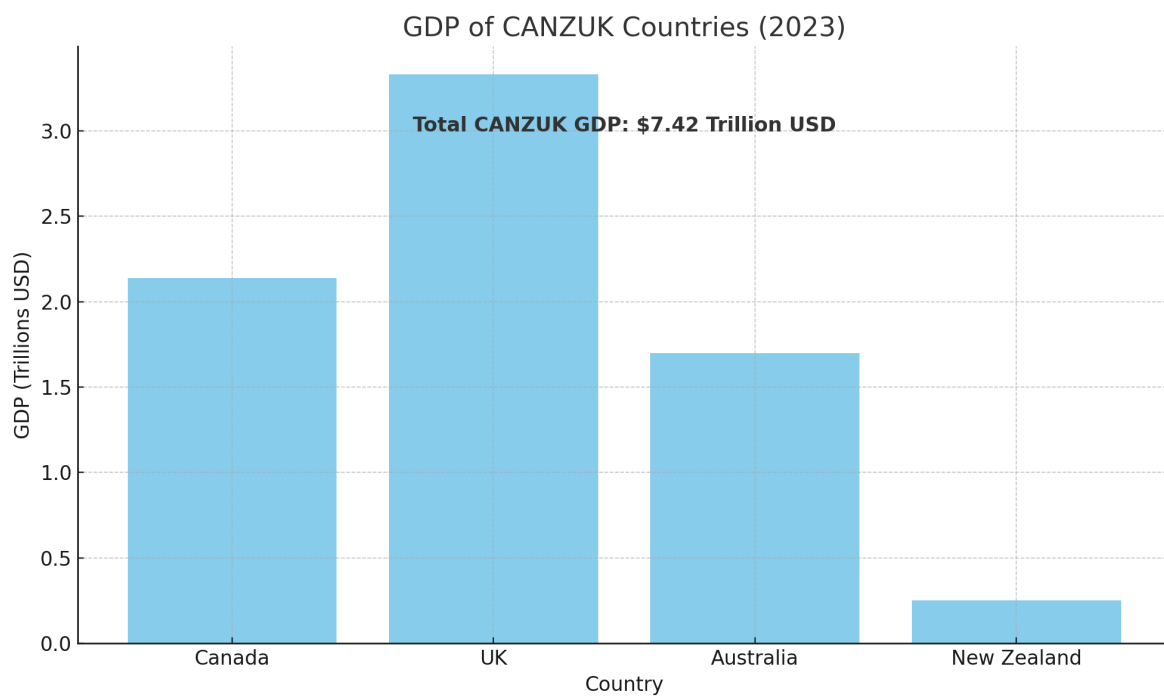


Fig. 1.3

Figure 1.3 provides the possible total increased GDP of CANZUK.

Beyond trade and defence, there is a clear trend toward institutional harmonization among CANZUK countries. Professional qualifications in fields such as law, medicine, and engineering are increasingly recognized across jurisdictions, reflecting a shared legal heritage rooted in common law (CANZUK International, 2025; CANZUK, 2025). For example, Australia and New Zealand already have mutual recognition agreements for both products and professional qualifications, allowing individuals registered in one country to practice in the other without additional testing or retraining. The United Kingdom has also adopted similar provisions, such as permitting fully qualified teachers from Australia, Canada, or New Zealand to apply to teach in England without conversion training.

Mutual visa-free travel is already established, and Commonwealth privileges often facilitate easier residency and employment access than is available to non-CANZUK nations (CANZUK International, 2025; CANZUK, 2025). Academic and diplomatic forums have advanced discussions around the creation of a CANZUK mobility zone modelled on the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, which currently allows Australians and New Zealanders to live and work freely in either country (CANZUK International, 2025; CANZUK, 2025; CANZUK International, 2020). Proposals envision extending this arrangement to include Canada and the UK, granting citizens the right to live, work, study, and travel across all four countries without the need for visas or work permits, subject to standard character and health requirements (CANZUK International, 2025; CANZUK International, 2020).

The convergence of these frameworks—economic, legal, military, and cultural— means that much of the proposed CANZUK model is already functionally in place, even without a formal supranational structure (CANZUK International, 2025; Chapnick, 2022). Any future formalization would likely serve to consolidate and streamline a network of bilateral and multilateral relationships that are already deeply operationalized (CANZUK International, 2025).

## **The support for CANZUK**

The CANZUK initiative is primarily supported by a small but vocal network of policy think tanks, academics, and advocacy groups rather than by widespread grassroots mobilization (CANZUK International, 2025; CIPS, 2019). Chief among its proponents is CANZUK International, a UK-based non-governmental organization that has played a central role in shaping the discourse around the proposed alliance between Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (CANZUK International, 2025; Lilico, 2025). While the group has garnered endorsements from various conservative political figures, such as members of the UK's Conservative Party, Canada's Conservative Party, and figures within Australia's Liberal-National Coalition, its political clout remains relatively diffuse and lacks formal institutional authority (CBC, 2025; Lilico, 2025). The movement is often framed as a technocratic or intellectual project, with support stemming from libertarian and neoliberal circles who see the alliance as a way to revitalize the geopolitical and economic stature of the four countries

involved (CIPS, 2019; Lilico, 2025). In this sense, CANZUK is less an organic or populist movement and more of a top-down proposal championed by elites concerned with the perceived collective decline of these Anglo settler states (CIPS, 2019; Lilico, 2025). Advocates cite shared legal systems, language, cultural values, and historical military alliances as justifications for deepened integration (CANZUK International, 2025; Lilico, 2025). However, the lack of visible mass support and the absence of robust party-level commitments in several member states raise questions about the initiative's long-term viability and popular legitimacy (CBC, 2025; CIPS, 2019).

## **The Common Culture argument**

One of the primary pillars of the CANZUK initiative is its invocation of a shared cultural heritage among Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Proponents often emphasize that these nations, as former British settler colonies, are bound together by institutional similarities and deep cultural affinities rooted in language, legal traditions, and sociopolitical norms (CANZUK International, 2025). English is the dominant language across all four nations, and Westminster-style parliamentary democracy is a foundational political model (CANZUK International, 2025). Beyond governance, CANZUK advocates highlight the nations' similar education systems, common law frameworks, and comparable approaches to civil liberties and the rule of law (CANZUK International, 2025).

Cultural commonality is frequently used to justify proposals for freedom of movement, suggesting that shared values regarding pluralism, secular governance, social tolerance, and liberal democratic ideals would ease migration and integration between the countries (CANZUK International, 2025). These arguments also reference a common civic ethos shaped by participation in British imperial institutions and 20th-century wars, particularly the two World Wars, where citizens from all four nations fought under a shared cause and banner. National narratives in each country still pay homage to this legacy, reinforcing a sense of cultural kinship (CANZUK International, 2025).

Advocates assert that this cultural alignment fosters a natural compatibility in media consumption, sports (e.g., rugby and cricket), humour, and public discourse. British, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand media frequently overlap in tone and content, with broadcasters like the BBC, CBC, and ABC enjoying mutual recognition and respect across borders (CANZUK International, 2025). Cultural products—films, literature, and music—circulate easily, and shared historical memory continues to shape national identities in ways that lend themselves to a collective cultural imagination (CANZUK International, 2025).

Yet, critics argue that this “shared culture” conception often romanticizes or oversimplifies the historical and contemporary differences that have evolved among the four nations. While cultural touchpoints may exist among majority populations, each country's demographic reality is increasingly shaped by multiculturalism, Indigenous resurgence, and non-British immigration dynamics that complicate the notion of a unified Anglophone cultural

bloc (Maitra, 2021). In this view, the cultural foundations of CANZUK may resonate more with a nostalgic vision of imperial kinship than with the pluralistic realities of 21st-century societies (Power, 2021).

Nevertheless, the appeal to common culture remains a powerful rhetorical device. It provides the emotional glue that binds the CANZUK vision, framing integration as a restoration of long-standing ties rather than the construction of something entirely new (CANZUK International, 2025). In doing so, it subtly appeals to identity politics in a transnational context, positioning the four nations as a cultural family with shared norms, values, and historical trajectories (CANZUK International, 2025). Whether this cultural framing can sustain political momentum or translate into viable policy remains to be seen.

## **The Economic Argument**

If enacted, CANZUK would instantly become the most significant economic bloc in the world by GDP per capita among major alliances, and among the top in nominal GDP, rivalling or surpassing both the European Union and the United States, depending on global fluctuations. With a combined GDP of approximately USD 7.4 trillion, a population of over 135 million, and some of the world's most advanced legal, financial, and technological infrastructures, the CANZUK union would not simply be another regional trade agreement — it would be a consolidated market power capable of influencing global trade standards on its own terms (CANZUK International, 2025; Mabley, 2022).

Harmonizing trade, regulatory, and professional standards across the bloc would allow member states to negotiate as a single entity. This increases bargaining power with larger economic actors like the U.S., EU, and China. For Canada and Australia, this would neutralize long-standing trade dependencies on American markets and reduce vulnerability to U.S. trade coercion — a tactic Washington has increasingly relied upon in its foreign policy toolkit (Mabley, 2022; CANZUK International, 2025). A unified CANZUK would also provide a credible counterweight to China's Belt and Road Initiative, allowing member nations to present a coordinated trade and investment front in regions like Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, and Africa — areas where strategic and economic interests overlap (Goodman, 2020).

In Africa, where China and Russia aggressively pursue extractive and infrastructure-based influence, the Canadians, British, and Australians already maintain significant economic stakes in mining, energy, agriculture, and fisheries. By aligning these interests under a unified trade and investment framework, CANZUK could act as a stabilizing economic force in the region (Levi & Greenhill, 2020; Ndzendze & Monyae, 2019; Kiggundu, 2021).

Domestically, all four nations face systemic economic stagnation. Growth forecasts across CANZUK members have been modest at best, with declining productivity, demographic aging, and a rising strain on social services presenting a common policy challenge (Chapnick, 2022; Duff, 2025). The cost of living continues to increase while wages remain stagnant in real

terms, and immigration policy alone has not proven sufficient to reverse the demographic slide. Innovation outputs in green technology, manufacturing, and artificial intelligence (AI) remain underwhelming compared to global competitors (CANZUK's Digital Synergy, 2023). Without structural reform, projections indicate that all four nations will face long-term economic contraction and declining living standards.

CANZUK may offer a credible solution to this decline. Harmonized trade and regulatory environments would promote greater market efficiency, enabling companies to scale faster and compete across a broader customer base without burdensome administrative barriers (CANZUK International, 2025). Increased competition has a demonstrable correlation with higher productivity, innovation, and profitability, outcomes all four nations desperately need. Rather than duplicating efforts, a CANZUK bloc could pool research funding, standardize patent and data frameworks, and mutually recognize credentials in high-skill sectors such as health, education, and technology (CANZUK's Digital Synergy, 2023).

## **The Defence Argument**

The defence rationale behind the CANZUK initiative is underpinned by two critical geopolitical anxieties: the enduring dominance of the United States and the rapid militarization and assertiveness of the People's Republic of China. Though vastly different in ideology and global strategy, these two powers represent the principal poles of tension that shape the security environments of the CANZUK nations, particularly Australia and New Zealand (CGAI, 2021).

The Chinese question looms largest in the South Pacific. As Beijing expands its strategic footprint through infrastructure investments, security pacts with Pacific Island nations, and a growing blue-water navy presence, Australia and New Zealand find themselves increasingly vulnerable. China's growing influence in countries such as the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea is seen by defence analysts as a direct challenge to traditional Western influence in the region. For Australia, in particular, China is no longer viewed as merely a trading partner but as a potential military aggressor, capable of projecting power into Australia's immediate strategic environment. In this context, the Australian Navy has emerged as the principal Western-aligned naval power outside the U.S. Pacific Command, tasked with maintaining freedom of navigation and regional deterrence. Yet Australia cannot shoulder this burden alone, even with recent expansions and modernization efforts (CGAI, 2021).

New Zealand's situation is even more precarious. Its armed forces, historically designed for peacekeeping and regional humanitarian missions, lack the scale, equipment, and strategic posture necessary to counter high-intensity threats. Despite its geographic isolation, New Zealand is increasingly implicated in Pacific geopolitics. It is economically entangled with China, which raises concerns about its strategic vulnerability and policy independence in times of crisis.

Though geographically distant from the South Pacific, Canada is not immune to these dynamics. Its military remains underfunded relative to its global responsibilities and ambitions, and its Pacific coastline positions it as a potential actor in any Indo-Pacific security arrangement. However, Canada's armed forces lack sufficient projection capability and rely heavily on U.S.

support for strategic deterrence and rapid deployment. NORAD and NATO commitments consume most of Canada's defence posture, leaving its Pacific obligations ill-defined and secondary. Moreover, Canada's fractured defence procurement process and limited naval assets further restrict its ability to engage meaningfully in Pacific theatre operations without significant allied support (CGAI, 2021).

The American question, conversely, is not merely one of alliance but of dependency and autonomy. While the United States remains the de facto guarantor of security in the Pacific, its increasingly erratic foreign policy, particularly under isolationist or transactional leadership, raises concerns about the long-term reliability of U.S. commitments. This is especially pertinent given America's strategic focus on its interests and shifting priorities. For the CANZUK nations, excessive reliance on American military power creates strategic vulnerabilities and political dilemmas, particularly if U.S. policy veers toward unilateralism or retreat (CGAI, 2021).

Against this backdrop, CANZUK is proposed as a theoretical solution to these intertwined defence challenges. By pooling their military assets, strategic planning, and defence procurement, the four nations could, in principle, form a more coherent and autonomous collective security bloc. This would not rival the U.S. alliance system but rather complement it, creating a mid-tier Anglosphere defence network capable of joint operations, intelligence sharing, cyber defence, and limited power projection. A CANZUK alliance could also bolster defence industrial cooperation, standardize equipment and training, and reduce duplication in procurement—all while enhancing regional deterrence against adversarial actors like China (CGAI, 2021).

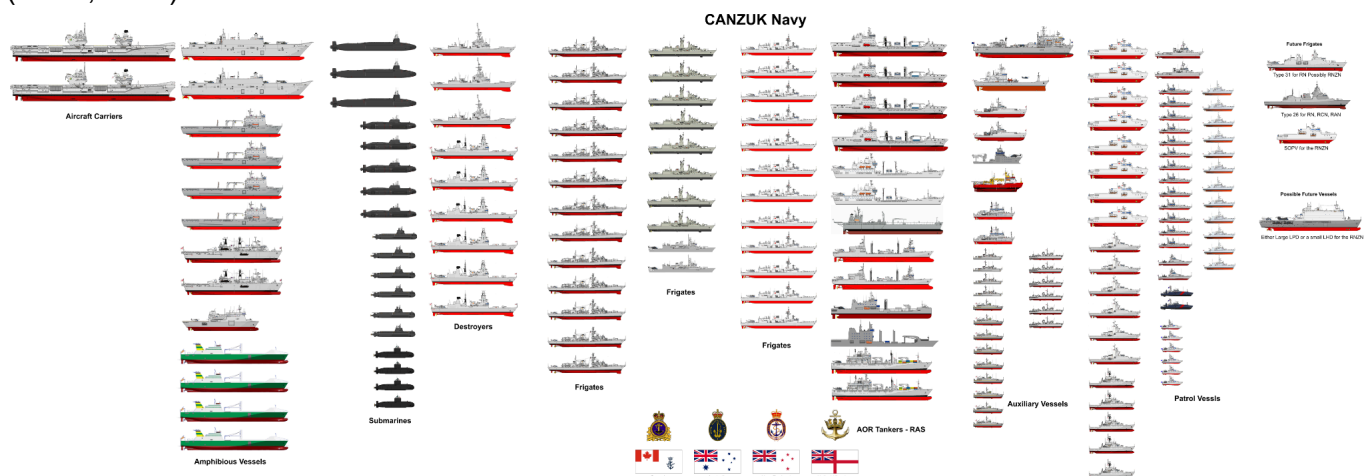


Fig 1.2 (CGAI, 2021)

Figure 1.2 shows the total composition of the possible CANZUK navy.



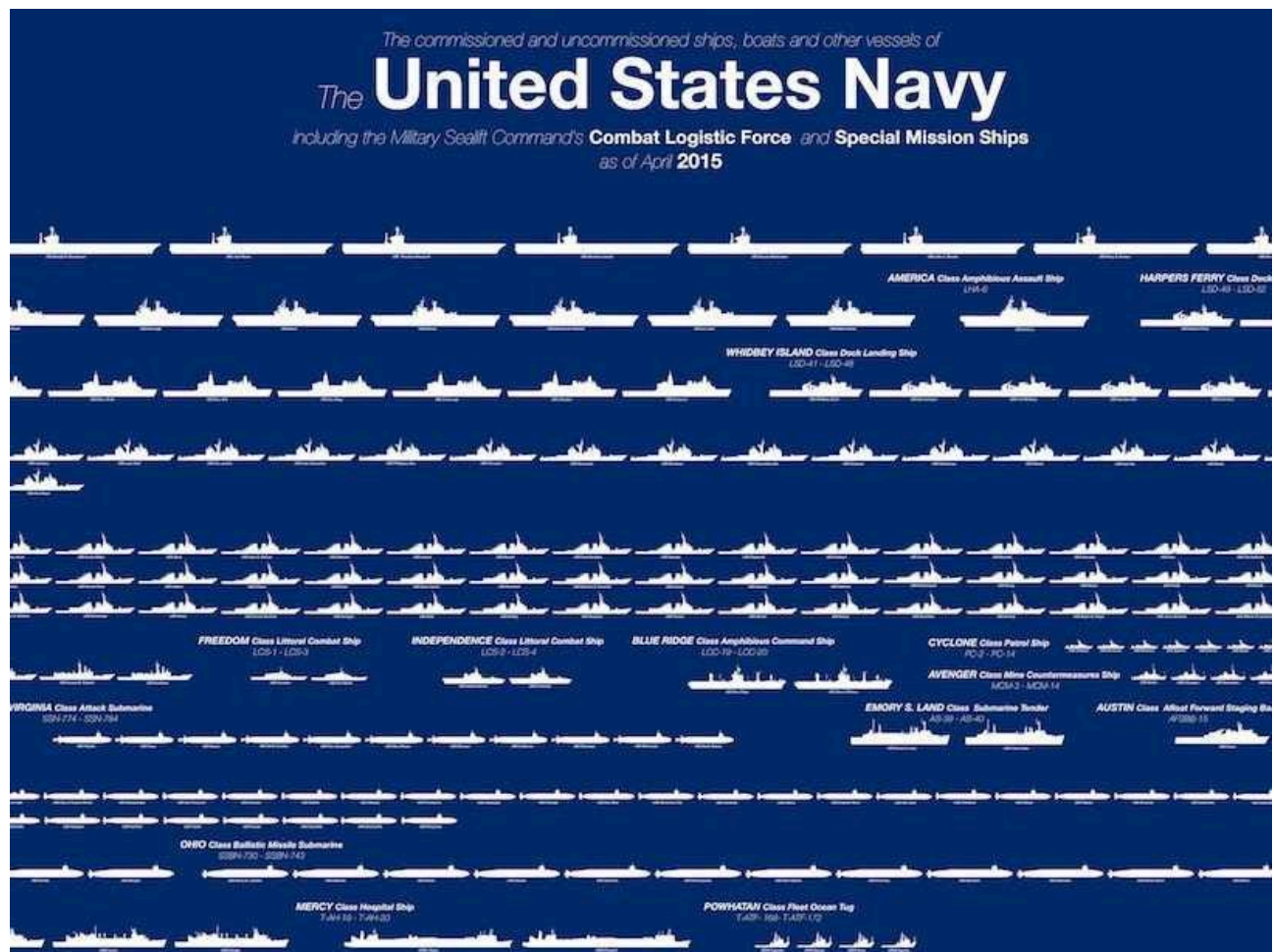


Fig. 1.3 (Figure adapted from Naval Graphics, 2015)

Fig 1.3 shows the US Navy's composition in 2015. The naval composition has not changed dramatically in the past ten years.

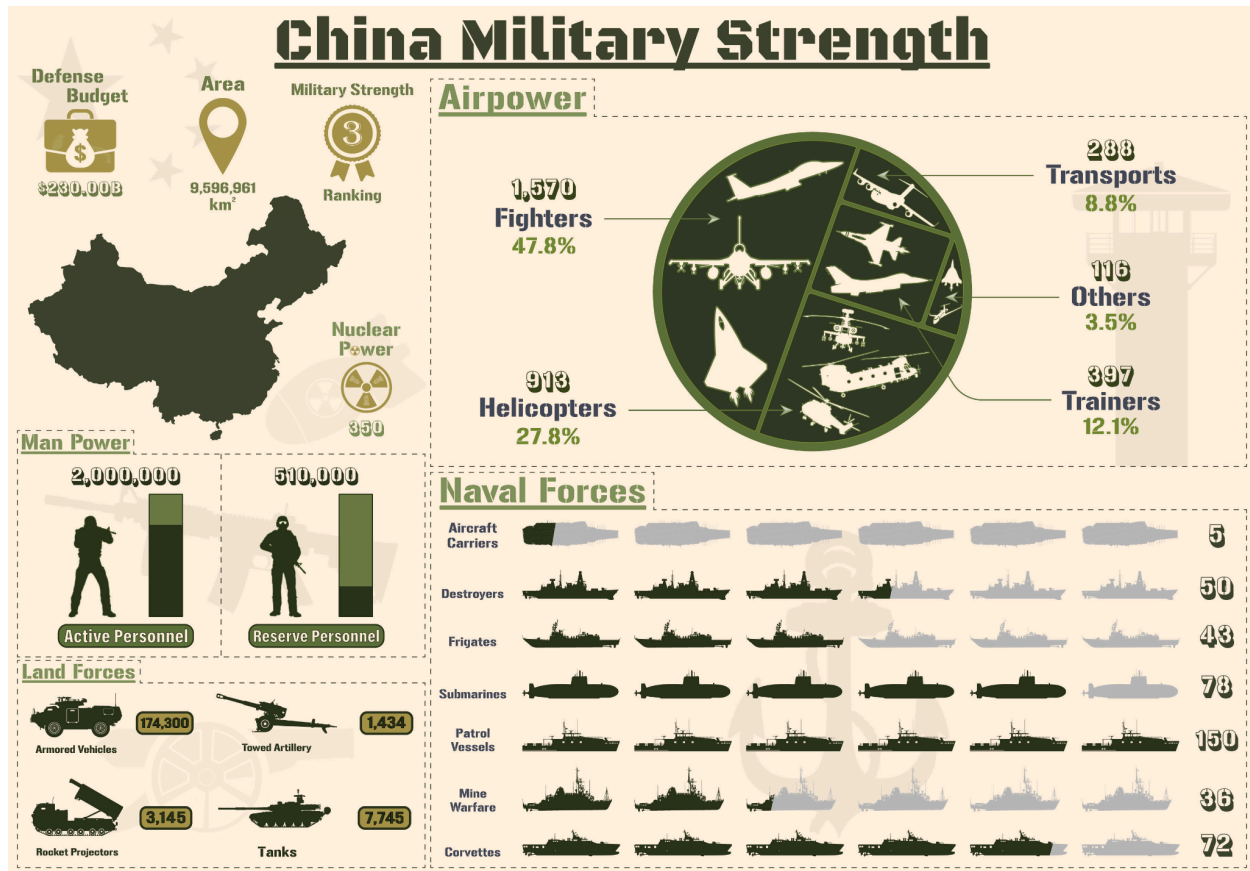


Fig 1.4 (Statista, 2023)

Fig 1.4 shows the overall strength of the Chinese military, which would be a likely adversary.

Critics argue that such a defence pact remains aspirational, hindered by budget constraints, differing threat perceptions, and political will (CGAI, 2021; CIPS, 2021). Nevertheless, the core idea remains compelling: these culturally aligned, historically cooperative nations might form a mutually reinforcing security architecture in an increasingly unstable global order (CGAI, 2021). The alternative — continued fragmentation and overreliance on the United States — may ultimately leave each more strategically and diplomatically vulnerable (CGAI, 2021; CIPS, 2021). In this light, the CANZUK defence argument is not about military parity with global powers but survival through solidarity (CANZUK International, 2025).

## The National Imperative Argument

### The National Imperative

Canada cannot afford to wait for the world to stabilize — it must begin shaping alliances that reflect both its values and its vulnerabilities (Atlantic Council, 2025;

Speer, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2017). The United States, long treated as an immovable pillar of Canadian defence and trade policy, has shown itself to be increasingly erratic, isolationist, and at times openly hostile (Atlantic Council, 2025). The Trump administration's disregard for international law, its use of trade as a coercive tool, and the casual suggestion of Canadian annexation were not just diplomatic noise — they were warning shots (Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2017). With over 80% of our population within striking distance of the American border and no independent nuclear deterrent, the illusion of sovereign security is exposed for what it is: inherited dependence (Atlantic Council, 2025).

Proponents of the CANZUK proposal argue that it is not a romantic throwback to empire — it's a pragmatic recalibration. These states already share interoperable forces, intelligence through Five Eyes, a common legal tradition, and a web of free trade agreements (CANZUK International, 2025; ). What's missing is structure and scale. Formalizing this relationship is about protecting the proposed alliance by aligning more deeply with consistently proven, reliable nations, not through vague statements of solidarity, but through action, blood, and treaty (CANZUK International, 2025).

## **The wish to subvert American hegemony**

A growing undercurrent within CANZUK advocacy is the desire to subtly challenge or at least rebalance the entrenched military and political dominance of the United States, which has for decades functioned as the uncontested hegemon within the Anglosphere and the broader liberal international order (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025; CBC, 2025). This motivation became especially pronounced after the first Trump administration, during which longstanding assumptions about American reliability, democratic integrity, and strategic leadership were fundamentally shaken (CANZUK International, 2025; Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). The administration's open flirtation with authoritarian rhetoric, disregard for international legal norms, withdrawal from multilateral agreements, and erratic foreign policy behaviour forced many allies to confront an uncomfortable truth: that the United States could no longer be consistently relied upon to uphold the post-World War II order it had helped create (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025; CBC, 2025).

This unreliability poses an existential dilemma for nations like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, historically aligned with the United States through a web of military pacts, intelligence sharing arrangements (like Five Eyes), and trade frameworks (CANZUK International, 2025; Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). The Trump administration not only abandoned key commitments (such as the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal) but also demonstrated a willingness to weaponize economic levers like tariffs and trade sanctions against allies (Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). Canada, for instance, endured a trade war under NAFTA's renegotiation, was threatened with steel and aluminum tariffs, and saw its political sovereignty questioned by a U.S. president who reportedly discussed the potential for American annexation of Canada (CBC, 2025; Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2017). These events catalyzed a broader re-evaluation of the value and cost of alignment with Washington (CANZUK International, 2025; Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025).

The fear is not limited to diplomatic or economic marginalization. In security terms, Canada's proximity to the United States is deeply troubling. With over 80% of Canadians living within 100 kilometres of the U.S. border, the country would be virtually indefensible in the face of an aggressive American posture. A vast majority of military efforts Its military is not designed for large-scale continental defence and remains technologically dependent on U.S. systems and intelligence infrastructure (RAS-NSA, 2025). For Australia and New Zealand, the anxiety is slightly different, focusing on the Pacific region where American naval dominance is increasingly seen as unstable, confrontational, and perhaps even provocative in the face of rising Chinese power (SPF, 2025; Newsweek, 2025). While these nations benefit from U.S. deterrence, they are also dragged into conflicts not of their own making, from Iraq and Afghanistan to future potential flashpoints in Taiwan or the South China Sea (Chatham House, 2025; MIR, 2020).

In this context, CANZUK is increasingly framed as a vehicle for strategic diversification and a partial escape from American hegemony. By binding together four culturally aligned, economically developed, and militarily cooperative nations, the bloc could offer a new axis of autonomy, one not wholly reliant on U.S. military protection or political leadership (CANZUK International, 2025; Conservative Friends of CANZUK, 2025). Though none of the CANZUK nations, even collectively, could rival U.S. capabilities, their pooled resources could create a more balanced and self-sustaining defence structure capable of limited deterrence, regional power projection, and shared sovereignty over strategic decisions (CANZUK International, 2025; RAS-NSA, 2025). The idea of acquiring or jointly developing a nuclear deterrent, most likely through closer cooperation with the UK's existing arsenal, has been floated in certain policy circles as a last-resort safeguard, especially for Canada, should American political instability escalate into overt hostility (Chatham House, 2025; Ahmad, 2025).

In broader terms, the desire to subvert or dilute American hegemony is not necessarily rooted in anti-Americanism but in a sober recognition of structural vulnerability. As the United States oscillates between global engagement and nationalist isolationism, its allies must reckon with a strategic future that may no longer include a benevolent, consistent superpower at the helm (). The CANZUK proposition, then, represents both a fallback and a quiet assertion of sovereignty: a way to reclaim decision-making, align with like-minded partners, and reduce exposure to the whims of a once-trusted ally whose internal fragmentation and external belligerence now pose a potential threat to the stability of its closest friends (RAS-NSA, 2025; Wells, 2022).

## **The Indigenous Perspective**

Any discussion of CANZUK that purports to reflect the realities and futures of its member states must necessarily grapple with the foundational presence and rights of Indigenous peoples. In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, three settler-colonial states in the proposed union, Indigenous nations predate the arrival of the Crown and continue to assert distinct

political, legal, and cultural sovereignty (Cox, 2011; ANU, 2024). The question of CANZUK cannot be ethically or strategically pursued without confronting this reality head-on.

For many Indigenous communities, the notion of deeper political or economic integration under the auspices of a renewed Anglosphere evokes not unity, but historical trauma. The British imperial legacy, which CANZUK tacitly draws upon in its invocation of shared governance, language, and institutions, is inextricable from a legacy of dispossession, forced assimilation, broken treaties, and cultural genocide (ANU, 2024; International Affairs, 2022). In each of these territories, the Crown is not simply a symbolic figurehead but a treaty partner, often one that has failed to uphold its end of the agreements made with Indigenous nations (ANU, 2024). Any modern political arrangement that extends the authority or reach of the Crown, particularly one rooted in a union of former dominions, risks reinforcing those colonial structures unless Indigenous sovereignty is explicitly acknowledged and incorporated (Cox, 2011).

Furthermore, Indigenous nations are international actors in their own right. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have endorsed, affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent on matters affecting their territories and governance (UN, 2007; Justice Canada, 2021; USW, 2024). A proposed supranational union like CANZUK would constitute such a matter. Without formal consultation mechanisms and representation of Indigenous interests within its decision-making structures, CANZUK would replicate the same systems of exclusion that defined earlier iterations of imperial governance (UN, 2007; CIGI, 2021; USW, 2024).

Moreover, Indigenous perspectives offer more than critique; they offer pathways forward. In each CANZUK country, Indigenous legal traditions and systems of governance hold deep knowledge about stewardship of land, collective decision-making, and long-term planning values that could enrich a CANZUK framework if included in good faith (Justice Canada, 2016; Natural Resources Canada, 2025). The opportunity exists to make CANZUK a model for post-colonial cooperation rather than a reenactment of colonial consolidation. This would require Indigenous participation not as stakeholders, but as sovereign nations in dialogue with the proposed union, with seats at negotiating tables and jurisdictional authority over transnational issues, particularly in areas such as environmental protection, trade through Indigenous lands, and military infrastructure development (Queen's Law, 2023; Natural Resources Canada, 2025).

Should CANZUK move beyond theory, its success will depend not merely on economic alignment or cultural affinity but on legitimacy. No such legitimacy can exist if the foundational nations of three of its four proposed members are ignored or marginalized. Reimagining CANZUK as a union that includes and respects Indigenous nationhood could offer moral clarity and institutional resilience in a world where legitimacy is increasingly tied to inclusion and justice (Natural Resources Canada, 2025; Queen's Law, 2023).

## Major Criticisms of CANZUK

While the CANZUK proposition garners support among certain policy circles, it has also attracted a wide array of criticisms from scholars, diplomats, Indigenous leaders, and civil society actors. These criticisms span ethical, strategic, cultural, and geopolitical dimensions and raise essential questions about the union's feasibility, desirability, and legitimacy (Bell & Vucetic, 2017; CIPS, 2019; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.; Roussinos, 2020).

### Colonial Nostalgia and White Dominionism

Critics argue that CANZUK inherently invokes a form of neo-imperial nostalgia, attempting to reassemble the “white dominions” of the British Empire under a new banner. Though proponents insist the initiative rejects imperialism, the cultural and institutional continuity it emphasizes is seen by many as an attempt to consolidate global influence among English-speaking settler-colonial states. This reconstitution of Anglo-centric power is viewed with suspicion by nations outside the bloc and by many within, particularly Indigenous communities and racialized populations. Critics contend that it prioritizes an exclusionary identity, rooted in whiteness and a shared colonial past, over a genuinely inclusive vision for international cooperation (Bell & Vucetic, 2017; CIPS, 2019; Roussinos, 2020).

Another argument about CANZUK's colonial nostalgia is that the unified movement would hinder progress for commissions more broadly efforts for reconciliation like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has aimed to document the traumatic harms perpetuated by the residential school systems that occurred within countries like Canada, including 94 calls to action to advance reconciliation (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d). The rebuilding of Anglo-centric dominance is seen as a regression in developing a reconciled relationship between the Indigenous peoples and settlers. Furthermore, the development of CANZUK would only perpetuate social inequalities through various forms of discrimination like sanism, racism, and maintaining structures of white supremacy (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.; CIPS, 2019).

The unification in the commonwealth countries like Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom will silence other marginalized communities that aren't associated with commonwealth culture. This marginalization is defined as focusing on only the positive and significant parts of history while effectively ignoring the traumatic harms perpetuated against marginalized communities and any accomplishments made by marginalized communities. This is commonly known as cultural competency — the tendency to “otherise non white peoples and silence their perspectives while having specific definitions and accomplishments for culture” (Pon, 2009).

Additionally, cultural competency, according to Pon (2009), has been used to perpetuate more harm by not recognizing marginalized people's experiences of oppression upon

establishing the culture. Furthermore, some criticisms of CANZUK would be the erasure of people's traumatic experiences settling in the Commonwealth countries due to the lack of recognition of people being harmed by Eurocentric social structures. Through this erasure, many non-white individuals would be subjected to systemic discrimination if CANZUK were to be implemented.

## **Strategic Redundancy and Duplication**

Strategic experts have noted that CANZUK risks duplicating existing frameworks such as NATO, AUKUS (Australia, UK, and US), the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance, and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade agreements. Since all four nations collaborate militarily and economically through robust multilateral institutions, creating a new political union may offer more symbolic than practical benefits. The proposed structures would also require extensive bureaucratic coordination, legal harmonization, and treaty renegotiation — steps that could take decades and may not offer returns proportionate to the political and administrative investment required (CIPS, 2017; Roussinos, 2020).

## **Democratic Legitimacy and Public Mandate**

The CANZUK proposal has yet to achieve a broad public mandate in any proposed member states. It is primarily driven by think tanks, technocratic elites, and confident conservative policymakers, but lacks visible grassroots enthusiasm. In New Zealand and Canada, especially, there is minimal public discourse on the issue, and no major political party has committed to it as a central platform. The absence of public consultation mechanisms and the lack of democratic legitimacy raise concerns that CANZUK, if pursued, would be an elite-driven initiative disconnected from the everyday realities and desires of the populations it purports to serve (CIPS, 2019; Roussinos, 2020).

CANZUK may risk alienating key regional allies. For example, Australia's engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Canada's ties with the United States and Latin America, and New Zealand's Pacific diplomacy could all be strained by an overt alignment with a predominantly Anglo bloc. Critics argue that CANZUK encourages geopolitical inwardness and risks detaching its members from the multipolar, multilateral systems necessary for 21st-century diplomacy (MacLennan, 2021; MIR, 2020). Additionally, there is concern that closer alignment with the UK nation, currently perceived as weakened post-Brexit, could harm the international standing of the other three members (MacLennan, 2021).

## **Economic Disparities and Migration Concerns**

Although advocates emphasize economic integration and freedom of movement, limited attention is paid to the structural differences between the economies. Canada's reliance on the U.S. market, Australia's resource-driven exports to Asia, and New Zealand's agricultural focus complicate efforts at harmonization (; MacLennan, 2021). Moreover, immigration systems and labour markets differ significantly. Critics caution that a "CANZUK passport zone" could create internal migration tensions, foster resentment from non-Anglophone immigrants, and reinforce hierarchical mobility privileges reminiscent of imperial preference systems (MIR, 2020; MacLennan, 2021).

## **Risk of Re-Entanglement in Western Militarism**

A final concern is that CANZUK could further entrench its members in U.S.-aligned military posturing, ironically, the very dependence some proponents claim it would counter. No matter how independent in theory, a defence union would likely conform to NATO or AUKUS doctrines, thereby dragging its members into conflicts unaligned with national interests (MacLennan, 2021). Critics warn that such a bloc could function as a secondary engine of Western militarism, projecting power under the guise of collective defence but in practice reinforcing the strategic aims of the global North (MacLennan, 2021).



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