

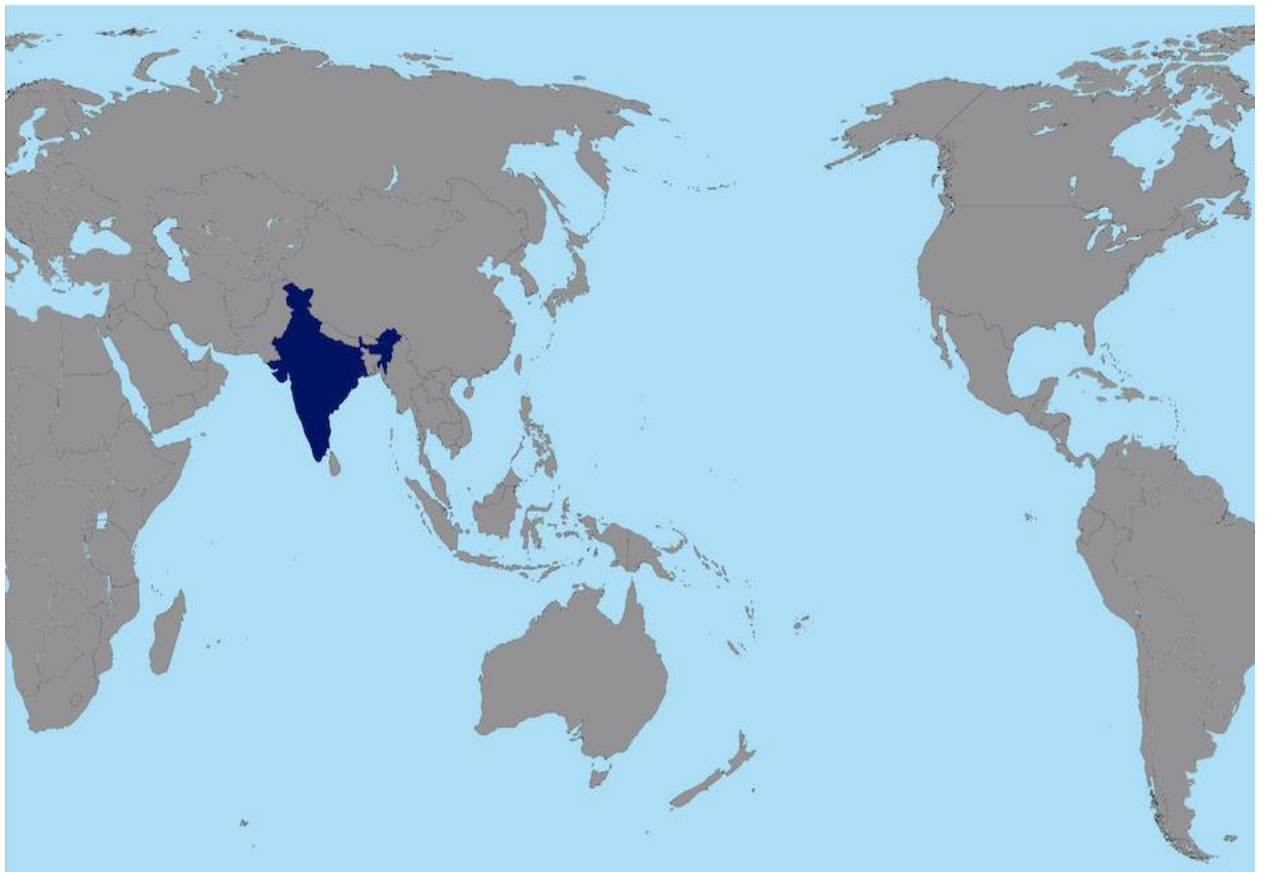


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



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ABOUT US

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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

November 2022

Abstract

November was the month of summits. Global leaders gathered for the UN Climate Change Conference at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt on November 11-12. ASEAN leaders gathered at Phnom Penh on the same dates for their annual summits, including with ASEAN partners. The 17th East Asia Summit took place at Phnom Penh on November 13. The G20 Summit took place at Bali on November 15 & 16. This was followed by the APEC Summit at Bangkok on November 16-19. These summits came at a time of accelerating bipolar confrontation, giving hope that cooperation and multilateral solutions were still on the table. They also provided opportunity for a series of leader-level meetings, both between China and Indo-Pacific powers, as well as between partner nations in the region. India's participation in the ASEAN and related summits was through its Vice-President, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present at the G20 summit and met his Quad counterparts, among others.

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida elaborated on his foreign policy in an commentary published by the Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies. In parallel, an advisory panel tasked with reviewing Japan's security capabilities submitted its report, urging the nation to shoulder a heavier tax burden to strengthen the country's defence capabilities and calling for the acquisition of counterstrike capability to maintain and enhance deterrence. The two events point to an impending increase in Japan's defence spending, though how far it will go in providing Japan an independent deterrent capability, even conventional, remains to be seen.

Participation by the Indian Navy in three maritime events in Japan during the month, including Exercise Malabar, confirmed the trend of growing Indian presence in the Indo-Pacific. The IAF trained with the Royal Singapore Air Force and the Indonesian Air Force during the month, while exercises were also conducted with Australian ships in the Bay of Bengal. The month ended with commencement of the 18th edition of the India-US Exercise Yudh Abhyas.

China was reported to have operationalised the JL-3 SLBM on its Jin-class submarines. The missile, with an estimated range of 10,000-12,000 Km, provides Chinese submarines the ability to hold at risk substantial sections of

the Western United States without having to leave the South China Sea. It does not, however, make any difference for India, which was already well within range of the existing JL-2 SLBM on China's SSBNs.

China bared its plans for the Indian Ocean Region through convening of a China Indian Ocean Development Cooperation Forum at Kunming on November 21. The Forum aims to advance implementation of China's Global Development Initiative in the region and thus build a maritime community with a shared future. It enables China to create an alternate, China-dominated and directed structure to IORA, upstage the Quad's initiatives to provide public goods and counter India's SAGAR initiative.

Canada unveiled its Indo-Pacific Strategy on November 29. The strategy describes China as a disruptive power and seeks to counter it where necessary, while continuing to cooperate where possible to address common challenges. It aspires to substantially strengthen relations with India, Japan and South Korea.

The East Asia Summit and Other ASEAN Summits

The 17th East Asia Summit (EAS) took place at Phnom Penh on November 13. World leaders present were India's Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang. The gathering highlighted the fact that for all its limitations, the EAS still remains the premier forum for strategic communication in the Indo-Pacific.

Unusually, the Chairman's Statement was published four days after the event on November 17, indicating differences on its content (reportedly between Russia and the US¹) necessitating further negotiation even after the summit ended. The readout of President Biden's participation states he underscored that freedom of navigation and overflight must be respected in the East and South China Seas, and that disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law². Another statement published on November 13 created the mistaken impression that ASEAN leaders had agreed

¹ ASEAN talks lay bare deep divisions on South China Sea, Ukraine, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/ASEAN-talks-lay-bare-deep-divisions-on-South-China-Sea-Ukraine>

² Readout of President Joe Biden's Participation in the East Asia Summit, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/13/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-participation-in-the-east-asia-summit/>

only on a limited number of issues³. The comprehensive statement⁴, when it finally came, comprised three broad sections: Review and Future Directions of the East Asia Summit, Areas of Cooperation, and Regional and International Issues.



Leaders Attend the 17th East Asia Summit at Phnom Penh on November 13, 2022.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Kingdom of Cambodia

ASEAN remains determined to maintain the EAS as an open, inclusive, transparent and outward looking forum that is an integral part of the evolving ASEAN-centred regional architecture. The statement underscores the need to create an enabling environment for peace, stability, good governance and prosperous development for all by ensuring a culture of dialogue and cooperation, enhancing mutual trust and confidence and respect for international law. The leaders encouraged further strengthening of the EAS Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat to facilitate and support EAS coordination and cooperation.

³ Chairman's Statement of the 17th East Asia Summit (17th EAS) on Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment, Strengthening Energy Cooperation for a Comprehensive Post-Covid-19 Recover, and Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Final-Chairmans-Statement-of-17th-EAS-on-Advancing-Womens-Economic-Empowerment-Strengthening-Energy-Cooperation-and-Promoting-Volunteerism.pdf>

⁴ Chairman's Statement of the 17th East Asia Summit, <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-17th-east-asia-summit/>

The leaders looked forward to finalisation of the EAS Plan of Action (2023 – 2027). Their priority areas for cooperation remained much the same as in the 16th EAS. They include environment, energy and sustainable recovery, education, finance, global health issues, ASEAN connectivity, economic cooperation and trade, food security and maritime security. The leaders took note of the establishment and ongoing implementation of the ASEAN-India Network of Universities Faculty Exchange Programme. The maritime cooperation section was substantially larger than in the previous statement and included references to conferences organised by India (and partner nations) on maritime security cooperation, IUU fishing and combating marine pollution. The leaders stressed the need to bolster maritime security cooperation through building and maintaining maritime orders based on the rule of law, ensuring safe maritime transport, providing capacity building assistance to maritime law enforcement agencies and promoting maritime domain awareness.

On regional and international issues, developments in the Korean Peninsula commanded first priority. The statement notes that most EAS members expressed deep concern over the recent surge in DPRK ballistic missile launches and its escalatory and destabilising rhetoric regarding the use of nuclear weapons. South China Sea came second, with content much the same as for the 16th EAS. The changes were that some EAS participating countries welcomed ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and China, indicating differences on this score. The leaders also welcomed resumption of physical textual negotiations on the Single Draft Negotiating Text for the long awaited Code of Conduct, but without any indication of forward movement. There was a new paragraph on Cross-Strait developments, with some EAS countries calling for the peaceful resolution of issues while reiterating their respective One-China Policy. Myanmar remained a subject of deep concern, with calls for making progress on the Five Point Consensus. A paragraph was also added calling for respect of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine as enshrined in the UN Charter. While some EAS nations underlined the importance of an immediate end to the war, some also took the view that the root cause of the situation in Ukraine should be addressed and the legitimate concerns of all countries be taken into account. Presumably, the Taiwan and Ukraine paragraphs were at the behest of US President Joe Biden⁵.

⁵ Readout of President Joe Biden's Participation in the East Asia Summit, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/13/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-participation-in-the-east-asia-summit/>

The 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits took place on November 11, though the joint statement was delayed till November 18⁶. Brazil and the UAE were welcomed as ASEAN's new Sectoral Dialogue Partners. ASEAN welcomed commencement of the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA). Comprehensive strategic partnerships (CSP) were established between ASEAN and India⁷, as well as ASEAN and the US, following the establishment of such partnerships between with China and Australia in 2021. Maritime cooperation including in maritime security, implementation of the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on cooperation on the AOIP and enhanced cooperation between the AOIP and IPOI, enhanced cooperation against terrorism and transnational crime, strengthened cooperation on cybersecurity, expeditious review of the AITIGA, as well as cooperation in a number of areas including the digital economy, fintech, transport and connectivity, environment, smart agriculture, healthcare, space, tourism, culture and regional and global issues of common concern comprised the thrust areas of the upgraded ASEAN-India CSP. In the international issues section, there was concern over developments in the Middle East and for Palestine and reference to an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Days later, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus convened their annual meeting at Siem Ream on November 23⁸. A day earlier, India's Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and his Cambodian counterpart had chaired the maiden India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap⁹. Two initiatives were announced: an India-ASEAN Initiative for Women in UN Peace Keeping Operations, for which India will conduct tailor made courses and table top exercises for women officers from ASEAN; and an India-ASEAN Initiative on Marine Plastic Pollution, for which an India-ASEAN Marine Pollution Response Centre is to be established at Chennai by the Indian Coast Guard. The ADMM

⁶ Chairman's Statement of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/01-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN-Summits-2.pdf>

⁷ Joint Statement on ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Joint-Statement-on-ASEAN-India-CSP-final.pdf>

⁸ Joint Declaration by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Defence Cooperation to Strengthen Solidarity for a Harmonised Security, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Joint-Declaration-of-the-9th-ADMM-Plus-JD-23-November-2022-Siem-Reap-Cambodia-ADOPTED.pdf>

⁹ Raksha Mantri and his Cambodian counterpart co-chair maiden India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1878047>

also held a similar bilateral meeting with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin the same day¹⁰.

ASEAN has successfully maintained its strategic independence, managing to navigate between pressures from the US, China and Russia while ploughing its notionally independent path. It has avoided taking sides in great power politics, though how long it can continue to do so is uncertain. With the baton of Chairmanship passing to Indonesia, and with India assuming leadership of the G20 at the same time, cooperation between India, Indonesia and ASEAN will be crucial to maintain regional peace and stability in the year ahead.

The Bali G-20 Summit

The G-20 Summit held under Indonesia's presidency in Bali, Indonesia on November 15 & 16 demonstrates that multilateralism remains alive and has a global role despite the polarisation caused by great power competition. The summit was attended by 16 heads of government; foreign ministers from Brazil, Mexico and Russia; Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, heads of 11 international organisations and nine invited guests. The traditional group photograph was not taken because Western leaders were unwilling to be seen standing with the Russian participant. However, in a tribute to the negotiating ability of Indonesia and India, the incoming chair of the G-20, the summit did produce the Bali Leaders' Declaration¹¹.

The Declaration reaffirms that G-20 is the premier forum for global economic cooperation. Significantly, G-7 leaders, who are part of the G-20, have signed on to this reaffirmation notwithstanding their desire to shape the world's economic agenda. It recognises that this is a time of unparalleled multidimensional crises pandemic devastation, climate change, other challenges have caused economic downturn, increased poverty, slowed global recovery and hindered achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. It acknowledges the war in Ukraine and notes the international position expressed in the UN General Assembly, which deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from Ukraine's territory. It also notes that the G-20

¹⁰ Readout of Secretary of Defense Travel to Cambodia, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3227475/readout-of-secretary-of-defense-travel-to-cambodia/>

¹¹ G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/16/g20-bali-leaders-declaration/>

is not the appropriate forum to resolve security issues while acknowledging that such issues can have significant consequences for the global economy.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Presidents Joe Biden and Joko Widodo and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, November 2022. Source PMO

The Declaration also recognises the necessity of upholding international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability, including defending the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. It unequivocally states that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. Adopting PM Modi's words, it notes that "Today's era must not be of war" and that the peaceful resolution of conflicts and efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital.

The G-20 have set themselves the objective of advancing an agenda for strong, inclusive and resilient global recovery and sustainable development. The priority is food security and protection of the vulnerable from hunger, which necessitates keeping food supply chains working. The agenda encompasses climate change and energy transitions, biodiversity, health, digital transformation, the world trading system and infrastructure investment, providing equitable opportunities for all people, tourism and culture, and anti-corruption and money laundering among the envisaged areas of cooperation. It is, in fact, the focus on these common challenges, rather than the geopolitical ones that are driving the actions of great powers, that kept the G20 on course and made it meaningful.

Significant commitments made during the Bali Summit were the G-20 partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment Projects¹², which include an investment of \$ 15 million in India's health infrastructure by the US International Development Finance Corporation, and the commitment by the Global Gateway to mobilise € 300 billion by 2027 for green and digital transitions and partnership through the world, including a green hydrogen and the deployment of solar and wind renewable energy partnership with India. The proof will, however, lie in actual delivery of funds, especially in the aftermath of the ongoing financial crisis in Europe.

Asia's priority must remain defence of the multilateral economic order, rather than the geopolitical conflict that threatens Europe and China's asymmetric power and assertion that threaten to bring similar conflict to Asia. In his closing remarks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured that "India's G-20 presidency will be inclusive, ambitious, decisive and action-oriented"¹³. He called for extending the benefits of development to all human beings with compassion and solidarity, prioritising women-led development and the maintenance of peace and security, without which future generations would not be able to benefit from economic growth and technological innovation. He concluded by noting, "The G-20 has to convey a strong message in favour of peace and harmony. All these priorities are fully embodied in the theme of India's G-20 Chairmanship – "One Earth, One Family, One Future"¹⁴.

The summit provided interaction for India's bilateral leader-level meetings with Australia¹⁵, Germany¹⁶, France¹⁷, Italy¹⁸, Singapore¹⁹, UK²⁰ and USA²¹.

¹² Fact Sheet: Presidents Biden, Widodo, von der Leyen and G20 Announce G20 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment Projects, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/15/fact-sheet-presidents-biden-widodo-von-der-leyen-and-g20-announce-g20-partnership-for-global-infrastructure-and-investment-projects/>

¹³ English Translation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's remarks at the Closing Session of the G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876366>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Prime Minister's meeting with the Prime Minister of Australia on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876430>

¹⁶ Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876382>

¹⁷ Prime Minister's meeting with the President of France on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876383>

¹⁸ Prime Minister's meeting with the Prime Minister of Italy on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876408>

¹⁹ Prime Minister's meeting with the Prime Minister of Singapore on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876384>

²⁰ Prime Minister's meeting with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876456>

²¹ Prime Minister's meeting with the President of USA on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Bali, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876098>

Discussions during these meetings were on bilateral issues as well as obtaining commitments of support for India during its G-20 presidency. India has a complex task in maintaining the world's focus on broader issues of relevance to the Global South despite G-7 nations seeking to focus on their priorities. How well it manages this will determine the success of its G-20 presidency.

The Biden Xi Jinping Summit

Among the most significant events of the month in the Indo-Pacific was the Joseph Biden Xi Jinping in-person meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Summit at Bali on November 14, 2022. It was the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders since Joe Biden assumed charge as the 46th US President on January 20, 2021. It was also the first summit-level meeting between the Presidents of the US and China since Donald Trump hosted Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago in April 2017 and Xi Jinping reciprocated in Beijing's Imperial Palace in November 2017.

The two leaders were, however, no strangers to each other. They had met numerous times when both were Vice-Presidents. In July 2022, Xi Jinping had telephoned Biden and asked him to stop the Pelosi visit to Taiwan²². Biden had declined, citing the legislature's independence from the executive. The visit went ahead, resulting in China effectively imposing a blockade on Taiwan for over a week, in the process exercising its war plan to take the island. The US retaliated by imposing further restrictions on semiconductor exports to China.

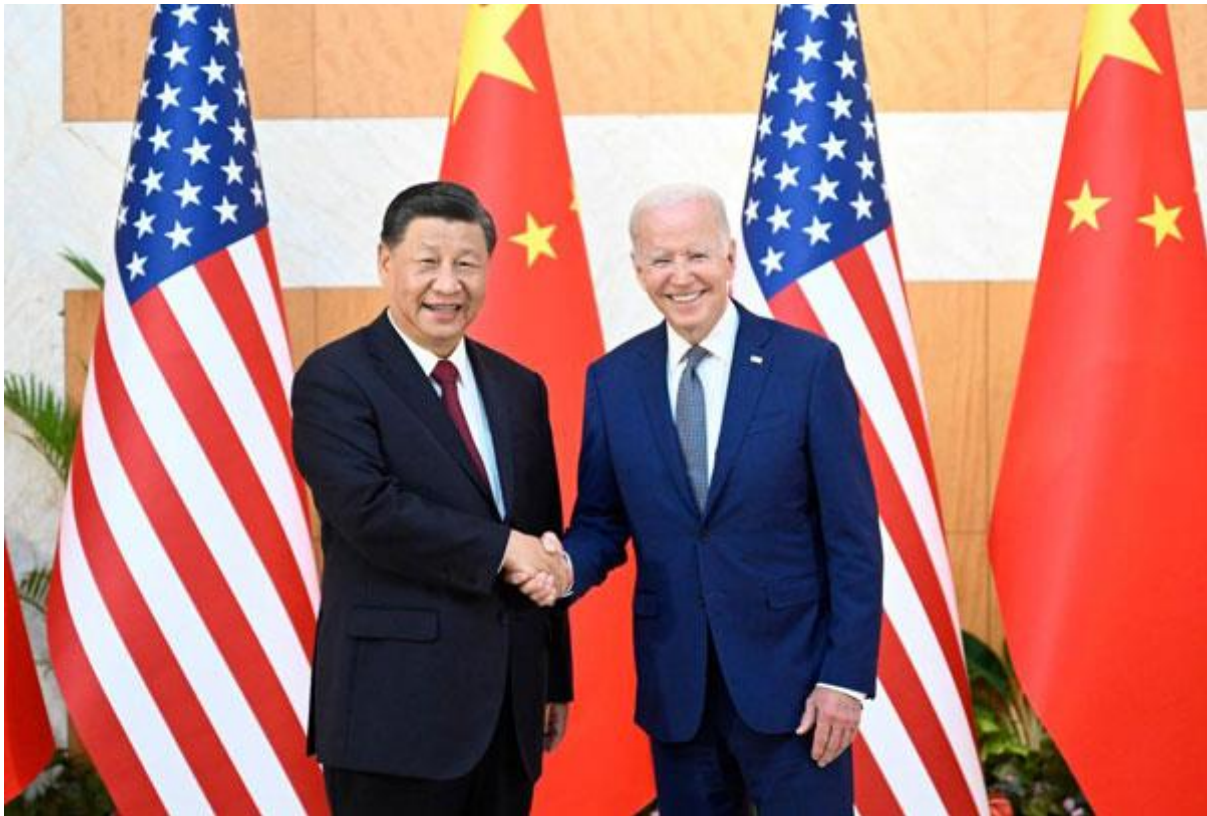
Given the fraught nature of the bilateral relationship and political pressures on both sides, little was expected from the meeting. The objectives were at best to break the ice and to understand each other's red lines. Xi went in on a high, having successfully marginalised all domestic opposition, gained endorsement of his policies from the 20th Party Congress, packed the Central Party Committee and the Politburo with his acolytes, and thus emerged as China's most powerful leader since Mao. Biden too was not short of confidence, basking in the better than expected showing during the mid-term elections.

Their meeting lasted for over three hours. Its tone was, however, far more diplomatic than the wolf warrior approach that had marked the meeting involving the Foreign Secretaries and National Security Advisers at Anchorage, Alaska, in March 2021²³. Both sides maintained diplomatic proprieties, even

²²For an overview of the visit, see "The Pelosi Visit to Taiwan", The Indo-Pacific Monitor Volume III, Issue 8, https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/indo-pacific-monitor-4108.pdf

²³For an overview of the Anchorage Meeting, see "The Anchorage Dialogue", The Indo-Pacific Monitor Volume II, Issue 3,

though they stood firm on their respective national positions and do not appear to have made any concessions. There are, however, nuanced differences in readouts of the meeting from the two countries.



Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping meet in Bali, Indonesia on November 14, 2022.
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China.

The US readout²⁴, running into just over 500 words, highlights that the US will compete vigorously with China, but both sides should ensure that the competition is managed, keep open lines of communication and ensure the competition does not turn into conflict. China and the US must work together to address transnational challenges, including climate change, global macroeconomic stability (including debt relief) and global health and food security. It reflects that President Biden expressed concern about the PRC's practices in Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, as well as on China's non-market economic practices, wrongly detained US citizens and human rights issues, while stating that the US policy with regard to Taiwan had not changed. It speaks of both countries opposing the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/indo-pacific-monitor-2280.pdf

²⁴Readout of President Joe Biden's Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/14/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>

in Ukraine and mentions that Secretary Blinken will visit China to follow up on the discussions.

The PRC readout²⁵, running into over 2000 words, seeks a return to the old US-China relationship without addressing the factors that resulted in breakdown of trust. It highlights the support that President Xi enjoys in China after the 20th Party Congress, reiterates the Chinese narrative of advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation while pursuing an independent foreign policy based on peace, and deep commitment to the international system with the UN at its core. It highlights Taiwan as being at the very core of China's interests, China's internal affair, lying at the very heart of China-US relations and projects attempts to split Taiwan from China as a red line that must not be crossed. It accepts the need of dialogue to resolve differences between the two sides, opposes weaponising the principles of the market economy and international trade rules, and opposes exchanges in science and technology. It claims President Biden agreed that China and the US share a responsibility to show the world they can manage their differences, that the US is committed to the one-China policy; that President Biden has said he doesn't want to decouple from China or promote a Cold War, and that it is in the interest of both to keep channels of communication open. There is no mention of joint opposition to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine: China stands on the side of peace and hopes that the US and NATO will conduct a comprehensive dialogue with Russia.

Four critical points stand out. First, China remains convinced that the US is a fading power and will continue with the policies it has adopted in its neighbourhood. However, a cautious Xi Jinping needs more time to rebuild China's economic and military capability and resilience. Both will remain antagonistic for the foreseeable future, while managing differences to ensure they don't spiral into conflict for the time being.

Second, the differences between the two on Taiwan remain. Unless there is a major change in either position, these differences are irreconcilable. The likely visit of the new prospective speaker in the US House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy to Taiwan will once again raise tensions, although the US side seems to have come away with the impression China is not yet ready to invade.

²⁵US President Joe Biden Meets with President Xi Jinping in Bali, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/14/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>

Third, Ukraine remains a key area of difference, with China maintaining its support to President Putin while the US tries its level best to oust him from power. This would indicate that both accept that any let-up in the Ukraine conflict is unlikely for the foreseeable future. The Global South will continue to bear the pain.

Finally, both sides have agreed to restore dialogue. Beginnings have already been made, with meetings between US Trade Representative and her Chinese counterpart, as well as between General Wei Fenghe and General Lloyd Austin. The overall impression is of the US seeking a holding action in its relationship with China, while attempting to put its full effort into marginalising Russia in Europe. This does not, however, address the situation of how the US will deal with a stalemate in Europe, which will implicitly provide fresh strategic space to China in the Indo-Pacific. For the time being at least, the Indo-Pacific is on the US back burner.

The Xi Jinping Meetings with Albanese and Kishida

In the wake of Xi Jinping's meeting with US President Joe Biden, the Chinese leader met with two other Quad leaders, Prime Ministers Anthony Albanese and Fumio Kishida. It was the first time both Prime Ministers met the Chinese leader after they assumed charge, in May 2022 and October 2021 respectively.

The Australia China leaders' meeting took place on the sidelines of the G20 summit, for 32 minutes, on November 15²⁶. For Australia, it marked the first leader-level interaction with China since Malcolm Turnbull had met Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit at Hamburg in June 2017. Shortly thereafter, Turnbull announced proposals to clamp down on foreign meddling in Australian politics, while the Australian senate forced out Sam Dastyari, a prominent senator accused of accepting bribes to support China's view on the South China Sea. China reacted by urging Australia to evaluate its bilateral relationship in a fair and objective manner and warned against irresponsible remarks to the detriment of mutual trust. A negative spiral set in and relations plummeted under Turnbull's successor Scott Morrison when Australia called for an independent inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. China turned up the heat by restricting imports from Australia and identifying 14

²⁶Anthony Albanese and Xi Jinping meet at G20, breaking six-year diplomatic cold shoulder, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-15/anthony-albanese-and-xi-jinping-meet-at-g20-summit/101657590>

points of dispute²⁷. China's Global Times said Australia risked becoming the poor white trash of Asia if it continued provoking China²⁸.

Both leaders acknowledged that in the past few years, bilateral relations had experienced difficulties. President Xi noted PM Albanese's remarks that China-Australia relations would be handled in a more mature way²⁹. PM Albanese, on the other hand, expressed his pleasure at having the meeting in a time of great global uncertainty and the need for both countries to work towards a stable, prosperous and peaceful Indo-Pacific and an international system governed by law and principles that are enshrined in the UN Charter. He noted that both sides had their differences and Australia would not resile from its interests or values, but the bilateral relationship was important³⁰.

The Australian readout of the meeting describes it as another important step towards stabilisation of the bilateral relationship³¹. It identified areas discussed as challenges to international peace and security, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and bilateral, trade, consular and human rights issues. "We will cooperate where we can, disagree where we must, and engage in our national interest", it states³². China's readout, on the other hand, notes that "A mature and stable bilateral relationship should first and foremost be reflected in putting the differences and disagreements between the two countries in the right perspective" and "It is imperative to rise above disagreements, respect each other and seek mutual benefit and win-win results". It seeks commitment to the original inspiration behind the establishment of diplomatic ties, action in the spirit of mutual respect and equal-footed cooperation and narrowing of differences through constructive and candid dialogue and communication, facilitating the growth of bilateral relations³³.

The meeting appears to have been in the nature of an ice-breaker. Its true test will lie in whether there are any outcomes. Notably, China's official newspaper has said that given Australia's manoeuvres against China in the past, the Chinese people have less trust towards Canberra's sincerity in improving bilateral ties and that constant malice from Australian politicians will bring a

²⁷ "If you make China the enemy, China will be the enemy": Beijing's fresh threat to Australia, <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/if-you-make-china-the-enemy-china-will-be-the-enemy-beijing-s-fresh-threat-to-australia-20201118-p56fqs.html>

²⁸ Australia risks backsliding into a poor country in Asia Pacific, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1199471.shtml>

²⁹ Opening Remarks – Bilateral Meeting – Bali, Indonesia, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/opening-remarks-bilateral-meeting-bali-indonesia>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Meeting with China's President Xi Jinping, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/meeting-chinas-president-xi-jinping>

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

dead end to bilateral ties³⁴. Reiterating that it is China's rapid economic development that helped Australia avoid becoming the poor white trash of Asia, it hopes that malicious actions that have led to reduction in Chinese investment in Australia and caused huge loss to both Chinese enterprises as well as the drop in Australia's per capita GDP will cease. Clearly, substantial effort will be required to bring relations back to an even keel.

The meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Kishida lasted for about 45 minutes and took place on the sidelines of the APEC Summit at Bangkok, on November 17. The late Shinzo Abe had visited China in October 2018 and hosted President Xi in Osaka in June 2019. President Xi and Prime Minister Kishida had held a telephonic summit in October 2021 and agreed on a broad direction of establishing a constructive and stable bilateral relationship.

Both leaders agreed that their countries had huge responsibilities for the peace and prosperity of the region as well as the international community. They also agreed that there existed a wide range of common interests and possibilities for cooperation. As per Japan's readout³⁵, PM Kishida expressed concern about the situation in the East China Sea and the launching of missiles by China into Japan's EEZ after the Pelosi visit in August. He reiterated the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, called on China to respond to Japan's position on human rights and the detention of Japanese nationals, and sought the lifting of import restrictions on Japanese food products. On Ukraine, he called on China to play a responsible role in maintaining international peace and security. He also expressed his expectation that China will fulfil its role regarding North Korea, including in the UN Security Council.

China's substantially longer readout contains numerous prescriptions on what Japan should and should not do, as has become standard following its dialogues with other countries³⁶. There is agreement that both share common interests and the relationship is important. There is satisfaction that exchanges between the two countries are resuming gradually and moving in the right direction. There is the note that there has been no change whatsoever to the commitments made by Japan to China on Taiwan.

³⁴China - Australia ties cannot reset on makeshift policy,
<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1280268.shtml>

³⁵Japan – China Summit Meeting,
https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/diplomatic/202211/_00018.html

³⁶President Xi Jinping Meets with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida,
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202211/t20221118_10977309.html

The outcome of the meeting was summed up by China in five points³⁷. First is that both will abide by the four China-Japan political documents and step up high level exchanges, dialogue and communication. Second was that both will work for early resumption of the Japan-China High-level Economic Dialogue. Third, a new meeting of the China-Japan high-level consultation mechanism on people-to-people and cultural exchanges will be held at an early date. Fourth, a hotline will be launched under the Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between defence authorities of the two countries (China and Japan held the 14th round of consultations under the high-level consultation mechanism on Maritime Affairs soon after, on November 22 and again reiterated that this hotline would be launched soon)³⁸. Fifth, both will jointly shoulder responsibility for maintaining international and regional peace and prosperity, scale up coordination and cooperation in international and global affairs, and work together to tackle global challenges.

With these meetings, China has renewed dialogue with three of the four Quad partners. There was a handshake with Prime Minister Modi, but no dialogue. The solidarity that Western nations demand in reaction to the crisis in Ukraine was not in evidence in the Indo-Pacific. There is the question of whether India was briefed by its partners in advance regarding the agenda to be discussed, or informed of the nature of discussions and contours of the agreement subsequently. The meetings open up the possibility of China dealing with the Quad partners piecemeal, using its undoubted economic attraction to seduce them, and reducing the Quad partnership to so much sea foam. India must remain on guard about this possibility, carefully watch how rapidly these relationships move, and whether they develop into something more than a tactical effort to buy time. In the interim there is no harm in establishing and using alternate channels for dialogue with China while keeping resolution of the border situation paramount.

At the same time, it is not going to be easy for China to rebuild the trust it has squandered through its assertion and the wolf warrior approach. There was little sign of this approach in Xi Jinping's meetings. Whether this will translate into more normal diplomacy, with the usual give and take, or whether China will retain its assertive and dogmatic approach, will determine the course of Indo-Pacific competition in the years ahead.

³⁷China and Japan Reach a Five-point Consensus on Stabilising and Developing Bilateral Relations,

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202211/t20221118_10977637.html

³⁸China and Japan Hold the 14th Round of Consultations under the High-level Consultation Mechanism on Maritime Affairs,

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202211/t20221124_10980401.html

Prime Minister Kishida on Japan's Foreign Policy

The elaboration by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on November 18, 2022 of “the fundamental thinking and efforts of Japanese foreign policy at this major turning point in history”³⁹ provides insight into the direction Japan will take under his leadership and will influence the geo-political calculations of Indo-Pacific countries.



Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae presents the Advisory Panel's Report to Japanese Prime Minister Kishida on November 22, 2022. Source: Prime Minister's Office Japan.

The thinking is built around four sections. The first focuses extensively on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine as a clear violation of international law that threatens the very foundations of international order. It mentions other challenges to international order in the East and South China Seas (without naming China) and from North Korea's nuclear and missile activities. Raising the spectre of the world reverting to the law of the jungle, it says Japan should pursue democracy that emphasises universal values while upholding the banner of political idealism, and when required, respond to challenges boldly and decisively with strict realism.

The second and third sections spell out how Japan has responded to the Ukraine crisis and what the country should do to maintain and strengthen the international order based on the rule of law. The current response is essentially through imposition of strong sanctions against Russia and assistance provided

³⁹ Fumio Kishida, “Japan's Foreign Policy at a Turning Point in History”, https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/ajiss_commentary/japans-foreign-policy-at-a-turning-point-in-history.html

to Ukraine, as well as to countries impacted by the consequential energy and food crisis. Future actions cover Japan's focal areas when it becomes a non-permanent member of the UNSC and the President of the G-7 next year. In the UNSC, Japan proposes advancing "efforts to reform the UN including the UNSC"; "promote the rule of law" and "strengthen efforts based on the principle of human security in the new era". In the G7, it proposes strengthening cooperation while demonstrating G7's strong determination to deny military aggression and the threat of nuclear weapons, as well as attempts to overthrow the international order. Japan also proposes formulating a new plan to promote FOIP and further strengthen coordination with partners such as ASEAN, Europe, Oceania, Latin America and in the Caribbean, in addition to the Quad.

The final section, on addressing the common challenges to humanity, laments that the NPT Review Conference in August could not adopt a consensus document due to Russia's objection, while committing that Japan will continue to take realistic and practical efforts in line with the Hiroshima Action Plan announced at the NPT Review conference⁴⁰ (the plan inter alia calls for not tolerating the threat of use of nuclear weapons, enhancement of transparency by nuclear weapon states, maintaining the decreasing trend of the global nuclear stockpile, securing non-proliferation while promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and promoting understanding of the realities of nuclear weapon use). The other challenge PM Kishida talks of addressing is climate change.

For a nation that was the leading proponent in generating the Indo-Pacific concept, beginning with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's 'Confluence of the Seas' speech to India's parliament in August 2007, it is remarkable how little content the Kishida formulation has about the Indo-Pacific or indeed Asia. The focus is making common cause with the developed world, including Western Europe and the US. Asia and the Indo-Pacific are mentioned in passing. The only regional concerns considered worthy of mention are those faced by Japan in East Asia. There is visible reticence about China and Taiwan doesn't find mention. The Indian Ocean part of the Indo-Pacific seems peripheral to Japan's thinking. Little thought appears to have been given to the efficacy of proposed actions in the UNSC and the G-7; the G20 does not even find mention despite publication of the commentary being timed for just after the G20 summit. This cannot but create the impression that Japan is paying only lip service to its partnerships including with ASEAN, India and Latin America.

⁴⁰ "Leading the World Towards a Future Without Nuclear Weapons", https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2022/09/future_without_nuclear_weapons.html

For over a decade now, Western leaders have been talking about the rising importance of Asia. Beginning with Hillary Clinton in October 2011 and then President Barack Obama in November 2011⁴¹, a succession (of leaders) have acknowledged the Indo-Pacific as the world's most populous and economically dynamic region, one where the future of the world will be decided. A multitude of countries have published Indo-Pacific strategies. That the Indo-Pacific finds so little place in the Kishida strategy reflects obsession with the immediate, with little thought to building for the future. A similar obsession with the present and focus on the war on terror provided the strategic space required for China's unobstructed rise, giving it opportunity to grow and hone its strategy of coercive assertion while remaining below the threshold of conflict. Despite lessons of recent history, however, it seems that Japan will join the US and Western powers again in taking its focus off China, providing space for its continued growth. The illusion that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine will be sharp and short has been destroyed. Unless there is return to focus on the bigger strategic challenge posed by China, Asia's democratic future stands imperilled.

For Japan itself, there does not seem to have been a weighing of associated costs of the European fixation, including the alienation of Russia and a situation where in Japan faces a clearly visible storm from the three powerful adversaries to its West. Japan is presently engaged in revision of its military policy documents. Its future will probably include a sharp increase in defence expenditure, increased militarism and development of own strike capabilities. Whether this militaristic turn and the making of common cause will further exacerbate tensions in the region or will pacify it is the question that its regional partners, in Southeast and South Asia will ask.

For India, the formulation will prompt a relook at commitments during recent high-level bilateral interaction, such as the Modi-Kishida summit of March 2022 and the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in September 2022. India will need to re-evaluate what it can expect in the region from Japan, particularly on the defence and security front, as the Indo-Pacific drifts further towards confrontation.

⁴¹ Remarks by President Obama to Australian Parliament, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>

India Flies its Flag in Japan and the Pacific

India's military outreach to Japan and the Indo-Pacific comprised three events during the month. These were participation in the International Fleet Review (IFR) hosted by the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) off Yokohama, and Exercise Malabar in the Philippine Sea. Admiral R Hari Kumar, India's Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), paid an official visit to Japan 05-09 November for these events⁴².



Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, Chief of the Royal Australian Navy; Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, Indian Navy; Admiral Sakai Ryo, Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and Admiral Michael M Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations, US Navy at the four-chiefs of Navies Talks at Yokosuka on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Exercise Malabar, November 05, 2022. Source: PIB

The IFR was hosted by the JMSDF to commemorate the 70th anniversary of its formation. It took place in Sagami Bay, near Yokosuka, on November 6. Twenty ships and submarines from the JMSDF, an unspecified number from the USN including USS Ronald Reagan, four from Australia, two each from India, Canada and Pakistan, and one each from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore and New Zealand participated⁴³. Six maritime aircraft including from France and the US also participated. Russia and North Korea were not invited, while China chose not to participate despite receiving an invitation. The absence of ships from partner countries in Europe, including UK (an RN ship was to attend, but could not reach in time), Germany, the Netherlands and France was noticeable. China assessed that this absence

⁴² Visit of Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff to Japan,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1874993>

⁴³ Multilateral Exercise, <https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202210/en20221028multi.pdf>

exposed Japan's lack of appeal: while these countries do send vessels to the Indo-Pacific due to pressure from the US, they have little interest in displaying support for Japan⁴⁴.

India's representation at the event included the CNS, IN ships Shivalik and Kamorta and a P-8I. This representation not only demonstrated India's ship-building capacity and the reach of its Navy, but also enabled further consolidation of India's high-level engagements with Japan. It further demonstrated India's consistent support to multilateral maritime security constructs in the Indo-Pacific.

Maritime issues impact all users of the seas and involve a large number of countries. Since threats are beyond the ability of any one country to manage, international naval cooperation to deal with issues of the commons has become the norm. The Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) comprises a series of biennial meetings between Pacific nations to discuss naval matters. It began in 1988 as a forum to enable leaders of regional navies to meet for a frank and open discussion to promote mutual understanding and discuss common challenges. It now has four major objectives: to discuss and formulate cooperative initiatives and identify those that warrant further consideration and development; to explore new ways of enhancing friendship and professional cooperation; to develop Navy to Navy relationships at a working level and maintain informal liaison among delegates and between successive workshops and seminars; and to discuss professional areas of mutual cooperation.

The 18th WPNS at Yokohama on November 7&8 witnessed the participation of 21 member countries and eight observers, including India. In his remarks at the event, Admiral R Hari Kumar, India's CNS, "stressed on the primacy of a Rules Based Order and expressed commitment of the Indian Navy and that of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) towards promoting the idea of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indo-Pacific"⁴⁵.

Addressing the IFR and WPNS, Prime Minister Kishida observed that naval power had become a public good and plays "a role in supporting the development and prosperity of the world by ensuring safety at sea, especially by maintaining sea lane security"⁴⁶. Describing the security situation around

⁴⁴ International fleet review in Japan exposes lack of appeal, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-11/17/content_10199777.htm

⁴⁵ Visit of Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, to Japan, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1874993>

⁴⁶ Address by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio at the International Fleet Review 2022, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/statement/202111/_00008.html

Japan as having rapidly become more severe, he reiterated the need to prepare for “the emergence of an entity that disturbs the peace and security of other countries by force or threat without honouring the rules”⁴⁷. He said Japan would formulate a new National Security Strategy and related documents by the end of the year, and would fundamentally reinforce Japan’s defence capabilities within the next five years.



Fleet Commanders from India, Japan, the US and Australia along with personnel from participating navies at the opening ceremony for Exercise Malabar on board JS Hyuga at Yokosuka on November 09, 2022. Source: Indian Navy

Before kicking off Exercise Malabar, Chiefs of the four participating navies came together for the four-Chiefs of Navies Talks at Yokosuka on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Ex Malabar on November 5. They reviewed the progress achieved so far and discussed areas that could be focused on during future iterations so as to further enhance the interoperability among participating navies. The CNS also conveyed his special compliments to Admiral Sakai Ryo, Chief of Staff of the JMSDF, for the highly professional and successful conduct of a series of high intensity maritime engagements.

⁴⁷Ibid.

The 25th edition of Exercise Malabar was conducted in the Philippine Sea, South of the Kanto coast of Japan, from November 8-15⁴⁸. Japan was this year's planning and exercise lead (the lead rotates each year among participating nations, along with exercise location, to demonstrate the combined ability of the four nations to operate across the entire Western Pacific and Indian Ocean). It marked the third time that Ex Malabar had included Australia "to advance collective planning, integration and employment of advanced warfare tactics between participating nations"⁴⁹. Participating units included HMAS Arunta, Stalwart and a submarine from Australia; INS Shivalik, Kamorta, a P-8I and a contingent of MARCOS from India; US ships Ronald Reagan, Chancellorsville and Milius, a P-8A and Special Forces from the US; and JS ships Hyuga, Takanami, Shiranui, Kunisaki, Oumi, a submarine, P-1 and UP-3D aircraft and a Special Boarding Unit from Japan. Exercise content included anti-submarine operations, anti-air warfare and surface operations. India's CNS expressed his satisfaction over scale and complexity of the exercise.

The three events provided opportunity for India to engage with and display its commitment to a 'special and strategic global partner', as well as demonstrate its growing maritime capability, reach and sustainability. It also enabled testing of the bilateral logistic cooperation and access agreements. As geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific rise, this Indian engagement and presence will constitute a factor in national calculations of both China and Japan.

Noticeably, India's presence in and engagement with Western Pacific partners is visibly growing, as is the content of its bilateral and multilateral exercises in the region. In the last six months alone, the Indian Navy has participated in Exercises RIMPAC, Kakadu, JIMEX, AUSINDEX and Vostok 2022, apart from maritime partnership exercises with South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore, among others. The trend appears to be towards the formation of a balancing architecture to counter China's asymmetric power. Whether this architecture coalesces fast enough to give China pause or otherwise will play a large part in determining whether the region will remain peaceful or descent into destructive conflict.

China Operationalises Upgraded SLBM Capability

Speaking to reporters in Washington DC on November 18, Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, said that China had fielded its JL-

⁴⁸ Japan-US-India-Australia Multilateral Exercise (Malabar 2022), <https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/en/release/202211/en20221108m.pdf>

⁴⁹ Japan hosts Australia, India US in Naval Exercise Malabar 2022, <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3217030/japan-hosts-australia-india-us-in-naval-exercise-malabar-2022/>

3 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) on the six Type 094 (Jin Class) SSBNs, giving them the capability to hit mainland US from waters closer to China's shores⁵⁰. China's Global Times responded by claiming that China's SLBM development was intended to defend it from nuclear blackmail and the US military was speculating with ulterior motives to gain more funds to enhance its capabilities⁵¹. Both statements are inherently true, so where does reality lie?



Warships from India, Australia, Japan and the US Exercise together in the Philippine Sea during Exercise Malabar 2022. Source: US 7th Fleet

The Type 094 (Jin Class) submarine began entering service in 2007 and six submarines are reportedly operational, with two more under construction. They represent the PRC's first credible sea-based nuclear deterrent, with the first deterrent patrol having been undertaken in December 2015. Each carries 12 CSS-N-14 (JL-2) SLBM's with a maximum range of 7400 Km. The boats are relatively noisy and hence are expected to be easy pickings for the highly developed US anti-submarine capability. The US territories this missile can at best reach without the submarine venturing beyond the first island chain are Guam and parts of Alaska, from the East China Sea. It is not sufficient to hit mainland USA or even Hawaii. Mainland USA is certainly within range of China's land-based missiles including the DF-41, which has an estimated range of 12000 – 15000 Km. However, the questionable survivability of the continental deterrent provides the rationale for the submarine-based leg.

The JL-3, on the other hand, is estimated to have a range of 10,000 – 12,000 Km. This enables the Type 094 SSBNs to strike any part of the Western United

⁵⁰ China making South China Sea a nuclear missile launchpad, <https://asiatimes.com/2022/11/china-making-south-china-sea-a-nuclear-missile-launchpad/>

⁵¹ US hypes China's JL-3 submarine-launched ballistic missile deployment 'with ulterior motives', <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1279959.shtml>

States, including cities such as Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Francisco, San Bernardino, Seattle, San Diego, Denver, Las Vegas, San Jose, Salt Lake City and Tucson, without having to venture outside the protected South China Sea (SCS). China has sound strategic reason to ignore international law and claim the SCS as its own – it can develop the region as a bastion for its submarine-based deterrent, and is in fact doing so. The USS Connecticut incident of October 2021 would only have strengthened China's resolve to further cement its defensive capabilities in this bastion⁵².

In effect, the JL-3 enables the PRC to deter the US by holding hostage much of Western USA while it continues its grey zone activity in the South and East China Seas. There is a strong strategic parallel with Pakistan using its nuclear blackmail while continuing its trans-border terror based strategy against India.

Operationalisation of the JL-3 does not significantly impact the India-PRC strategic calculus. The existing JL-2, operational since 2015 at least, had sufficient range to strike all parts of India (and for that matter Australia) as well as large parts of the Indian Ocean from the SCS itself – and India's strategic ASW capability in the SCS is negligible. The obvious counters that India needs are first, to develop strategic ASW capability in the SCS and second, to strengthen its own submarine based deterrent through the development of longer range SLBMs. The earlier this is done, the better placed India will be to deal with China's threats.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy

Days after the Trudeau Xi Jinping spat at Bali⁵³, Canada joined the growing list of Western nations with a professed Indo-Pacific interest through publication of its Indo-Pacific strategy on November 27, 2022⁵⁴. "The Indo-Pacific is rapidly becoming the global centre of economic dynamism and strategic challenge", says the strategy. "Every issue that matters to Canadians – including our national security, economic prosperity, respect for international law, democratic values, public health, protecting our environment, the rights of women and girls and human rights – will be shaped by the relationships Canada and its allies and partners have with Indo-Pacific countries". The

⁵² For an overview, see "The USS Connecticut Incident", Indo-Pacific Monitor, Volume II Issue 10, October 2021, https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/uploads_dpg/publication_file/indo-pacific-monitor-3442.pdf

⁵³ China's Xi Jinping Chides Justin Trudeau at G-20, Video Shows, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-xi-jinping-chides-justin-trudeau-at-g-20-video-shows-11668620157>

⁵⁴ Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng>

strategy highlights the economic opportunity the Indo-Pacific provides, projecting that it will account for more than half the global economy, or twice the share of the US, by 2040. It also projects that the region will be home to two-thirds of the global middle class by 2030.

The strategy identifies the Indo-Pacific Region's strategic challenges as instability on the Korean Peninsula, the rising violence in Myanmar, clashes on the India-China and India-Pakistan borders, escalating tensions in the South and East China Seas and across the Taiwan Strait, and severe poverty and inequality. "China's rise as a global actor is reshaping the strategic outlook of every state in the region, including Canada", it says. It calls out China for actively seeking to reinterpret international rules to gain greater advantage as well as for assertive pursuit of its economic and security interests, unilateral claims, and increasing coercive treatment of other countries and economies. It notes that many of Canada's closest allies, including the US, EU, Germany, France and the UK have increased or are considering increasing their presence in the region.

The strategy commits Canada to investing in five interconnected strategic objectives for the region: to promote peace, resilience and security; to expand trade, investment and supply chain resilience; to invest in and connect people; to build a sustainable and green future; and to make Canada an active and engaged partner to the Indo-Pacific. This includes defending Canadian national interest and investing in an enhanced military presence, along with intelligence and cyber security, promoting security in the region and ensuring the safety of Canadians.

The strategy describes China as an increasingly disruptive global power, and Canada's approach towards China as aligned with that of partners in the region and around the world. "China is looking to shape the international order into a more permissive environment for interests and values that increasingly depart from ours", it states. In support, it cites China's disregard for UN rulings on disputes in the South China Sea and its actions to further militarise the region and challenge navigation and overflight rights. It also cites the effects of China's lending practices and the risks they create for developing economies; increasing reluctance to comply with the mandates of UN institutions, and the growing risk of arbitrary application of Chinese laws that have necessitated Canada warnings its citizens travelling to China. However, China's sheer size and influence makes cooperation necessary to address some of the world's existential pressures such as climate change and biodiversity loss, global health and nuclear proliferation, while China's economy offers significant opportunities for Canadian exporters. Canada will therefore, in areas of

disagreement, challenge China, including when it engages in coercive behaviour, ignores human rights obligations or undermines the security interests of Canada or its partners. At the same time, Canada will cooperate with China to find solutions to issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, global health and nuclear proliferation. Canada will continue to strengthen the defence of its infrastructure and domestic institutions against foreign (Chinese) interference; pursue dialogue with China to advance Canada's national interests while remaining true to national values; diversify investments in regional relationships and institutions; and work closely with partners to face the complex realities of China's global impact.

The strategy is bullish on India, describing it as a critical partner in Canada's pursuit of its Indo-Pacific objectives and highlighting the shared tradition of democracy and pluralism, a common commitment to the rules-based international system and multilateralism, and mutual interest in expanding commercial relationships and growing people-to-people contacts. Canada will grow economic ties with India, seek to expand market access by concluding an Early Progress Trade Agreement as a step towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement; facilitate bilateral trade and investment, invest in and connect people including by bolstering Canada's visa-processing capacity in India; support academic, educational, cultural and youth and research exchanges; and accelerate cooperation in the fight against climate change. Canada will also seek new opportunities to partner India and engage in areas of common interest, including security, and the promotion of democracy, pluralism and human rights. In addition, Canada will also enhance cooperation with Japan, South Korea and ASEAN.

Canada has a long history of exhorting states, particularly in the third world, to toe the US liberal "rules-based" line. This was tempered first by the profits that came from trade with China, and later by the need to free Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig. The moralising impulse has become visible again in its description of China and the stated intent to defend Canadian values and interests against China's coercion. However, Canada lacks the ability to independently shape or even influence China's behaviour, as became evident in during the Meng Wanzhou – Michael Spavor – Michael Kovrig episode. Its banding together with the West indicates that it, along with other US partners, realise they can no longer continue the economic engagement without paying substantial strategic costs. Effectively, Canada and other US partners are moving towards balancing China. This balancing has not yet been framed as a struggle between democracy and authoritarianism, as the Cold War was. It presently involved blunting China's efforts to convert Asia into its sphere of

influence and prevent it from dominating the global maritime, space and cyber commons.

Barring the section regarding India, the strategy appears to be an Asia-Pacific and not an Indo-Pacific one. Even the statements about India will generate surprise and disbelief, and will be treated with a dose of salt in India. Canada has a long history of supporting anti-India activities in its territory for electoral reasons. Only two months ago, India had issued an advisory to its nationals and students in Canada asking them to exercise caution and remain vigilant following a sharp rise in incidents of hate crimes, sectarian violence and anti-India activities in Canada⁵⁵. India had also protested the vandalisation of a temple in Toronto after it was sprayed with pro-Khalistani graffiti⁵⁶. Canada's actions to protect India's Diasporas and to execute the commitments made in its strategy document will thus be watched keenly in India.

⁵⁵ Advisory for Indian Nationals And Students from India in Canada, September 23, 2022, <https://twitter.com/meaindia/status/1573229938857349121?lang=en>

⁵⁶ India protests vandalisation of temple in Toronto, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/india-protests-vandalisation-of-temple-in-toronto-101663220875358.html>



Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road
New Delhi - 110003
India

www.delhipolicygroup.org