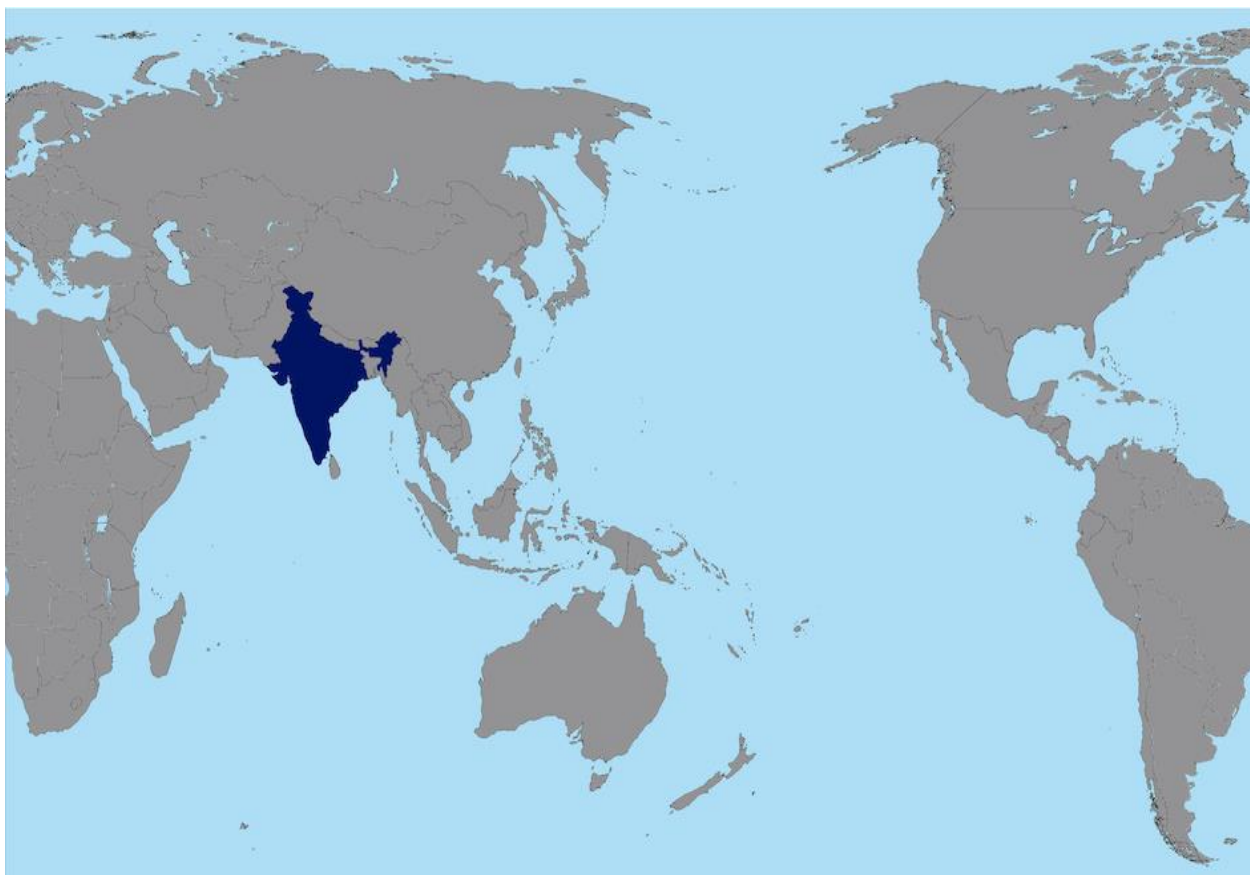




Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

DPG INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR JUNE 2022



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DPG INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

This publication is a monthly analytical survey of developments and policy trends that impact India's interests and define its challenges across the extended Indo-Pacific maritime space, which has become the primary theatre of global geopolitical contestation. It is authored by Cmde. Lalit Kapur (Retd.), DPG Senior Fellow for Maritime Strategy, based on open source reports and publications. Your comments and feedback may be send at lalit@dpg.org.in. To subscribe, please [click here](#).

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Abstract

Australia's new government signalled its geopolitical outlook with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visiting Tokyo for the Quad Summit the day after being sworn in, Indonesia for the Annual Leaders' Summit on June 6 and Madrid for the NATO Summit on June 28-30. His Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles met with US and Japanese counterparts at Singapore on June 11, visited Tokyo for a bilateral with Defence Minister Kishi Nobuo on June 15, and then visited India from June 20-23. Speeches and communiqués during these interactions indicated that Australia will seek to enhance deterrence in the Pacific by deepening its security engagement with the US and Japan and spending more on defence, while expanding its defence and security outreach towards India. A settlement with France's Naval Group and the forthcoming visit of PM Albanese to France holds out prospects for a possible revival of the India-Australia-France trilateral.

India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh visited Vietnam from June 07-10, signing the Joint Vision Statement on the India-Vietnam Defence Partnership Towards 2030 and witnessing the signing of a MoU on Mutual Logistics Support. He also handed over 12 high-speed guard boats built jointly by Indian and Vietnamese shipyards.

The Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) returned to Singapore after a three-year pandemic induced hiatus. The keynote speech by Prime Minister Kishida spelt out his five-pillar vision (strengthening the international rules-based order, enhancing security, promoting nuclear disarmament, UN reform and strengthening cooperation in new areas of economic security) for Japan's diplomatic and security role in the region. US Defense Secretary General Lloyd Austin spoke on the next steps in the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, while his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe provided an ideological perspective of China's global strategy. A host of defence ministers, including from Australia, Canada, Cambodia, Fiji, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam provided their country perspectives.



China launched Fujian, its third aircraft carrier, the largest warship ever built in Asia, on June 17. Given the use of new technologies, it will take at least 4-5 years, if not longer, for the carrier to complete trials and become operationally available. The furious pace of China's warship construction and reports of a larger nuclear-powered carrier in the pipeline provided an unmistakable signal to all in the region.

As the month drew to an end, G-7 leaders met in Elmau, Bavaria from June 26-28 to impose further costs on Russia for its actions in Ukraine and set out their vision to transform the global economy, secure energy supply, improve food security, combat climate change, create a new Global Partnership for Infrastructure and Investment and shape international cooperation for the future. They were joined by leaders from Argentina, India, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa for two sessions, one relating to climate, energy and health; and the other food security and advancing gender neutrality.

The NATO Madrid Summit followed from June 28-30, which was also attended by US allies in Asia (Australia, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand. It was marked by NATO expansion to include Finland and Sweden, and a statement of intent to address the security concerns of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Bosnia-Herzegovina. A new NATO Strategic Concept was launched, revising the previous guidance that had been in force since 2010 and including concern about China's negative impact on NATO values and interests. There were commitments to greater investment in deterrence and forward defence, particularly on the part of the US which is to further increase military deployments in Poland and Romania. NATO leaders also set out their vision of how to deal with emerging challenges, including authoritarian and technological ones, expanding their geographical remit eastward to include the Indo-Pacific.

Australia's Indo-Pacific Defence Engagement

Australia's new Albanese government, sworn in on May 23, began its international engagement with the Quad Summit the next day. Its defence priorities become clear from the fact that within a month of being sworn in, Prime Minister Albanese had visited Tokyo, Jakarta for the Annual Leaders' Summit¹, and Madrid, for the NATO Summit². The cancellation of the Attack-submarine contract had been put behind, with the Australian government

¹ Joint Communiqué: Indonesia-Australia Annual Leaders' Meeting, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/joint-communication-indonesia-australia-annual-leaders-meeting>

² Visit to Europe, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/visit-europe>



agreeing to pay France's Naval Group € 555 million³, and PM Albanese was scheduled to visit Paris on completion of the NATO Summit⁴. Richard Marles, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, has met with his counterparts from the US, Japan and India. This brief focuses on the defence engagement.

A trilateral meeting between Richard Marles, the Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister, the US Defense Secretary General Lloyd Austin and Japan's Defence Minister Kishi Nobuo took place on June 11, on the sidelines of the Asia Security Summit⁵. The ministers expressed concern about the increasingly severe security situation in the East China Sea, unilateral actions to change status quo and coercive / intimidatory actions in the South China Sea, the destabilising actions of North Korea and the need to maintain peace across the Taiwan Straits. They agreed to enhance the frequency and depth of trilateral exercises, to pursue trilateral cooperation on advanced technologies and strategic capabilities, to leverage trilateral mechanisms for information exchange, to deepen engagement with Pacific Island countries and to deepen their Indo-Pacific engagement with European and like-minded partners and allies.

In Tokyo on June 15, Ministers Marles and Kishi agreed to further advance defence cooperation facilitated by the bilateral Reciprocal Access Agreement⁶, to increase the sophistication of bilateral exercises, advance cooperation on science and technology and accelerate development of a framework between Japan's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency and Australia's Defence Science and Technology Group, increase cyber and space cooperation and enhance coordination of activities in working with ASEAN and Indo-Pacific partners.

In March this year, the summit between Prime Ministers Modi and Morrison⁷ had resulted in the leaders agreeing to deepen cooperation to address the security and defence challenges in the region, building closer defence information-sharing arrangements, discuss a reciprocal access agreement, and coordinating counter-terrorism efforts, including through sharing of

³ Naval Group Settlement, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/naval-group-settlement>

⁴ Visit to Europe, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/visit-europe>

⁵ United States-Japan-Australia Trilateral Defence Ministers Meeting – 2022 Vision Statement, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/statements/united-states-japan-australia-trilateral-defence-ministers-meeting-2022>

⁶ Joint Statement on Advancing Defence Cooperation, Tokyo, Japan, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/statements/joint-statement-advancing-defence-cooperation-tokyo-japan>

⁷ Joint Statement: India – Australia Virtual Summit, <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/35008/>

information. Minister Marles followed up his interactions at Singapore and Tokyo with a three-day visit to India from June 20-23⁸. The post-visit joint statement re-committed to building on operational engagements through the bilateral Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), to give a fillip to the JWG on Defence Research and Material Cooperation, to commence the young officer exchange programme announced by the Prime Ministers during their summit in March, and to enhance bilateral exercises. It did not, however, contain any mention of upgradation of the MLSA to a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), though Minister Marles did talk about this at the National Defence College in New Delhi⁹. India's participation in Australia's Pacific Endeavour Exercise in October 2022 found mention in the joint statement again, but an invitation to participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre found mention only in the speech by the Australian minister at the NDC¹⁰.



Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh receives the Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles at New Delhi on June 22, 2022. Source: PIB

⁸ Joint Statement on Enhancing Defence Cooperation, New Delhi, India, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/statements/joint-statement-enhancing-defence-cooperation-new-delhi-india>

⁹ Speech: National Defence College New Delhi, India, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/speeches/speech-national-defence-college-new-delhi-india>

¹⁰ Ibid.



His speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 11 provides a clear indicator of Australia's direction¹¹. Australia is now undoubtedly awake to the danger China poses and will be more active in security matters throughout the region. It will do so by deepening its security alliance with the US, strengthening its defence engagement with Japan, spending a minimum of 2% of the GDP on enhancing military deterrence capability, and expanding its outreach towards India.

Differences in geographic focus and capacity constraints will continue to influence how much can be done bilaterally on the defence and security front. Australia's primary focus is the Southern Pacific and China's increasing inroads into the region. Its secondary focus is the South and East China Seas, the former because of the connectivity it provides to Australia's trade, the latter also due to alliance commitments with the US and the emerging partnership with Japan. The Indian Ocean, which is India's primary focus is important, but less so. So Australia has no hesitation in acknowledging that "India's location makes it the natural leader of this region, which Australia strongly supports"¹². On Sri Lanka, it acknowledges "we understand that India is the lead here, and we want to talk to India about their views about how we can help"¹³. In saying this, Australia echoes the US National Security Strategy of 2017, wherein the US supported India's leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader (South and Central Asian) region¹⁴. But when it comes to spelling out how Australia will contribute towards strengthening India's ability to play such a leadership role, particularly militarily, there is need for greater clarity and dialogue.

India – Australia defence relations have without doubt seen transformational change in the last little over a decade. Australia has now participated in Exercise Malabar for two years running and is set to do so again later this year. At the bilateral level, the content and depth of bilateral exercises has increased. Exercise AUSINDEX has become a regular event; India will participate in Australia's Exercise Pacific Endeavour; and has been invited to participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre. An Indian P-8I aircraft deployed to Darwin in April, while an Australian P-8A was in Goa earlier this month. Minister Marles undertook a sortie in an Indian P-8I during his recent visit. The young defence

¹¹ Address: IISS 19th Shangri-La Dialogue, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/speeches/address-iiss-19th-shangri-la-dialogue-singapore>

¹² Speech: National Defence College New Delhi, India, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/speeches/speech-national-defence-college-new-delhi-india>

¹³ Interview with Avani Dias, ABC News, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/rmarles/transcripts/interview-avani-dias-abc-news>

¹⁴ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017.



officers exchange programme will help enhance mutual understanding. But given limitations imposed by geography and capacity, such interactions will remain symbolic, indicative of a growing relationship, rather than deterrent.

The critical areas both need to address on priority include information exchange, particularly with regard to the terror threat emanating from India's northwest, and strengthening of defence technology and industry linkages. Both sides have made a beginning, but both areas warrant much more. Australia may not be able to provide high-end platforms, but can help in niche areas, including perhaps in building servicing facilities for US origin equipment. India's shipbuilders can provide low-cost solutions to enable capacity-building for the smaller Indo-Pacific nations - the visit by Minister Marles to Goa Shipyard may portend some moves in this direction. There is, perhaps, need for a focused effort to produce an India Defence Technology and Industry Strategy for Australia (and vice versa), on the same lines as the India Economic Strategy that showed the path towards a bilateral trade deal.

But these are still early days in a budding relationship. Much will depend on the imagination and energy with which the leaderships of both countries follow up on defence and security matters, both bilaterally as well as in conjunction with regional partners like Indonesia and Indian Ocean island nations. That in turn will determine how successful both the natural stewards of the Indian Ocean are in making the Indian Ocean a more secure, stable and prosperous region, as a sub-set of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

India Vietnam Defence Relations

In the online interaction between India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and his Vietnamese counterpart Senior Lt Gen Phan Van Giang on July 1, 2021, both "acknowledged the significance of the Joint Vision Statement of 2015-20 in strengthening defence cooperation engagements between both the countries thus far and looked forward to concluding the Joint Vision Statement of 2021-25 at the earliest opportunity"¹⁵. That opportunity came on June 08, 2022, when India's Raksha Mantri visited Vietnam for three days and signed the 'Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership Towards 2030' and witnessed the signing of a MoU on Mutual Logistics Support, described as the "first such major agreement between Vietnam and any country"¹⁶. Other

¹⁵ Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh hold virtual interaction with his Vietnamese counterpart; both sides agree to enhance engagements between defence forces of the two countries", <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1731977>

¹⁶ "Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh & his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Giang hold bilateral talks in Hanoi", <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831981>

developments included the handing over of 12 high-speed Guard Boats, five built by L&T Shipyard in India, the balance by Hong Ha Shipyard in Haiphong; the gift of two simulators and a monetary grant for the setting up of a Language and IT Lab at Vietnam's Air Force Training School, an invitation from India to Vietnam to become part of India's defence industrial transformation through enhanced cooperation, and an invitation from Vietnam to India's Ministry of Defence and defence industry to participate in the Vietnam International Defence Exhibition scheduled in late 2022¹⁷.



Vietnam Defence Minister Pham Van Giang and India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh Inspect a Vietnamese Army Guard of Honour at Janoi, June 8, 2022. Source: Vietnam Ministry of Defence

¹⁷ Indian Defence Minister pays an Official visit to Vietnam, http://mod.gov.vn/wps/portal/!ut/p/b1/vZPJptAEIafZZ6AZm18BLO1gcbsmIsFNvtq7IDh6eOJokg5TOYSuepU0id99ZdURExERNwnc1Ukj2rok_ZzjrmzImCHF0kBgK0mAHSGbDNDJGAqJElIii8U3N_RoiCpjGkNZWYZWAIgUgXpRqPD0e8TUUMj9hU-46MAZtc0rycXZC4XNLY2VFCR59Rv0KC09Hk0b3aYgNoSZzDfreJE56du2j_IzPVnOicpq9xtETdFa17ZeR7ho87JINtN-KK51eQq9M8XMRcWtnWwmqQlYPJUfo7_5D3CW9EUJAdcx3tj1e40ysc-KIE8H32-G_Esn4hFKeziKMqyf4G_qE4vQD4pQRzhEdEgDm79TqirdmcGjw7DerN2EEPJ96SJKPPZVycYCxlDyB4S9ura-e3GyedwL3h3S8Bo4vCqIeVar4nRC-Wagw7xa--6QK-9-FByIu2iF9_WcQX25PaUCL_Pl8lMrcc6fDO010Esuw0zzBk3OAHCCiXkpVsr_O88am4S53Uz8TBDWKw34ryWEWjdJI7G6pSyQUpNWHDCVEbVHfaHoOcUQVOM_NupVeKzV9LOPN97dnLF3zTZX0NbRUSuitO9zb54zpV1Y7DvfO2djWG8fuDBerqHYnOszPBQ7AmtDlxFjNxucw5N_mi4-fgLzrVGw/dl4/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/



India and Vietnam have a long civilisational connect and shared memories of a colonial past. Diplomatic relations between them were established in 1972 and elevated to a strategic partnership in 2007. India and Vietnam signed a Protocol on Defence Cooperation in September 1994 and upgraded it into a MoU on Defence Cooperation in 2009. The bilateral partnership was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2016, and a Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People was adopted in December 2020. An implementing arrangement for defence industry cooperation was also signed at that time¹⁸.

Defence exchanges between the two countries include dialogue at the Ministerial, official and service-to-service levels, capacity building and training programmes, talks between the two Coast Guards, cooperation in UN Peacekeeping Operations, exchange of ship visits and defence industry engagement. There is also Track 2 interaction, involving Vietnam's Institute of Defence International Relations and India's military think tanks. The Vietnamese Navy's newest Russian-built frigate Quang Trung participated in Exercise MILAN 2022 off Visakhapatnam in March this year, while Indian Naval Ships Ranvijay, Kora, Airavat and Kiltan visited Cam Ranh and Ho Chi Minh City in 2021, the last two carrying COVID-19 and flood relief supplies.

The commonly held perception of Vietnam and India regarding the China challenge was amply demonstrated at the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 12, when General Wei Fenghe, China's Defence Minister, obfuscated while replying to questions about his country's military incursions into India and Vietnam. Both countries have long borders with China: Vietnam's is 1297 Km, while that of India is 3488 Km. However, Vietnam has been able to conclude a border agreement and has demarcated its China border. A maritime dispute remains, caused by China's irrational claims in the South China Sea, its occupation of the Paracel Islands and now, militarisation of the Spratly Islands. Vietnam has been at the receiving end of China's efforts to gain administrative control over the entire South China Sea region. Observers may also recall that among the earliest indications of China's assertion in the South China Sea was the incident with INS Airavat in Vietnam's EEZ on July 22, 2011¹⁹. It could, therefore, be assumed that a common anti-China agenda drives the India – Vietnam defence relationship.

¹⁸ List of Outcomes: India Vietnam Virtual Summit (December 21, 2020), https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33325/List_of_Outcomes_India_Vietnam_Virtual_Summit_December_21_2020

¹⁹ Incident Involving INS Airavat in the South China Sea, <https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/3040/Incident+involving+INS+Airavat+in+South+China+Sea>



Nothing would be further from the truth. Geographic factors and capacity constraints don't permit concerted action. Moreover, Vietnam's defence policy is governed by the 'Four No's Doctrine'. "Vietnam consistently advocates neither joining any military alliances, siding with one country against another, giving any other countries permission to set up military bases or use its territory to carry out military activities against other countries nor using force or threatening to use force in international relations. Vietnam also promotes defence cooperation with countries to improve its capabilities to protect the country and address common security challenges"²⁰.

China enjoys strong political influence over Vietnam. Both are communist countries, wedded to the primacy of the party in national affairs. Differences between them lie primarily over China's assertions in the South China Sea including its seizure of the Paracel Islands, militarisation of the Spratly Islands and attempt to establish full administrative control over the South China Sea; as well as the applicability of UNCLOS and its provisions including Freedom of Navigation in the region. Vietnam is committed to finding peaceful solutions to these differences. The extent of China's influence is demonstrated by the fact that although Russia became Vietnam's first strategic partner in 2001, China was the first country where the relationship was upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, in 2008. It was only after having assured China with the highest level of diplomatic partnerships that Vietnam moved to establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Russia in 2012, an 'Extensive Strategic Partnership' with Japan in 2014 and a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with India in 2016. Expectations from the India-Vietnam partnership, including in defence, must, therefore, be tempered with political realities.

Vietnam's primary international commitments are to ASEAN, of which it has been a member since July 28, 1995²¹. This, together with ASEAN's professed interest in having its domestic defence industry join the global value chain by 2030²² indicates the direction for India – Vietnam defence relations. The focus must be strengthening Vietnam's ability to tackle humanitarian and governance challenges in the maritime domain; strengthening defence cooperation across ASEAN mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus and ARF; and

²⁰ 2019 Vietnam National Defence White Paper, <http://www.mod.gov.vn/wps/wcm/connect/08963129-c9cf-4c86-9b5c-81a9e2b14455/2019VietnamNationalDefence.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=08963129-c9cf-4c86-9b5c-81a9e2b14455>

²¹ Vietnam in ASEAN: Toward Cooperation for Mutual Benefits, <https://asean.org/vietnam-in-asean-toward-cooperation-for-mutual-benefits/>

²² 2019 Vietnam National Defence White Paper, Op Cit.



integrating Vietnam into India's Atmanirbhar Bharat thrust, including in defence industry.

It is in this context that achievements by the visit of Shri Rajnath Singh to Vietnam must be weighed. The delivery of 12 high speed guard boats is a step in the right direction. Negotiations for sale of other equipment, like the Brahmos and Akash missiles and the Varunastra torpedo do not appear to have made sufficient headway yet. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement will extend India's reach, while drawing Vietnam into the Indian Ocean. Given capacity constraints of both countries; the MLSA will not cause China excessive concern. Training cooperation and dialogue at different levels will continue, with incremental expansion. There is need to pursue intelligence cooperation, but turf constraints may limit what can be done by the Defence Ministries in this domain.

Vietnam's geographic location makes it an important partner. The bilateral relationship for both is an investment in the future, in building mutual comfort with each other as well as under ASEAN-centric mechanisms. As nations wedded to strategic autonomy, both appear to be proceeding in the right direction.

Shangri-La Dialogue 2022

Following two years of pandemic-induced disruption, the Asian Security Summit (Shangri-la Dialogue) returned to Singapore from June 10-12, bringing together key defence and security practitioners and decision-makers from across the world to discuss a range of Asian security issues. The dialogue was launched with a keynote address by Japan's Prime Minister Kishida Fumio. Subjects covered during the seven plenary sessions encompassed the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, China's vision for regional order, managing geopolitical competition, new forms of security cooperation, military modernisation, common challenges for Asia-Pacific and European defence, and new ideas for securing regional stability.

Prime Minister Kishida left no doubt about his disquiet at the multiple challenges that have arisen to world order, the most recent of which is Russia's action in Ukraine²³. He expressed concern about international law being flouted and binding legal verdicts being dishonoured in the South China Sea, unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in violation of international law in the East China Sea, the danger to peace and stability in

²³ Keynote Address by Prime Minister Kishida at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue 2022, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/diplomatic/202206/_00005.html

Taiwan Straits and the lack of respect for people's diversity, free will and human rights in the region, and North Korea's continuing missile tests in violation of UN Security Council resolutions – and the inability of the UNSC to adopt a resolution due to exercise of the veto. His fear was about whether the rule-based international order built up through hard work, dialogue and consensus could be upheld, or whether the world would return to being a lawless place where unilateral changes to status quo by force are unchallenged and accepted and the strong coerce the weak militarily and economically. The focus of his address was the role he visualised Japan would play in this time of unprecedented change. He identified five pillars of initiatives that framed the Kishida vision to boost Japan's diplomatic and security role in the region. These were maintaining and strengthening of the international rules-based order, enhancing security, promoting a world without nuclear weapons, strengthening the functions of the US including through UNSC reform, and strengthening international cooperation in new areas such as economic security.



Prime Minister Kishida Fumio Delivering the Keynote Address at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, June 10, 2022. Source: IISS

The speech by US Defense Secretary General Lloyd Austin, titled "Next Steps for the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy"²⁴, was intended to reassure regional

²⁴ Remarks at the Shangri-La Dialogue by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III (As Delivered), <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/3059852/remarks-at-the-shangri-la-dialogue-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-a/>

allies and partners of the continued US commitment towards them and the Indo-Pacific. General Austin identified challenges of concern as the pandemic, climate change, nuclear threats from North Korea, coercion of smaller neighbours by large states, the instability in Myanmar and challenges in the grey zone. He categorically called out China's more coercive and aggressive approach to its territorial claims, in the South China Sea, East China Sea and on the border it shares with India. Describing the Indo-Pacific as the heart of American grand strategy and central to the Biden Administration's forthcoming National Security Strategy and his department's National Defense Strategy, he highlighted the three-pronged approach the US had adopted to realise the shared vision of the region's future. This approach was based on ensuring regional allies and partners had the capabilities to defend their interests, deter aggression and thrive on their own terms (including through the joint development and sharing of technology); stepping up the scale and complexity of combined US exercises with allies and partners; and encouraging broad-basing of security architectures and mechanisms, not just between the US and partners, but among the partners themselves. He highlighted that the US did not seek confrontation of conflict, or a new Cold War, or an Asian NATO, or a region split into hostile blocs. However, the US would defend its interests without flinching.

The counter to General Austin came from General Wei Fenghe, China's Minister for National Defense, the next day²⁵. In a speech driven more by ideology than reality, the General called for the upholding of multilateralism and building of a community with a shared future for all. He called for upholding fairness and justice and opposing hegemony, for mutual respect where all countries were equals. He described the US Indo-Pacific strategy as an attempt to build an exclusive small group to target one specific country, to create conflict and confrontation. Stating that all should uphold the rule of law and oppose unilateralism, he called for peaceful settlement of disputes while opposing unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction. His fourth call was to promote exchanges and mutual learning while opposing the practice of closing the door and excluding others. He painted China's development as a big contribution to global peace, highlighting China's contribution to global economic growth and pointed out that China had not resorted to colonialism, exploitation and plundering of others. Stating that China had never proactively started a war against others or occupied an inch of other's land (a premise questioned by Indian and Vietnamese participants who were given an obfusatory reply), he propagated President Xi's Global Security Initiative. In essence, General Wei's speech conveyed the premises that officially guide

²⁵ Fifth Plenary Session: China's Vision for Regional Order,
<https://www.iiss.org/events/shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2022>



China's global strategy but did not account for the reality that makes China a matter of concern for all.

Kishida will have a hard time implementing his vision. Mere calls for complying with international rules are never going to be enough to sway an ideologically driven China that is unmindful of consequences. Nuclear disarmament, however keen Japan may be on it, is a goal growing more, not less distant. Similarly with UN reform: vested interests will continue to stand in the way. It is in enhancing security and on the economic front that prospects are brighter, depending on the assiduity with which they are followed up.

Despite General Wei's protestation, the reality is that very few outside the PRC leadership buy the propaganda narrative of peaceful co-existence and a shared (China-determined) future for mankind that China expounds. That countries across the Indo-Pacific, both traditional allies and new partners, are coming together to find new ways to balance its excessive assertion speaks for itself. China's turn towards ideology rather than pragmatism, its unprecedented military expansion and assertive actions over the last decade arouse fear in smaller states and concern even amongst Asia's middle powers. Unless an effective way to deter it can be found, the Indo-Pacific appears headed for strife.

On the other hand, notwithstanding General Austin's words, there is doubt about whether the US will actually fight if push comes to shove. The integrated deterrence propounded by General Austin does not convince, nor has enough been invested in both stiffening the ability to resist in the Indo-Pacific, and in research into new technology. The US is playing catch-up, especially in long-range strike technology, hypersonics, Quantum Technology, Drone Technology, etc. The partnerships that the US is building are one reason to give China pause, though whether the US can overcome domestic divisions and dispel the Chinese belief that it is a waning power remains to be seen.

Moreover, notwithstanding the IPEF, the US engagement with the Indo-Pacific remains military focused, with economic pillars of its policy coming up against increasing protectionism at home. Security alone will not suffice to rally the region; an economic pillar to the engagement will be required. No one wants his country to become the battleground in a conflict between China and the US. Continued jockeying for influence by China and the US is thus likely to remain the hallmark of the Indo-Pacific in the years ahead.

The Launch of Fujian

Just over 80 years after the Battle of Midway which witnessed the aircraft carriers Yorktown, Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu and Soryu being sunk and changing the course of World War II, China's Jiangnan Shipyard launched the country's third aircraft carrier, on June 17, 2022. The debate about the utility of aircraft carriers in today's missile environment does not seem to bother China's planners as it seeks to join, and then surpass, the United States Navy as the world's foremost maritime power²⁶.

While China's first two carriers, the Liaoning and Shandong, were built to a modified Russian design, Fujian is entirely home grown and built. It will mark the graduation of the PLA (Navy) from the STOBAR (Short Take-Off but Arrested Recovery) configuration used by Russia, India, Italy, Spain, UK and (till now) China to the CATOBAR (Catapult-assisted Take-Off but Arrested Recovery) configuration used by the US and French Navies, enabling the launch of heavier and more capable aircraft. China will also join the USN in becoming the world's only operators of EMALS (Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System); with France likely to join the ranks (the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency has notified Congress of the possible sale of the system and associated equipment to France at an estimated cost of \$ 1.32 billion)²⁷.

Fujian will displace an estimated 80,000 tons²⁸, making her the largest warship ever built in Asia and putting her in the same league as USS Gerald Ford and substantially higher than the 45,000 tons of the future INS Vikrant. She will have a length of over 315 metres (USS Gerald Ford 333 metres, Vikrant 262 metres); a beam of 76 metres (USS Gerald Ford 78m, Vikrant 62m) and a complement of two squadrons of fighter/strike aircraft, the same as USS Gerald Ford, as compared to one squadron on Vikrant. Reports indicate that these will be J-35s, the naval variant of the J-31 fifth-generation fighter that made its maiden flight in October 2021, and which China claims is superior to the US F-35 Lightning II. Other aircraft on board could include carrier-borne versions of the J-15 interceptor, J-15D EW aircraft, the Xi'an KJ-600 AEW aircraft, new helicopters and drones.

²⁶ This aspect was also the subject of DPG Policy Brief Vol VI Issue 20, "China's Type 003 Aircraft Carrier and India's Options", https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/chinas-type-003-aircraft-carrier-and-indias-options-2767.pdf

²⁷ France – Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), <https://www.dsca.mil/sites/default/files/mas/Press%20Release%20-%20France%2021-65%20CN.pdf>

²⁸ China unveils giant aircraft carrier CNS Fujian, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-06/18/content_10164161.htm

Understanding where the Fujian will be operationally deployed necessitates understanding the role of a strike carrier. Like the cavalry, strike aircraft carriers are designed primarily to create shock and awe. They do this by moving fast and bringing preponderant firepower to bear at unexpected locations, while their innate defensive strength, heavy armour and compartmentalisation protects them from damage in short, sharp engagements. The strike carrier, unlike its escort counterpart, is not a defensive weapon although it can, just like a tank, be used as one. Its purpose is offensive, as an instrument of deterrence or coercion.



The hull of China's third aircraft carrier, CNS Fujian, being towed out of dry dock at the Jiangnan Shipyard, Shanghai on June 17, 2022. Source: China Military

How will Fujian impact the balance of power in the Western Pacific? Not significantly. Any conclusion that the Fujian is intended to prevent US power from coming into play in a Taiwan contingency is flawed. Taiwan is well within reach of PLA AF shore-based aircraft. PLA operations there would have the protection of China's A2AD, including using manoeuvrable ballistic missiles like the DF-21 or DF-26, a whole range of conventional cruise missiles, hypersonic weapons coming into service, submarines and even mines. Offensive missions deep into the Western Pacific could be undertaken by shore-based bombers. Surveillance missions in areas of interest could be

undertaken by drone carriers: China also launched the Zhu Hai Yun, the first ship of its kind, last month²⁹. The reality is that China will act only when it is confident that its deterrent capabilities will prevent US interference of the type that happened in 1996 and in the 1950s. It may then use the Type 003 and sister ships to further extend the defensive perimeter, but this cannot be the Fujian's primary purpose. Similarly, Fujian and its sister ships are unlikely to make a significant difference in the South China Sea. Where they will matter, and where there is a significant potential for use for overt coercion, is in the Indian Ocean.

Notwithstanding the media furore, however, this stage marks only the launch of the hull. Making the ship habitable and fitting it out with the range of equipment that allows it to fight will take time, perhaps as much as 2-4 years. Moreover, much of the equipment will have to be integrated into the ship for the first time. Experience indicates that this invariably leads to teething problems that take time to resolve. USS Gerald Ford, for example, was launched in October 2013, but commissioned only in July 2017 and has not been operationally deployed till date. USS John F Kennedy, launched in October 2019, is expected to commission only in 2024. Vikrant, launched in 2013, is expected to commission only in August this year. It can reasonably be expected that Fujian, though it may commission by 2024, will not be ready for operational deployment till at least 2025-2026.

Experience has also indicates that ship design stabilises around the fourth ship of a class. The experience of operations invariably throws up the need for myriad design improvements. Fujian is, however, likely to be the only ship of its class. The expectation is that the next Chinese carrier, Type 004, will be nuclear-propelled and could displace 110,000 tons, making it the largest warship afloat. In that respect, Fujian is part of an evolutionary path to the final Chinese aircraft carrier design and to how China plans to operationally utilise it. It will be some time before even the Chinese, let alone the rest of the world, will have an indication of what the ship is capable of.

"So dreadful is the prospect of a military defeat, and so horrifying its consequences, that nations are willing to go to any length to avoid such an outcome"³⁰. Aircraft carriers represent the high end of surface maritime power, just as nuclear submarines represent the high end of underwater power. The

²⁹ China's drone carrier hints at 'swarm' ambitions for the Pacific, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2361366/chinas-drone-carrier-hints-at-swarm-ambitions-for-pacific>

³⁰ Admiral Arun Prakash, "Arun Prakash writes: Agnipath, between the lines", <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/agnipath-scheme-armed-forces-protests-7979936/>

continued growth of China's maritime power in both the surface and underwater dimensions, and the dual use infrastructure it is building in the Indian Ocean dictate that India takes effective steps to balance it. Limitations on the sheer availability of maritime capacity in Western powers necessitates that India pays greater attention to balancing of its own accord, instead of depending on others to do the needful. Thus, notwithstanding economic pressures and the demands of continental security, ways will have to be found to strengthen the maritime front. Not doing so risks a future defeat at sea, with consequences that can only be described as disastrous.

The NATO Madrid Summit June 2022

Barely three years ago, then President Trump was contemplating exiting NATO³¹. Following his unilateral pull-out from Syria, President Macron of France had described NATO as "brain dead" and expressed concern about a waning commitment from the US towards the transatlantic alliance³². European countries were seen as unwilling to spend on their security, with many unwilling or unable to spend the benchmark of 2% of their GDP on defence. The withdrawal from Afghanistan had deprived NATO of reason for cohesion.



NATO Leaders Meet at Madrid, June 29-30, 2022. Source: NATO

³¹ Trump Discussed Pulling US From NATO, Aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/nato-president-trump.html>

³² NATO alliance experiencing brain death, says Macron, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-50335257>



The alliance has revived like the proverbial Phoenix following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A new NATO Strategic Concept, pledged during the 2021 Brussels Summit, has been unveiled. There will be greater US presence in Europe, and a greater commitment of troops from allies towards deterrence. NATO seeks to expand its geographic remit into Africa and the Asia-Pacific. Leaders from Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea have attended the NATO Summit for the first time and will lead in developing a road map for expanded cooperation between NATO and the Indo-Pacific. A new partnership spanning the globe, which may eventually become an alliance, appears to be taking shape.

Two developments underlie this resurgence, renewed cohesion and the expanded NATO outlook. The first is undoubtedly Russia's invasion of Ukraine. President Putin may have based his action on an assessment that NATO was divided and would not seriously oppose him, but events have proved him wrong. NATO has come together in a way that was probably unforeseen, with a newfound resolve to oppose Russia in Ukraine. The second is the 'No limits' partnership between China and Russia announced on February 4, 2022. That partnership has solidified western fears of an authoritarian alliance and helped generate a newfound sense of purpose, designed to preserve the hegemony of the western civilisation over the world.

The sense of purpose is visible in the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept³³. The previous concept, adopted in November 2010³⁴, was 35 pages long and sought to find a rationale so that "it continues to be effective in a changing world, against new threats, with new capabilities and new partners"³⁵. The new concept, in contrast, is just 11 pages long. It clearly identifies Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area". Other threats identified, in the sequence in which they are listed, are terrorism; conflict, fragility and instability in Africa and the Middle East; transnational and humanitarian challenges, the stated ambitions and coercive policies used by China; contested cyberspace, technologies that could restrict access and freedom to operate in space; emerging and disruptive technologies; erosion of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architectures; and climate change. NATO's core tasks remain deterrence and

³³ NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

³⁴ Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

³⁵ Ibid.



defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. The geographic areas of strategic import have expanded to the Balkans and Black Sea, the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel regions, and the Indo-Pacific, "given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security.

The first visible impact came on June 28, when President Erdogan of Türkiye, President Niinisto of Finland and Prime Minister Andersson of Sweden agreed to a trilateral memorandum to address Türkiye's concerns³⁶. That cleared the path for NATO's expansion to include Finland and Sweden, removing the buffer that existed in Russia's north. Finland has a 1340 Km long border with Russia, which will now become part of the NATO-Russia border. More important, that border is now less than 180Km from the Kola Peninsula, where Russia's nuclear submarines and Arctic Fleet are based. Moscow has, in response, said it would position nuclear missiles in the region to defend itself. Sweden's joining NATO brings to bear its strong indigenous defence industry as well as a strong Baltic Sea navy, exposing Russia's Kaliningrad enclave and St Petersburg, and enabling better access to the Baltic Republics. The Madrid Summit Declaration announces the decision to invite Sweden and Finland to become members of NATO³⁷. Their actual joining is still dependent on ratification of the decision by legislatures of the countries concerned, but that would appear to be a formality.

Next is the continued commitment to NATO's open door policy and the intent to expand NATO's remit in Eastern Europe. As of now, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia, Georgia (across the Black Sea), Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Ukraine are not members of the alliance. Apart from the support to Ukraine, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said NATO had agreed to step up support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova, helping to build their capability and strengthen their resilience³⁸.

There is renewed commitment to forward defence and bolstering deterrence. NATO presently has 40,000 troops under its direct command. The number dedicated for NATO tasks is to be increased to 300,000³⁹. Allies have doubled the number of NATO battle groups on the eastern flank, "ensuring strong

³⁶ Türkiye, Finland and Sweden sign agreement paving the way for Finnish and Swedish NATO membership,

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197251.htm?selectedLocale=en

³⁷ Madrid Summit Declaration, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm

³⁸ Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government with Partners (2022 NATO Summit), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_197292.htm

³⁹ Ibid

defence from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea"⁴⁰. The US has increased its forward presence in Europe by 20,000 personnel, bringing its total strength in Europe to 100,000⁴¹. A permanent US V Corps Headquarters Forward Command Post is to be established in Poland; an additional rotational Brigade Combat Team is to be maintained in Romania; there will be enhanced rotational US deployments in the Baltic region, including armoured, aviation, air defence and special forces assets; the number of US destroyers stationed in Rota, Spain is to be increased from four to six; and two squadrons of US F-35s will be deployed to UK. Additional air defence enablers are to be deployed in Germany and Italy⁴².

There is now open acknowledgement of the concern about China, and the China-Russia partnership. "We now face an era of strategic competition", says Jens Stoltenberg⁴³, echoing the worlds used by the US. "The People's Republic of China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values", says the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept⁴⁴, before going on to talk of the PRC's malicious hybrid and cyber operations, its confrontational rhetoric, its disinformation, the ambition to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains. It also talks of China's using economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and subversion of the rules-based order in the space, cyber and maritime domains, before going on to state "The deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests"⁴⁵. This is a far cry from 2010, when China did not even find mention in NATO's Strategic Concept and Russia was seen as a strategic partner.

NATO's area of security concern and partnerships are expanding beyond the Euro-Atlantic. "We will step up cooperation with our Indo-Pacific partners, including on cyber defence, new technologies, maritime security, climate change and countering disinformation", said Stoltenberg⁴⁶. So for the first

⁴⁰ Fact Sheet: The 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/29/fact-sheet-the-2022-nato-summit-in-madrid/>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government with Partners (2022 NATO Summit), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_197292.htm

⁴⁴ NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Stoltenberg Press Conference, Op Cit.

time, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea were invited to attend the NATO Summit. Also invited were Georgia, Finland and Sweden. Allied Foreign Ministers met their counterparts from Jordan and Mauritania, to chalk out their plans for what NATO could do in the Sahel region (and Middle East). They agreed to a defence capacity building package for Mauritania, covering border security, irregular migration, terrorism, intelligence, maritime security and special operations. The setback in Afghanistan appears to have been put behind as the western allies seek new areas to expand their democratic influence.

Another significant development is creation of the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), intended to “support NATO’s efforts to boost interoperability and to ensure that every ally has access to cutting-edge technological solutions for military needs”⁴⁷. The US will provide access to test centres and accelerator sites, to ensure that the allies preserve their technological edge in the era of strategic competition. Complementing this is the launch on June 30 of NATO’s Innovation Fund, which will invest € 1 billion in early stage start-ups and other venture capital funds developing dual use emerging technologies of priority to NATO, including artificial intelligence; big-data processing; quantum-enabled technologies; autonomy; biotechnology and human enhancement; novel materials; energy; propulsion and space⁴⁸. Among the early objectives is ensuring “the seamless delivery of the next generation Airborne Warning & Control System (AWACS) and related capabilities”⁴⁹.

China’s response was predictable. “NATO has already disrupted Europe. It should not seek to destabilise Asia and the world”, said Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian⁵⁰. He castigated NATO for its repeated forays into the Asia-Pacific region, NATO member states for “sending aircraft and warships to carry out military exercises in China’s nearby waters, creating tensions and fanning disputes”, and clamouring for bloc confrontation. He advised NATO to “stop drawing ideological lines, stoking political confrontation, or seeking to start a new Cold War”⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Fact Sheet: The 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/29/fact-sheet-the-2022-nato-summit-in-madrid/>

⁴⁸ NATO Launches Innovation Fund, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197494.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁴⁹ Madrid Summit Declaration, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm

⁵⁰ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian’s Regular Press Conference on June 29, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202206/t20220629_10712209.html

⁵¹ Ibid.

Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue on April 13, 2021, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg had spoken of the real potential he saw for stepping up NATO dialogue with other countries that share NATO values and interests, including India. He had said that India and NATO could do more together, to address global challenges that are far greater than any country or continent can tackle alone, as well as to safeguard shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law, and to protect "our way of life"⁵². As a new alliance with a global remit takes shape, US focus shifts to the Euro-Atlantic and its oft-proclaimed pivot to the Indo-Pacific comes up against capacity constraints and Russia's defence industry is squeezed by sanctions, India will have to carefully evaluate its strategic options in the years ahead.

Other Indo-Pacific Developments

The US Indo-Pacific Command announced that the 28th RIMPAC Exercise would be held from 29 June to Aug 4, in Hawaii and off Southern California. 26 nations, 38 ships, four submarines, 9 national land forces, 170 ac and about 25,000 personnel will participate. RIMPAC, a biennial exercise that began in 1971, is world's largest maritime exercise, covering a wide range of operations from disaster relief and maritime security operations to sea control and complex warfighting. This year's exercise includes forces from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom, and the United States⁵³.

The truce between the Government in Yemen and Houthi rebels was extended for two more months under the same terms as the original UN-brokered agreement that came into force on April 2, 2022. "By agreeing to implement and now renewing the truce, the parties have provided a rare glimmer of hope to Yemenis that an end to this devastating conflict is possible", said Hans Grundberg, the UN Special Envoy for Yemen⁵⁴.

⁵² Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Raisin Dialogue 2021 Conference, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_183011.htm

⁵³ US Navy Announces 28th Rim of the Pacific Exercise, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3049942/us-navy-announces-28th-rim-of-the-pacific-exercise/>

⁵⁴ Press Statement by US Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundgerg on the Renewal of the UN-Mediated Truce, <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/press-statement-un-special-envoy-yemen-hans-grundberg-renewal-un-mediated-truce-0>



Visit of RAAF P-8A to Goa to conduct coordinated operations with the Indian Navy, June 07-09, 2022. Source: Indian Navy

North Korea fired eight short-range ballistic missiles from the Sunan area of its capital Pyongyang on June 4⁵⁵. The missiles flew into the sea 110 – 600 Km from its coast, prompting condemnation by Japan, South Korea and the US. At least one of the missiles had a variable trajectory, including manoeuvring capability. In response, the Republic of Korea and the US Navies conducted carrier strike group exercises including air and missile defence, interoperability and maritime interdiction operations⁵⁶.

IN ships Nishank and Akshay were decommissioned on June 3 after over 30 years of service to the nation⁵⁷. India conducted a successful flight test of the Agni-4 IRBM on June 6⁵⁸. The Defence Acquisition Council accorded

⁵⁵ North Korea fires volley of missiles, prompting joint military drill by the US, Japan, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-fires-ballistic-missile-off-east-coast-skorea-military-2022-06-05/>

⁵⁶ Republic of Korea, US Navies Conduct Carrier Strike Group Exercises, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/News/Article/3052929/republic-of-korea-us-navies-conclude-carrier-strike-group-exercise/>

⁵⁷ INS Nishank and INS Akshay Decommissioned, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831080>

⁵⁸ Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile, Agni-4, successfully tested, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831654>

Acceptance of Necessity (AON) to proposals worth Rs 76,390 crores⁵⁹, including the procurement of eight next-generation corvettes at an approximate cost of Rs 36,000 crores (about \$ 4.6 billion).

A Royal Australian Air Force P-8A maritime patrol aircraft arrived in Goa on June 6 for coordinated ASW and surface surveillance operations with Indian Naval P-8I aircraft from 07-09 June, 2022⁶⁰. An IN P-8I had visited Darwin for a similar purpose in April 2022. INS Satpura, on a deployment to the South China Sea, visited Manila from June 03-06 to strengthen relationships and interoperability with the Philippine Navy⁶¹. Indonesian ship KRI Cut Nyak Dien visited Port Blair from June 13-15, followed by the 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol in the Andaman Sea with INS Karmuk and a Dornier aircraft from June 16-24, ending at Sabang⁶².

⁵⁹ Defence Acquisition Council, headed by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, clears proposals worth Rs 76,390 crores in major boost to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831550>

⁶⁰ Visit of RAAF P-8A to Goa, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/visit-raaf-p8a-go-a-0>

⁶¹ INS Satpura Visits Manila, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1831892>

⁶² 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo CORPAT), <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1836311>



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