

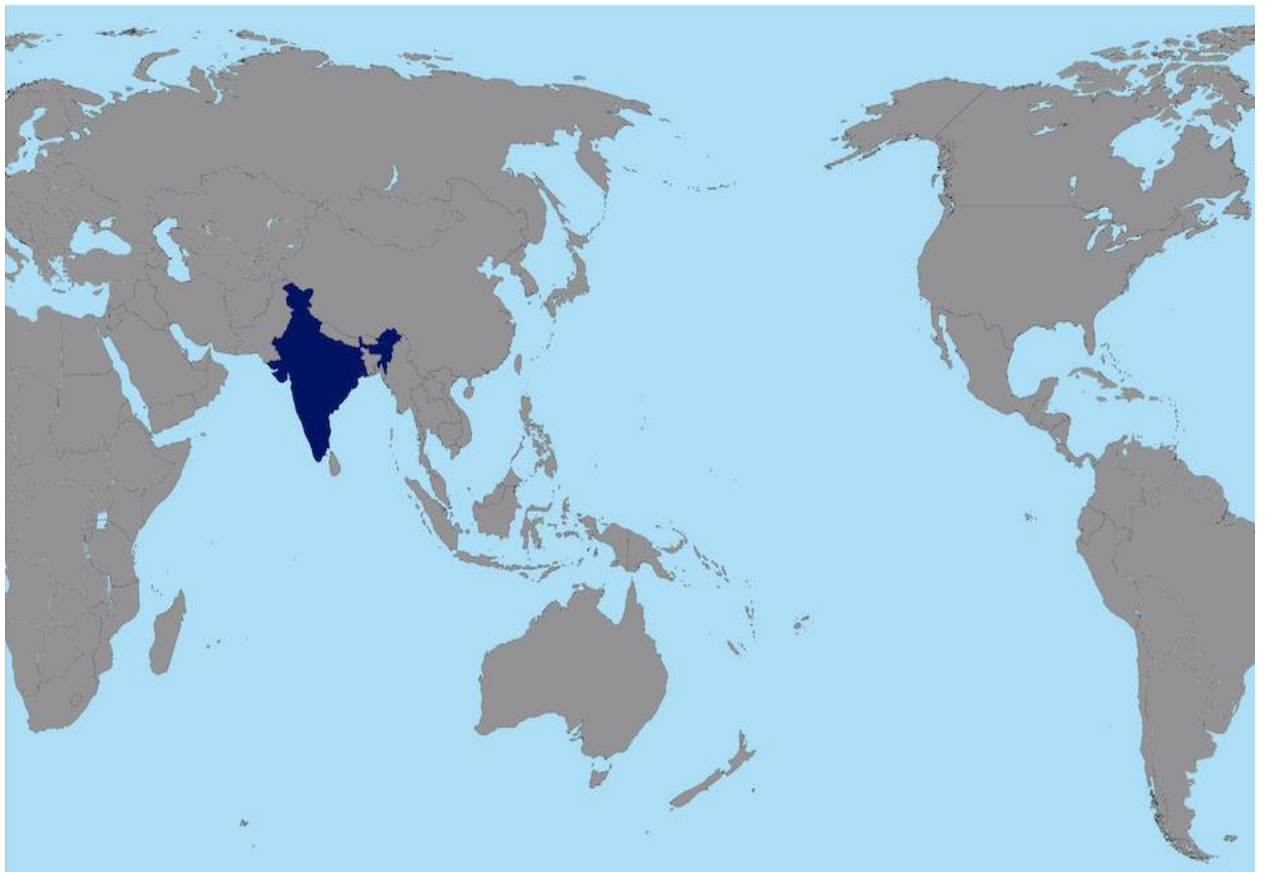


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR OCTOBER 2022



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Delhi Policy Group

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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 and assisted by Jayantika Rao Tiruvaloor Viavoori, Research Associate, based on open source reports and publications. Your comments and feedback may be addressed to Jayantika at jayantika@dpg.org.in. To subscribe, please [click here](#).

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DPG INDO-PACIFIC MONITOR

October 2022

Abstract

The Chinese Communist Party concluded its 20th Party Congress on October 22. A new 205-member Central Committee was elected. A new Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee were unveiled. Xi Jinping was able to not only induct his loyalists into the Standing Committee but also ensure that there is no likely opposition to his continuance in power for the foreseeable future.

The long-awaited US National Security Strategy was finally published on October 12. Premised on the belief that the US has entered a decisive decade that could change the world, the strategy posits two equally important strategic challenges the US must overcome: competition between major powers to reshape the future and transnational challenges including climate change, communicable diseases, terrorism, the energy transition and food insecurity. It sets three priority objectives: outcompeting China and constraining Russia; cooperation on shared challenges; and shaping the rules of the road in critical and emerging areas such as technology, cyberspace, security, trade and economics.

Two weeks after publication of NSS 2022, the US Department of Defence published its National Defense Strategy (NDS) on October 27. The NDS includes the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review. The US had earlier published its strategy for the Arctic on October 08, the Biodefense Strategy on October 18 and the US Coast Guard strategy on October 25.

The six-month truce that had been announced with much hope on April 2, 2022 ended on October 2 as all attempts to persuade the warring sides to continue it failed. An attempted drone attack on an oil tanker at the Al-Dubba oil terminal near Mukalla city on October 21 signalled a return to conflict and the accompanying instability that has characterised the region.

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at Perth on October 22. The outcomes included a Joint Statement, a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation for the next decade and a Critical Minerals Partnership.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited New Zealand and Australia from October 5-11, his first visit to New Zealand and the second to Australia this year. He also co-chaired the 13th India-Australia Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue. The visit, following barely a week after the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R Harikumar had been to both countries, indicated the growing trajectory of India's relations in the Southern Pacific.

The user training launch of a K-15 SLBM from INS Arihant on October 14 marked a significant step in the operationalisation of India's nuclear deterrent. Coming soon after the commissioning of INS Vikrant last month, the event marks continuing accretion of India's maritime capability.

In other Indo-Pacific Developments during the month, the US and Canadian Navies exercised together in the South China Sea to support Japan's Indo-Pacific deployment. North Korea continued with its MRBM launches, while the UN Security Council approved a sanctions package for Haiti targeting gang leaders and those who finance them. Exercise Tiger Triumph 2022 was conducted off Visakhapatnam, while the USS Gerald R Ford set out on its maiden operational deployment into the Atlantic more than five years after she was commissioned.

The US National Security Strategy 2022 and Implications for India

The Biden-Harris National Security Strategy, released on October 12, 2022¹, provides an overview of how the current administration sees the global environment, defines US interests and spells out its broad strategic approach to fulfilling stated objectives and overcoming challenges. Given the global nature of US interests and reach, the strategy will have inevitable implications for India and indeed the Indo-Pacific region.

The fundamental premise of the strategy is that the US has entered a decisive decade facing two equally important strategic challenges, either of which could change the world as the US sees it. The first is major powers competing with each other to reshape the future world order. China is unambiguously identified as the pacing challenge having both the intent and the capacity to reshape international order, while Russia and its aggression in Ukraine pose the immediate challenge to the Trans-Atlantic Alliance. That China/the PRC find mention 51 times in the strategy and Russia finds mention 69 times highlights their strategic importance and priority.

The second is that transnational challenges are affecting people everywhere – climate change, food insecurity, communicable diseases, terrorism, energy transition and inflation. The two are intertwined and the window of opportunity to deal with both is narrowing even as their intensity grows. Both must be tackled on an equal plane, generating a contradiction that may require the US to cooperate with China on climate change while militarily opposing its coercive activity. How the commanders involved in implementing the strategy are expected to resolve these contradictions is unanswered. Intriguingly, there is acknowledgement that US has, particularly in the Middle East, “too often defaulted to military-centric policies underpinned by an unrealistic faith in force and regime change to deliver sustainable outcomes, while failing to adequately account for opportunity costs to competing global priorities or unintended consequences”². Whether this will influence US willingness to intervene forcefully in other troubled areas or not is to be seen.

NSS 2022 sets three priority objectives: outcompeting China and constraining Russia (constraining China does not find mention); cooperation on shared challenges which are described as lying at the core of national and

¹ National Security Strategy, October 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

² NSS October 2022, P 42.

international security; and shaping the rules of the road in critical and emerging areas such as technology, cyberspace, security, trade and economics. The three pillars of the strategy to deal with these challenges are investing in (comprehensive) national power to maintain a competitive edge; using diplomacy to build the strongest possible coalition; and modernizing and strengthening the military.

Regional priorities are, in order of appearance, promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific; deepening the alliance with Europe; fostering democracy and shared prosperity in the Western Hemisphere, supporting de-escalation and integration in the Middle East; building 21st century US-Africa partnerships; maintaining a peaceful Arctic; and protecting the sea, air and space commons.

Table 1: Comparison of Regional Priorities in NSS 2022 vis-à-vis NSS 2017

Sl No.	NSS 2017	NSS 2022	Remarks
1.	Indo-Pacific	Indo-Pacific	Separate paragraph reiterates US stand on Taiwan (P 24)
2.	Europe	Europe	Europe will be foundational partner in addressing the full range of global challenges. Immediate priority Ukraine, long-term priority China.
3.	Middle East	Western Hemisphere	Greater concern about growing influence of China, Russia and Iran in the Western Hemisphere.
4.	South and Central Asia	Middle East	Central Asia finds mention in European section. South Asia section goes into Indo-Pacific
5.	Western Hemisphere	Africa	
6.	Africa	Arctic	
7.	-	Protecting sea, air and space commons	

“No region will be of more significance to the world and to everyday Americans than the Indo-Pacific”, states NSS 2022³. It declares “a vital interest in realising a region that is open, interconnected prosperous, secure and resilient”⁴. It commits the US to working with regional states to keep the Indo-Pacific open and accessible and ensure that nations are free to make their own choices,

³ NSS October 2022, P 38.

⁴ NSS October 2022, P 37

consistent with obligations under international law. It commits to affirming the freedom of the seas, building collective capacities, strengthening alliances and reaffirms the centrality of ASEAN and seeks deeper bonds with SE Asian nations. It describes the Quad and AUKUS as critical to addressing regional challenges and commits to reinforcing collective strength by weaving allies and partners together, including by encouraging tighter linkages between likeminded Indo-Pacific and European countries⁵. It also commits the US to enhancing partners' resilience to transnational challenges, including climate change and biological threats.



USS Gerald R Ford in the Atlantic during its first operational deployment, along with ships from the Spanish, Danish, Dutch and US Navies on October 25, 2022. Source: US Navy

If the Indo-Pacific is the area of greatest geopolitical significance, the Trans-Atlantic Alliance is the “vital platform” on which many elements of US foreign policy are built⁶. Europe will remain the “foundational partner” in addressing the full range of global challenges. Consequently, the Trans-Atlantic bond is to be broadened and deepened, through strengthening NATO, raising the level of ambition of the US-EU relationship and standing beside Europe to defend the principles of freedom, sovereignty and non-aggression. NSS 2022 commits to working with the EU and G7 to reshape the economic order and galvanise

⁵ NSS October 2022, P 38

⁶ Ibid.

cooperation on the most pressing shared challenges. The objective of banding the West together to stand up to the rest is evident.

India finds mention seven times in NSS 2022, as do Iran and Australia (Japan finds mention five times, while Pakistan does not figure at all). "As India is the world's largest democracy and a Major Defense Partner, the United States and India will work together, bilaterally and multilaterally, to support our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific"⁷. The India-US relationship evidently continues to form an important part of US thinking for the region. There are, however, a few caveats.

First, given the stated objective of encouraging tighter linkages between like-minded Indo-Pacific and European countries, the significance of the Indian Ocean should have grown. The Indian Ocean provides the only reliable link between Europe and the Pacific, unless European countries plan on crossing both the Atlantic and the Pacific for the link-up. "We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region", said NSS 2017⁸. NSS 2022 only speaks of promoting "prosperity and economic connectivity across the Indian Ocean Region"⁹, but makes no mention of security. When seen with the reduced salience of the Middle East, this may indicate a lessening of US security involvement in the region.

Second, the US focus on marginalising Russia will conflict with India's relationship with that long-term partner. CAATSA sanctions, India's purchases of oil from Russia, its abstention from anti-Russia votes in the UNSC and UNGA and India's interests in the SCO will continue to remain a sore point. On the positive side, the US needs India for the Quad, the I2U2 and its undoubted soft power, as well as its economic, technological and military potential. The India-US relationship will thus continue to require deft management.

Third, advanced technology from the US could remain hard to come by. The US NSA, Jake Sullivan, spoke of implementing the "small yard, high fence" concept when it comes to protecting critical technology¹⁰. The way ahead seems to lie in joint development.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017, P 50.

⁹ NSS 2022, P 37.

¹⁰ Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on the Biden-Harris Administration's National Security Strategy, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/10/13/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-the-biden-harris-administrations-national-security-strategy/>

The NSS is a statement of intent. It will necessitate the earmarking of resources required to make the strategy fructify. This, however, is in the hands of the Congress, which could swing away from the Biden administration if the Democrats lose their house majority during the mid-term elections next month. The reluctance of the Biden administration to include trade and market access will limit the interest of particularly third world nations in partnering the US. The technology protection regime the US seeks to impose will lead to a world of technological blocs.

In the final analysis, whether the strategy can deter China's aggression, particularly towards Taiwan and in the South China Sea, will provide the litmus test of its effectiveness.

The US National Defense Strategy 2022

Two weeks after publication of the US National Security Strategy (NSS) 2022, the Department of Defense followed up with publication of public versions of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2022¹¹, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and the Missile Defense Review (MDR). The three are for the first time integrated, purportedly ensuring tight linkages between strategy and resources.

As in NSS 2022, China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive endeavour to refashion the Indo-Pacific region and the international system to suit its interests and authoritarian preferences" is unambiguously identified as "the most comprehensive and serious challenge to US national security". The US is thus engaged in "Strategic Competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC)". Next in sequence comes "Russia as an acute threat", with the Russian government using "force to impose border changes and reimpose an imperial sphere of influence". Third come "Threats to the US Homeland", with the PRC and Russia now posing "more dangerous challenges to safety and security at home, even as the terrorist threat persists". Fourth are other persistent threats, including North Korea, Iran and Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs). Fifth come "the wide range of new or fast-evolving technologies and applications" that complicate escalation dynamics and create new challenges for strategic stability. These include "counterspace weapons, hypersonic weapons, advanced CBW, and new and emerging payload and delivery systems for both conventional and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Sixth are the gray zone activities of competitors, used to seek adverse changes in the status quo using

¹¹ 2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>

methods that may fall below the perceived thresholds for US military action. China, Russia, North Korea and Iran are singled out as users of gray zone activities. Seventh are climate change and other transboundary challenges, which are transforming the context in which the DoD operates.



USN Aircraft Carriers Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan along with USS Tripoli participate in Exercise Valiant Shield in the Western Pacific, June 2022. Source: US INDOPACOM

Four defense priorities have been identified: defending the homeland paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC; deterring strategic attacks against the US, Allies and partners; deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary and prioritising the PRC challenge in the Indo-Pacific followed by the Russian challenge in Europe; and building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

The first objective is to deter challengers through a mix of denial, resilience and direct cost imposition (punishment). Attacks on the homeland are to be deterred through raising the direct and indirect costs to potential attackers while reducing their expected benefits through increased resilience. The aim is to ensure hostile operations do not advance adversary objectives or severely limit US response options. Strategic attacks on the homeland are to be deterred through the modernisation of nuclear forces; nuclear command, control and communications; the nuclear weapon production enterprise; and through

strengthening extended deterrence, including conventional. PRC attacks are to be deterred by “leveraging existing and emergent force capabilities, posture and activities to enhance denial, and by enhancing the resilience of US systems the PRC may seek to target”. Russian attacks are to be deterred through reinforcing “iron-clad treaty commitments to include conventional aggression that has the potential to escalate to nuclear employment of any scale” and modernising the denial capabilities of allies and partners. North Korean attacks are to be deterred through the forward posture, integrated air and missile defence and close coordination and interoperability with the ROK, while retaining the potential for direct cost imposition. For Iran, the US will focus on increasing partner capability and resilience and collaborate with partners to expose Iranian gray zone operations.

The second leg of the US strategy, after integrated deterrence, is ‘campaigning’ – i.e. “conducting and sequencing logically-linked military activities to achieve strategy-aligned objectives over a period of time”. Campaigning thus seeks to adopt a long-term approach instead of the traditional short-term one to change the environment to the benefit of the US and allies while “limiting, frustrating, and disrupting competitor activities that seriously impinge on US interests”. So the US will campaign to gain military advantage, enhance deterrence and address gray zone challenges. Campaigning activity includes building and exercising force elements needed in crisis or conflicts such as infrastructure, logistics, command and control, dispersal and relocation, and mobilisation. It includes intelligence sharing, economic measures, diplomatic action and activities in the information domain. It includes cyberspace operations to degrade malicious cyber activity by competitors and preparation of cyber capabilities to be used in crisis or conflict. And in the Indo-Pacific, it includes key infrastructure investments and coordination with the Department of State to enhance US access to the region.

In terms of regional priorities, the Indo-Pacific comes first, with the DoD announcing its intention to build a resilient security architecture in order to sustain a free and open regional order and deter attempts to resolve disputes by force. The US will modernise the alliance with Japan, deepen the alliance with Australia and advance the Major Defence Partnership with India to enhance ability to deter PRC aggression and ensure free and open access to the Indian Ocean region. It will support Taiwan’s asymmetric self-defense, work with ROK to improve its defense capability and invigorate multilateral approaches to security challenges in the region, including by promoting the role of ASEAN in addressing regional security concerns. It will work with allies and partners to address acute forms of gray zone coercion resulting from China’s campaign

to establish control over the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait, South China Sea and disputed land borders with India.

In Europe, the DoD will maintain its commitment to NATO collective security and deter, defend and build resilience against further Russian military aggression and gray zone coercion, including through improvement of its forward posture and extended nuclear deterrence commitments. In the Middle East, the DoD will retain the ability to deny Iran a nuclear weapon and disrupt top-tier VEO threats that endanger the homeland and vital US interests. The focus is advancing Gulf partner ability to deter and defend against aggression from Iran. In the Western Hemisphere, the US will maintain the ability to respond to crises and seek to strengthen regional roles and capabilities for humanitarian assistance, climate resilience and disaster response. In Africa, it will prioritise disrupting VEO threats against the US homeland and vital national interests, working with African states to build regional capability. And in the Arctic, the DoD will deter threats to the US homeland by improving early warning and ISR capabilities, partnering with Canada to enhance NORAD Command capabilities and increase shared MDA.

The 2022 Force Planning Construct is intended to size and shape the force to simultaneously defend the homeland, maintain strategic deterrence and deter and if necessary, prevail in conflict. In other areas, the US will coordinate with the contributions of allies and the deterrent effects of US nuclear posture. The DoD will improve capability in the space domain, make network architectures more resilient against system-level exploitation, improve speed and accuracy of detection and targeting, and develop concepts and capabilities that improve ability to reliably hold at risk military forces and assets that are essential to adversary operational success. The intent is to build a future force that is lethal and can penetrate adversary defences at range; sustainable, resilient, survivable, agile and responsive.

To build enduring advantages, the DoD will transform the foundation of the future force by overhauling its force development, design and business management practices. It will “make the right technology investments”, including in directed energy, hypersonics, integrated sensing and cyber, while seeking opportunities in biotechnology, quantum science, advanced materials and clean energy technology. It will adapt and fortify the defence ecosystem to ensure the US produces and sustains the full range of capabilities needed to give the US, allies and partners a competitive advantage. This includes bolstering support for research institutions and small businesses, supporting advanced manufacturing processes, collaborating with the private sector in priority areas, and working with domestic and international partners in the

defense ecosystem to fortify the defence industrial base, logistical systems and global supply chains. It will strengthen resilience and adaptability, while investing in human resource to cultivate the workforce it needs.

Many imponderables stand between the stated strategy and its implementation. The first is affordability and political commitment. The US has, for example, not been able to move towards implementing its 355-ship Navy goal, first articulated in December 2016 and formally made part of US policy by NDAA 2018. Three different official studies since then call for a force size of ranging from 321 to 404 manned ships and 45 to 204 large unmanned vessels. The CNO is on record as having said that he needs 362 or more manned ships and about 150 large unmanned vessels to meet the Navy's commitments under the (then still to be released) NDS¹². In reality, however, the size of the USN has fallen below 300 ships and is projected to reduce further over the next decade, essentially due to inadequate funding to move towards the necessary force accretion. The gap between commitments and resources is evident, generating excessive pressure on manpower while delaying essential maintenance. With mid-term elections in the offing and projections of loss of democratic majority in the House (and possibly the Senate), there are real risks of the strategy being hamstrung due to continued inadequate allocation of resources.

Second is the pull of immediate needs vis-à-vis future ones. Though China is described as the pacing challenge, the immediate perceived need is to counter Russia's action in Ukraine – and immediate needs have always taken precedence over future ones in democratic countries. This has resulted in diversion of scarce resources that could otherwise have gone into strengthening the Indo-Pacific. For all its brave words, whether the DoD will succeed in strengthening deterrence against China and will continue postponing the long-heralded pivot to Asia remains a moot point.

Third is duality of objectives vis-à-vis China and Russia – competing with them while at the same time aspiring to cooperation on shared challenges. It is debatable whether either China or Russia will play along with the US and go along with cooperation in selected areas, even as they contest others. Time will tell whether this duality of objectives succeeds or is a delusion.

Fourth is the conflict between the urge to compartmentalise technology to prevent its spread into adversary hands and the need to seek cooperation in advanced technology from Indo-Pacific partners. How the US manages this

¹² Force level data drawn from CRS Report RL 32665: Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress, October 20, 2022.

contradiction will play a large part in shaping the efficacy of its desired approach.

From India's perspective, the DoD's stated objective of building partner capability in the Middle East goes against the sanctions being contemplated by the White House following Saudi Arabia's announcement of an oil production cut. The focus on the Pacific, while leaving the Indian Ocean more or less to India, is a concern. As the Western parts of the Indian Ocean increasingly drift towards instability, India will hope that the US does more and effectively addresses the inevitable expansion of China's influence in this region.

Resurgence of Conflict in Yemen

The truce that came into effect in Yemen on April 2, 2022 had held out hope for resolution of the conflict ongoing since 2014 between the Iran backed Houthis and the Saudi Arabia-UAE backed Yemen government¹³. Twice extended, the truce finally expired on October 2, with the UN Security Council expressing its "deep disappointment at the passing of the 2 October deadline to extend the Yemen truce by six months"¹⁴. A statement from the US stated, "The choice between the parties is simple: peace and a brighter future for Yemen, or a return to the pointless destruction and suffering that will further fracture and isolate a country already on the brink"¹⁵.

The initial truce had allowed a limited number of ships carrying fuel to enter Hudaydah port and limited commercial flights to operate from Sana'a, both under Houthi control. According to their spokesman, the Houthis seek "the humanitarian demands and natural rights of the Yemeni people in opening Sana'a international airport and Hodeida port without any obstacle and benefitting from the country's oil and gas resources in favour of the Yemeni people"¹⁶. Yemen's internationally recognised government said it was willing to pay those who were on the payroll before September 2014, when the Houthis seized Sana'a, but not those hired by the Houthis thereafter¹⁷. These differences have resulted in failure of talks to extend the truce. Both sides have

¹³Press Statement by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg on a two-month Truce, <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/press-statement-un-special-envoy-yemen-hans-grundberg-two-month-truce>

¹⁴ Security Council Press Statement on Yemen, 5 October 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15054.doc.htm>

¹⁵ UN Truce Expiration in Yemen, October 3, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/un-truce-expiration-in-yemen/>

¹⁶ Why the Houthis refused to extend Yemen's truce, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/why-houthis-refused-extend-yemens-truce>

¹⁷ Houthis demand payments for civil servants as a condition for renewing the truce, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/gulf-news/2022/09/29/un-envoy-to-yemen-meets-houthi-council-chief-in-effort-to-renew-truce/>

also accused each other of failing to live up to their commitments, particularly around humanitarian measures.

The immediate impact is a return to conflict, impacting not only the Yemeni people, but also all those engaged in export or import from North Yemen. The attempted drone attack on a tanker at Al-Dubba oil terminal, near Mukalla port, indicates the shape of things to come¹⁸. Yemen's externally supported official government lacks the strength to overcome opposition. The Houthis have the support of the people, but not the weapons and technology required to prevail over the hard power that Western and Arab support can bring to bear. The ground is ripe for insurgency, with all the human suffering it brings. The key question is whose will flags first, that of the people of Southern Yemen or of the external powers.

Instability in the vicinity of the connector from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean renders all traffic using it vulnerable. The need to secure sea lanes and continue demonstrating support to Arab nations will keep the USN involved in the region, preventing the shift of scarce resources to the Indo-Pacific. On the other hand, the strategic approach of NDS 2022 directed towards building up regional capacity while avoiding direct intervention comes up against White House angst about the perceived Saudi support for Russia just before mid-term elections. Unless a long term approach is adopted to effectively manage the instability in the region, subversives could link up with the Horn of Africa and expand into the African continent, generating further complications in an already troubled region.

Albanese and Kishida Take the Australia-Japan Special Strategic Partnership Forward

The Australia-Japan relationship, formally elevated to a Special Strategic Partnership during the Shinzo Abe – Tony Abbott summit in July 2015, grew further when Prime Ministers Fumio Kishida and Anthony Albanese met at Perth on October 22, 2022. Their meeting resulted in a Joint Statement¹⁹, a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation²⁰ for the next decade, and a Critical Minerals Partnership²¹.

¹⁸ Security Council Press Statement on Yemen, 26 October 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15080.doc.htm>

¹⁹ Australia-Japan Leaders' Meeting Joint Statement, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-japan-leaders-meeting-joint-statement>

²⁰ Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/documents/2022/_00018.html

²¹ Partnership between Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and Australia's Department of Industry, Science and Resources and Department of Foreign Affairs and

Previewing his visit on October 21, 2022²², Prime Minister Kishida had identified his three priority areas: security and defence cooperation, the promotion of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP), and resource and energy cooperation. The separation of security cooperation from the promotion of FOIP was noteworthy. He saw the Quad as a framework for the promotion of a wide-range of practical co-operation aimed at realising FOIP and not as one for security cooperation. He expressed concern about China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East and South China Seas. He also spoke of the shared view between the G-7 and Australia regarding the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait for the security of Japan as well as the stability of the international community.



Prime Ministers Fumio Kishida and Anthony Albanese at Signing Ceremony of Japan-Australia Agreements at Perth, October 21, 2022. Source: Kantei.go.jp

The six-page Joint Statement is built around five pillars: security and defence cooperation; economic security cooperation; climate, energy security and energy transition; trade and economic cooperation; and global and regional cooperation. The leaders pledged to further strengthen economic security, in

Trade Concerning Critical Minerals,

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/documents/2022/_00019.html

²² Contributed Article to 'The Australian' by Prime Minister Kishida Fumio on the Occasion of His visit to Australia, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/statement/202210/_00008.html

particular through the Quad and the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, including through working with other interested countries to address and respond to economic coercion. They expressed the desire to elevate cooperation on critical and emerging technology policies, telecommunications resilience and security and cybersecurity. On the climate and energy front, they pledged to support initiatives to advance clean energy technologies and supply chains including for hydrogen and ammonia through the Indo-Pacific, as well as for increased LNG trade. They reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement; an open, free, fair and inclusive multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core; and expressed the intent to work together to meet the infrastructure needs of Indo-Pacific partners including in cooperation with the US and India through the Quad. They announced enhanced space cooperation through working together for the successor of the Japanese geostationary meteorological satellite from 2029-30 and in-principle agreement for Woomera, Australia to be the landing site of the Japanese Martian Moons Exploration capsule, scheduled to launch in 2024 and return to Earth in 2029. They reiterated unwavering support for ASEAN centrality and the AOIP; pledged to strengthen cooperation in the Pacific to address needs of Pacific Island nations; welcomed the strong and enduring contribution of the US to stability and prosperity in the region; welcomed deepening engagement through the Quad; reaffirmed the importance of enhancing cooperation with European Partners in the Indo-Pacific; and committed to the G-7 and G-20. They also condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine and expressed serious concern the situation in the East and South China Seas, North Korea's nuclear and missile programme, as well as the situation in Myanmar.

The Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation reaffirms the shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and spells out shared objectives over the next decade. The two will strengthen exchange of strategic assessments at all levels, consult each other on issues that may impact their sovereignty, deepen trilateral cooperation with the US, and expand cooperation between the JSDF and ADF through more sophisticated joint exercises and operations as well as multilateral exercises with partners. They will enhance cooperation through mutual use of each other's facilities including for maintenance, improve ISR cooperation, cooperate in HADR and capacity building for regional partners, strengthen cyber defences and work to ensure a free, safe and secure technology environment.

The Critical Minerals Partnership is intended to build secure critical mineral supply chains between Japan and Australia and promote investment and other areas of collaboration for mutual benefit. Both will work to facilitate

commercial arrangements to develop Australia's domestic critical minerals sector and ensure supply of critical minerals to Japan.

The change in outlook between the Joint Declarations on Security Cooperation in 2007 and 2022 is noteworthy. In 2007, the focus of security cooperation was combating transnational crime, border security, counter-terrorism, disarmament and counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, maritime and aviation security and human security concerns such as disaster relief and pandemics²³. The means of cooperation included strengthened dialogue, exchange of personnel, joint exercises and coordinated activities directed primarily towards law enforcement and humanitarian relief. In 2022, on the other hand, the focus has shifted to "growing risks to our shared values and mutual strategic interests", underpinned by the values that define the FOIP: a rules-based order, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, an open and stable maritime domain, resilience to aggression, coercion, disinformation, malicious cyber activity and other forms of interference, as well as global challenges such as pandemics, natural disasters and climate change. The stated objective now is a "favourable strategic balance that deters aggression and behaviour that undermines international rules and norms"²⁴. The country to be balanced is obviously China. The means now include sharing of strategic assessments, intelligence cooperation, shared surveillance and reconnaissance, contingency planning, more sophisticated joint exercises, mutual use of facilities including for maintenance, mutual asset protection, personnel links and exchanges and advanced defence science and technology as well as industry cooperation. Notably, both countries are committed to substantially enhancing their defence spending.

The imperatives of geography and national capacity, however, limit how much the two countries can contribute to mutual security. The distance of over 4000 Km between their closest points and their limited military capacity restricts the extent of security cooperation in the event of conflict; both can at best supplement US power. Demographic constraints, military industrial capacities, defence-related R&D and political limitations, including Japan's pacifist constitution, are other limitations. The reality is that Australia-Japan security cooperation in today's environment can work only if underpinned by

²³Japan Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, 13 March 2007,

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0703.html>

²⁴Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, October 22, 2022,

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/countries/japan/australia-japan-joint-declaration-security-cooperation>

US strength. Also, notwithstanding the use of the term 'Indo-Pacific', it is more likely to focus on the Western Pacific than the Indian Ocean.

The perceived dilution of US interest in the Indian Ocean in NSS 2022 will impact the approach of both Australia and Japan towards this region. India, whose priority must be the Indian Ocean, must find ways to overcome this impediment and focus the attention of Quad partners towards Indian Ocean security.

India's SLBM Test

The existence of INS Arihant, India's nuclear submarine, is no secret. Commissioned in August 2016, the SSBN has now been in service for over six years. The fact that she is by far India's most ambitious indigenous weapon platform and the torch-bearer for India's sea-based deterrent is well known. Yet information about her is hard to come by and official announcements are rare. So a terse official announcement proclaiming that INS Arihant had successfully launched a Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) on October 14, 2022 aroused interest²⁵.

The announcement added that the successful user training launch was significant to prove crew competence and validate the SSBN programme. Finally, it said, "A robust, survivable and assured retaliatory capability is in keeping with India's policy to have a 'Credible Minimum Deterrence' that underpins its 'No First Use' commitment.

The world's first successful SLBM launch took place when the Soviet diesel electric submarine B-67 fired an R-11FM Scud missile, with a range of about 600 Km, on 16 September 1955. This launch, however, was from a surfaced submarine. The first operational underwater launched SLBM was the American Polaris A-1 (range about 2600 Km), fired by USS George Washington on 20 July 1960. SLBMs have evolved substantially thereafter. The Trident D-III used by the US and UK has a range of about 12,000 Km; Russia's R-29 Layner has a similar range; the French M51 has a range of about 10,000 Km, China's JL-2 has a range of about 8000 Km and North Korea's Puguksong-1 has a range of about 500 Km. SLBM's under development include China's JL-3, with a range of about 12,000 Km; North Korea's Puguksong 3-5 with a maximum claimed range of about 3000 Km; South Korea's Hyunmoo-IV with a range of 500 Km (tested from a conventional submarine on September 7, 2021) and India's K-4, K-5 and K-6, with ranges of 3500, 5000 and about 8000 Km

²⁵INS Arihant carries out successful launch of Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1867778>

respectively. India, South Korea and North Korea are relatively new entrants into the SLBM club.

The conceptual requirements of underwater SLBM storage and launch involve unique complexities. Because of their size (the K-15, for example, weighs about 10 tons and has a length of about 10 metres), missiles are stored in a vertical tube, somewhat like a silo fitted into the submarine hull. They cannot be exposed to the corrosive influence of sea water, so the tube must have a watertight cap that can not only resist the high pressure environment at the submarine's operating depth, but can also be opened underwater at the time of launch. There could be need for access to the missile from inside the submarine for maintenance and inspection purposes, so a suitable space had to be provided to enable this. To fire the missile, the cap is opened. The missile is then ejected either by high pressure gas or steam that propels it towards the surface with sufficient velocity to lift it into the air. Once clear of water, the first stage of the missile is ignited, powering its flight to a ballistic trajectory. Additional stages may be used, depending on its range.

The concept may appear simple, but converting it to reality involves overcoming many technological challenges generated by the much higher pressures of the underwater environment, difficulties of accessibility, gravity, and the potentially catastrophic consequences of any malfunction. The successful user launch indicates that all these complexities have been overcome with sufficient reliability. It demonstrates to both the user and the world the progress India has made, placing it among the handful of countries that can launch SLBMs from an operational submarine.

Is this, however, sufficient to provide India a credible submarine based nuclear deterrent against its potential adversaries, Pakistan and China? The K-15 has a maximum range of 750 Km. India's No First Use policy predicates nuclear retaliation be directed against 'value' targets, which are usually big cities. Of Pakistan's ten biggest cities, only Karachi, Hyderabad and Quetta are within range from potential deployment areas, which would have to be in sufficiently deep waters at least 50 Km from the coast. The rest, including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Islamabad, Gujranwala and Peshawar, are out of range. So unless the assessment is that the three cities in range constitute unacceptable levels of damage, the deterrent effect of the K-15 is questionable.

In China, to target say Beijing, would require the submarine to be deployed deep in the Yellow Sea, halfway between South Korea and the Chinese coast. The Yellow Sea, however, is known for its relatively shallow waters, with depth rarely exceeding 50 metres, forcing the submarine to remain within 20-25

metres of the surface to avoid running aground. Similar depths prevail in the East China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. It is only in the South China Sea that sufficient depths for the submarine to hide become available, but even then, the deployment would have to be well inside the first island chain, an area China keeps under near continuous surveillance because this is the operating area for its own SSBNs. The inescapable conclusion is that the K-15 SLBM will not suffice to deter China.

This is no cause for concern. Longer range Indian SLBMs are under development. The point of note is that most of the technologies required have been proven; all that is now needed is increase in missile range. The K-4 SLBM, with a range of around 3500 Km, should begin trials by 2023. It will enable coverage of all Pakistan from anywhere north of the Equator in the Western Indian Ocean. It will technically have the range to reach Beijing from the Bay of Bengal or the Andaman Sea. As the longer range K-5 and K-6 are inducted, the underwater leg of India's nuclear triad will become effective.

The strides that have been made in this ambitious indigenous weapon's programme are indeed commendable and a matter of pride. They mark a major step in the evolution of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', one that is able to defend itself and credibly deter coercive activity by the adversary.

Other Indo-Pacific Developments

China's President Xi Jinping extended his term as the General Secretary of the Communist Party into a second decade and ensured there is no visible challenge to his supremacy by not including any a clear potential successor into the seven-man Politburo Standing Committee, as the 20th Party Congress concluded on October 22. Apart from Xi Jinping, the Politburo Standing Committee now includes Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi. The size of the Politburo was reduced to 24 members, all Xi loyalists. The selection of members indicates China's turn to a more ideological approach towards governance.

Following his visit to Australia at the end of September, Admiral R Harikumar, the Chief of India's Naval Staff, visited New Zealand from 29 September to 01 October 2022²⁶. He signed a White Shipping Information Exchange Agreement with his counterpart, enabling further expansion of shared Maritime Domain Awareness in the Indo-Pacific. He also complimented the Royal New Zealand

²⁶ Visit of Adm. R Harikumar, CNS to New Zealand, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/visit-adm-r-hari-kumar-cns-new-zealand>

Navy (RNZN) for their participation in Ex MILAN 2022 and joined in the Anniversary celebrations of the RNZN.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Japanese Defence Minister Hamada Yasukazu met at Hawaii on October 1 for the Trilateral Defence Minister's Meeting (TDMM)²⁷. The second TDMM of 2022, following their meeting in Singapore in June indicates both the priority allotted by the three ministers to cooperating in pursuit of their national vision of order in the Indo-Pacific, as well as further coalescing of the US-Japan-Australia security alliance.



External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms Penny Wong address the Press at Sydney on October 10, 2022. Source: Dr. S Jaishankar/Twitter

Maritime forces from Canada, Japan and the US came together in the South China Sea from September 23 to October 1 for Exercise Noble Raven 22-2, in order to strengthen cooperation and realise a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'²⁸. Participating units included two destroyers each from the JMSDF and the USN, as well as a frigate from Canada and a Japanese submarine.

²⁷ Opening Remarks: Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting, Hawaii, United States, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/transcripts/2022-10-02/opening-remarks-trilateral-defence-ministers-meeting-hawaii-united-states>

²⁸ Japan-US-Canada Multilateral Exercise Noble Raven 22-2, <https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202210/20221003-1en.pdf>

The USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group joined up with the USS Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group, HMCS Vancouver, HMCS Winnipeg and JS Kirisame in the Philippine Sea to experiment with new naval concepts in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific beginning October 24²⁹. Both US groups are forward deployed to the Western Pacific.

North Korea launched ballistic missiles on October 3, 4, 15 and 28 October, with the missile on October 4 flying over Japan for the first time in five years and causing citizens along its flight path to take cover³⁰. Other tests all involved short range ballistic missiles. In response, the US, ROK and Japan conducted a trilateral ballistic missile defence exercise on October 6, air exercises with Japan and ROK the same week, and tactical missile live fire exercises with ROK. The frequency of North Korean missile launches is a signal of its discomfort with growing bonhomie between the US and South Korea. They don't however, appear to be deterring rejuvenation of the US-ROK alliance.

Over five years after she was commissioned the USS Gerald R Ford departed Norfolk for her first operational deployment into the Atlantic on October 5³¹. The deployment will see the ship exercise with about 9000 personnel from nine nations, involving 20 ships and 60 aircraft. The carrier was reported to have entered Halifax, Nova Scotia, for its first international port visit on October 28³².

Australia conducted a Quad Counter-Terrorism Tabletop Exercise in Sydney from October 26-29, 2022³³, wherein 60 counter-terrorism experts from the US, Japan, India and Australia shared policy priorities and best practices, exchanged information on evolving terrorist threats, developed an understanding of national CT capabilities and increased awareness of the impact of emerging technologies.

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited New Zealand and Australia from October 5-11. The visit to New Zealand was his first, enabling the forging

²⁹ Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group, USS New Orleans Operate as Combined Force with Canadian, Japanese Allies in US 7th Fleet, <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3201297/ronald-reagan-carrier-strike-group-uss-new-orleans-operate-as-combined-force-wi/>

³⁰ North Korea conducts longest-range missile test yet over Japan, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-fires-missile-towards-east-skorea-military-2022-10-03/>

³¹ Gerald R Ford Carrier Strike Group Departs for First Deployment, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3179931/gerald-r-ford-carrier-strike-group-departs-for-first-deployment/>

³² Aircraft carrier visit to Halifax shows "how tight" US is with allies: commander, <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/aircraft-carrier-visit-to-halifax-shows-how-tight-u-s-is-with-allies-commander-1.6130804>

³³ Quad Counter-Terrorism Tabletop Exercise, <https://ministers.dfat.gov.au/minister/tim-watts/media-release/quad-counter-terrorism-tabletop-exercise>

of a more contemporary India-New Zealand relationship³⁴. In Australia, he co-chaired the 13th Annual Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, enabling discussion on taking forward the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership³⁵. He also addressed the Lowy Institute in Sydney on the growing importance of India's relationship with Australia and the interest that both countries share as members of the Quad³⁶. The visit will help enhancing mutual understanding as the partners work together to transform growing strategic convergence into institutional linkages that will take the on-ground relationship forward.

Indian Naval ships visited Kuwait³⁷, Dubai³⁸, Diego Saurez³⁹, Port Elizabeth (South Africa)⁴⁰, Port Victoria (Seychelles)⁴¹ and Antsiranana⁴² during the month, showing India's flag, establishing their reach, furthering India's interests and building goodwill among Indian Ocean nations. The JMSDF Destroyer JS Suzutsuki visited Kochi from October 18-19⁴³.

China informed Japan that it will not participate in the International Fleet Review to be held on November 6 in Sagami Bay, but will send a delegation to attend the Western Pacific Naval Symposium to be held in Yokohama from November 7⁴⁴.

³⁴ Opening Statement by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar at Joint Press Interaction with the Foreign Minister of New Zealand, https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35785/Opening_Statement_by_External_Affairs_Minister_Dr_S_Jaishankar_at_Joint_Press_Interaction_with_the_Foreign_Minister_of_New_Zealand

³⁵ Visit to Australia by India's Minister of External Affairs, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/visit-australia-indias-minister-external-affairs>

³⁶ An address b Dr S. Jaishankar, India's Minister for External Affairs, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/event/address-dr-s-jaishankar-india-s-minister-external-affairs>

³⁷ First Training Squadron at Kuwait, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/first-training-squadron-kuwait>

³⁸ First Training Squadron Arrives at Dubai, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/first-training-squadron-arrives-dubai>

³⁹ INS Suvarna Entered Port Diego Saurez, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/ins-suvarna-entered-port-diego-suarez>

⁴⁰ Indian Naval Ship Tarkash Reaches South Africa for IBSAMAR VII, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1867069>

⁴¹ INS Suvarna Entered Port Victoria, Seychelles, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/ins-suvarna-entered-port-victoria-seychelles>

⁴² INS Tarkash Visits Antsiranana, Madagascar, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/ins-tarkash-visits-antisiranana-madagascar>

⁴³ Visit of Japanese Destroyer at Kochi, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/visit-japanese-destroyer-kochi>

⁴⁴ Amid tense ties, China says it won't take part in Japan naval fleet review, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/10/29/national/china-fleet-review-wont-attend/>

The second edition of the Indo-US Tri-Services Amphibious HADR Exercise Tiger Triumph was conducted at Visakhapatnam from October 18-20, 2022⁴⁵. It does not, however, seem to have involved the participation of any ships, aircraft or troops in field locations.



Personnel from the Indian Air Force and the French Air and Space Force Exercise Together During Exercise Garuda VII at Jodhpur, October 2022. Source: PIB

A press release from US CENTCOM indicated that General Michael Kurilla, commander of CENTCOM and V Adm Brad Cooper, Commander of the US Fifth Fleet, embarked USS West Virginia, an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine at an undisclosed location in the Arabian Sea on October 19⁴⁶. Disclosure of the presence of an SSBN in the region is somewhat unusual, leaving doubt about what signal it was intended to send, and to whom. Speculation that the signal was intended for Russia or Iran appears far-fetched. The question is whether the signal will be correctly read.

The Indian Navy hosted the 29th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) off Visakhapatnam from October 26 to 30, 2022. It also participated in the maiden edition of the India-Mozambique-Tanzania

⁴⁵ Tiger Triumph 2022, <https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/tiger-triumph-2022>

⁴⁶ CENTCOM Commander embarks USS West Virginia Ballistic Missile Submarine, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3194433/centcom-commander-embarks-uss-west-virginia-ballistic-missile-submarine/>

Trilateral Exercise at Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania from October 27 – 29⁴⁷. The exercises help in sharing of experience and best practices as nations work towards building capacities and enhancing maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian and French Air Forces began Exercise Garuda-VII at Air Force Station Jodhpur on October 26⁴⁸. Scheduled to end on November 12, the exercise will promote professional interaction, exchange of experience and enhancement of operational knowledge, besides strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

⁴⁷ Indian Navy Participates in Maiden Trilateral Exercise with Mozambique and Tanzania,
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1871827>

⁴⁸ Exercise Garuda-VII at Air Force Station Jodhpur,
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1871611>



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