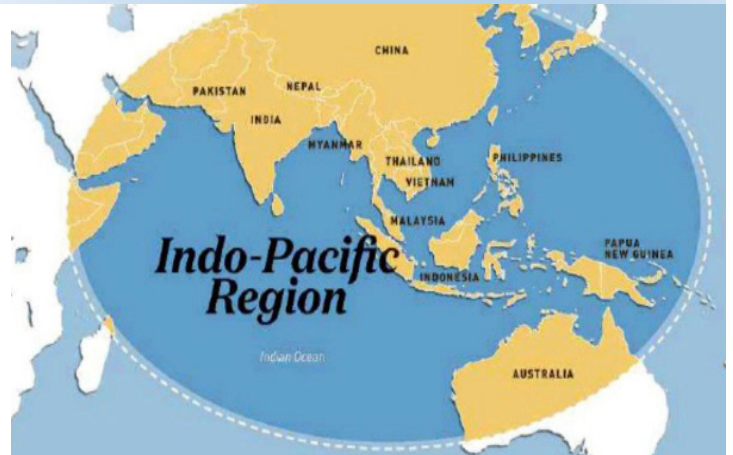




# CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

## INDO-PACIFIC NEWSLETTER



A monthly Newsletter on Security and Strategic Issues on Indo-Pacific Region from Centre for Air Power Studies

### From Editor's Desk

2021 was a pivotal year in international politics. From the beginning of Joe Biden's presidency, China's centennial celebrations, a massive and devastating second COVID-19 wave in India, continued pandemic-triggered migration crisis, faltering global supply chains, backsliding of democracy across the world, Taliban's rapid accession to power, a worsening climate crisis with gross implications to the Indo-Pacific, to the release of the EU's Indo-Pacific policy and the formation of new mini-lateral associations (including AUKUS) – 2021 was a tumultuous year riddled with highs and lows.

In our first issue of 2022, we rush in the new year with a selection of insightful picks covering the India-Russia dynamics vis-à-vis the Indo-Pacific, the little-discussed African perspective on the Indo-Pacific politics, the need and potential for an India-Japan-EU digital partnership in the new era, and ways of effective deterrence in the region in light of Washington's changing nuclear calculus in the region.

Additionally, in our coveted cherry picks section, we cover commentaries on how the F-35 can be a foundation for allied deterrence in the region, India's foreign policy in 2021, its conceptualization of maritime security, Biden's Indo-Pacific framework in 2022, and CAPS' very own Dr Joshy Paul's article arguing how the India-Russia strategic partnership is key to regional stability.

Lastly, CAPS wishes all a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!

Jai Hind

Vol 1, No 8 , 07 January 2022

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External Minister of India- Jaishankar view

Read on more about it at :-

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/dec/24/indo-pacific-is-witnessing-both-multi-polarity-and-rebalancing-jaishankar-2399352.html>

### QUOTE

"We are committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific. And concerned at complicating actions including unilateral change of status quo and militarization"

S Jaishankar  
External Affairs Minister  
India

## Opinions/Review/Expert View

## India-Russia Partnership in Indo-Pacific

Source: Joshy M Paul, CAPS

<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/27/the-india-russia-strategic-partnership-is-key-to-indo-pacific-stability/>. 27 Dec, 2021.



India and Russia held their first ever 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi during Russian President Vladimir Putin's brief visit to India on 6 December. Both countries decided to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and boost the Vladivostok–Chennai energy corridor, a gateway for Russia into the Indo-Pacific and an alternate source of energy for India, rather than relying on the volatile Middle East.

India–Russia strategic relations are unique in many ways. The 1971 Indo–Soviet treaty was binding only for the former Soviet Union, which guaranteed Soviet military protection over India. Making full use of this treaty, India has been able to maintain its 'strategic autonomy' and avoid entrapment in alliance formations to contain threats from Pakistan and China.

India has also received technical assistance from Moscow for some of its military programs, such as its nuclear submarine program, indigenous aircraft carrier program and licensed production

of Russian-made fourth-generation fighter aircraft. In 1984, an Indian astronaut travelled to space in a Soviet payload. This is in contrast to US-style partnerships that are averse to sharing critical technologies or even systems like F-22 Raptor with its close allies, except for the United Kingdom. The Indian Armed Forces' dependence on Russian-made systems cannot be replaced any time soon.

The United States views India–Russia strategic cooperation with some concern, as Washington perceives it as incompatible with US interests in the region. During 2021, the United States raised its objections to India buying S-400 missile defence batteries from Russia but has lately toned down its position, and views the batteries as a means to protect Indian airspace from the Chinese threat, not against the United States or its allies. It would bolster India's deterrence capability against China

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on the land border where both countries have been locking horns for over half a century.

With increased Chinese assertiveness in the maritime

domain, the Indo-Pacific security architecture has been transforming from Cold War-style alliances and security commitments from the United States into a 'self-help' system, where the United States encourages regional countries to take more responsibility for their security and regional stability. The United States expects middle powers like Japan, Australia and India to do that job. Washington's focus is to prevent any threat from reaching the homeland, and this means containing

the Chinese threat locally.

The United States is thus working to equip its regional allies — especially Japan and Australia — to prevent the Chinese threat locally. In 2020, Japan and the United States agreed to build a new Japan-specific fighter jet at a cost of about US\$40 billion to replace its two decades old F-2. This is in addition to Japan's agreement with the United States to purchase 105 F-35 fighter jets (63 F-35As and 42s F-35Bs) at the total cost of US\$23 billion. The new F-3 fighter jet will be made in Japan based on a design created in partnership between Lockheed Martin and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

AUKUS — the US–Australia–UK tripartite agreement — aims to equip Australia with nuclear powered submarines to enhance its deterrence capability. Australia is expected to work in tandem with the United States to constrain China in its neighbourhood. The United States is also building long-range defence systems under the new Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI) to counter the China's presence in the region.

As for New Delhi, it seeks assistance from the United States to emerge as a preponderant power in the Indian Ocean. This is important given China's naval expansionism in the Indian Ocean under the guise of 'protecting' Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) assets and anti-piracy operations. Two critical technologies that India put on the US wish list are electromagnetic aircraft launch

systems (EMALS) for India's third aircraft carrier, INS Vishal, and nuclear propulsion technology for the next generation nuclear submarines. While the Trump administration offered EMALS to India in 2017, Washington is non-committal on nuclear propulsion technology.

India faces a two-front threat from China — from the land and the ocean. It needs advanced systems and critical defence technologies to counter the land threat on the Himalayan border and the maritime threat, which is critical to India's trade and energy security interests. India–Russia defence collaboration is critical to defending its land border, while strong India–US cooperation is key to mitigating threats from the ocean.

Moving towards a more militarily powerful India is not only in its own interest — it will also help to maintain stability by bolstering India's active contribution to regional security. In this regard, India–Russian strategic cooperation is neither parallel nor a rival, but complementary to President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific strategy.

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## Reflections on the Indo-Pacific: Perspectives from Africa

Source: Abhishek Mishra, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/reflections-on-the-indo-pacific-perspectives-from-africa/>. 28 Dec, 2021.



The Indo-Pacific denotes a vast maritime zone, stretching from the littorals of East Africa and West Asia, across the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific Ocean, to the littorals of East Asia. Some of the world's large commercial trading routes traverse these waters. This vast geographic and strategic expanse, connecting the Indian and Pacific oceans, is increasingly being viewed as a global centre of gravity that engages and is of interest to many countries. Countries like France, Japan, India, the US, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK have developed policies to promote their reach in the region. Although developing international partnerships in the region is not new, the motives to embrace and promote the centrality of the Indo-Pacific in their maritime policies are diverse.

While some countries are aiming to balance the competition and shape the maritime architecture in the region, others are developing strategies in response to China's economic, political, and military expansion. Indeed, the Indo-Pacific is emerging as the new and expanded theatre of great-power contestation, with the African continent at the heart of such competition.

In many ways, the Indo-Pacific is a contested concept without much clarity on what falls within or outside the geopolitical space. While the US's concept of the Indo-Pacific excludes Africa, countries like India, France, and Japan acknowledge the centrality of African states within their Indo-Pacific strategies. For some time now, external powers have been scrambling to set up naval and military bases in Africa and align with friendly regimes to protect their investments and safeguard the commercial sea lanes from piracy. As a result, African leaders have continuously voiced apprehensions about getting caught in between great power contestations.

Without clearly defining their national interests and power capabilities and taking direct policy positions on the Indo-Pacific, African countries risk getting marginalised from the very process and activities that will impact the continent's long-term prosperity and interests. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for African states to remain passive bystanders.

The maritime domain is undoubtedly vital for Africa to achieve peace, security, and

development. In recent years, African countries have begun to realise the economic potential of harnessing water bodies and slowly shed their continental outlook. They are now adopting maritime security policies as part of broader national security strategies. However, their ability to exert agency while engaging with external partners has been limited due to capacity and resource constraints. Moreover, each African country's maritime needs and requirements differ. Small African island nations do not necessarily have the same interests or priorities as the littorals in East and West Africa. Therefore, for the African countries to truly reflect their developmental ambitions, they need to exercise collective agency by engaging in different multilateral and minilateral initiatives.

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Multilateralism matters for small African states as it gives them the best chance to pool resources and ideas to influence global decisions and ensure that their voices are factored in discussions that have a bearing on the continent's growth and development.

This volume features a compilation of country-specific chapters that explore four main themes for each country included: their position/stance on the emerging Indo-Pacific discourse; their interests, concerns and apprehensions on the developing maritime architecture in the region and their principle maritime security challenges; their possible contribution to the knowledge and discourse on the Indo-Pacific through multilateral

and minilateral forums and initiatives; and their views on the emerging major power contestation and role of external powers.

In his chapter on Kenya, Brian Gicheru Kinyua aims to assess the country's decisiveness as a leading Eastern African economic hub in the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific. Hamad Bakar Hamad makes a case for Tanzania to emerge as a key partner for Indo-Pacific countries, especially in developing a sustainable blue economy in the Zanzibar region, and fighting the growing menace of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Neha Sinha examines the vitality of

Mozambique for the security, prosperity, and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. After all, the Mozambique Channel is a key trading route for goods transiting the Cape of Good

Hope to West Asia and beyond. While outlining South Africa's position on the Indo-Pacific, Denys Reva acknowledges that its maritime foreign policy approach lacks dedicated naval security and governance strategy documents that clearly outline its vision for the maritime space.

Discussing Djibouti's geostrategic position, Abhishek Mishra examines how the country, which hosts several foreign military bases, plays an outsized role in the politics of the Indo-Pacific and has emerged as a proxy turf and geopolitical chessboard for extra-regional competition. On Nigeria, Dirk Siebeles notes that there is not much for the country to gain from participating in discussions on Indo-Pacific maritime issues as

these are often linked to sovereignty questions and the increasing rivalry between India and China, Nigeria's most important trading partners. However, as the Nigerian experience has shown, a key lesson is the imperative to address maritime security challenges in context with land-based issues.

Kwang Poon notes that throughout Mauritius's recorded history, it has been the 'object of desire' for all major powers due to its geostrategic location. Mauritius is willing to promote and maintain a secure, inclusive, peaceful, free and open Indo-Pacific. It already plays a leading role within the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association by hosting the headquarters of these organisations. As far as the Seychelles is concerned, Malshini Senaratne opines that the island-nation's international agenda revolves around maritime security, climate change mitigation and post-pandemic economic recovery. The Seychelles must remain mindful of balancing external influences while carefully defining its place within the Indo-Pacific to adopt a more proactive role in protecting its blue growth interests.

Lastly, Satyajit Sen makes a case for why multilateral security for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Southwest Indian Ocean region under the leadership of the IOC will be a positive engagement. He argues that with increased capabilities, SIDS acting

under the IOC and with a common voice may engage with the major powers to secure their backyard and set the agenda on their terms as the geopolitical realities in the era of the Indo-Pacific unfold.

Africa's role and place in the Indo-Pacific are neither defined nor clearly articulated. But the African countries must determine which specific agendas of the Indo-Pacific—maritime security, marine ecology and resources, capacity building and information sharing, maritime connectivity, and disaster management—to focus on going forward. Unless these countries can articulate their interests proactively and stake a claim in the Indo-Pacific, they will miss out on participating in the decision-making processes on maritime security issues.

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## Japan-India-EU: A Digital Partnership for the Digital Decade

Source: Mahima Duggal (CAPS) and CIGS

[https://cigs.canon/en/article/20211221\\_6444.html](https://cigs.canon/en/article/20211221_6444.html). 21 Dec, 2021.

The coming decade – characterized as the era of information, innovation and new technologies – is poised to witness major, fast-evolving digital trends, further spurred by a landscape of intense US-China great power technological competition. While China's Politburo identified advanced technologies as the foremost issue in its five-year (2021-2025) national security agenda, Washington is also actively discussing regulations to enhance US competitiveness. Further, even as Beijing promotes its Digital Silk Road (DSR) to export Chinese technologies and expand and augment its influence, the US has initiated its own Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) to advance inclusive growth, open internet, a diverse and resilience communication infrastructure, and a robust and secure digital economy. This has forced middle powers and small states into a binary choice. To navigate such an environment, actors like the European Union (EU), Japan and India can come together to take a lead in shaping the global digital future. Such a transcontinental digital could offer a viable third way that focuses

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on human interests over state or corporate ones and is driven by shared values of democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and the rule of law. What are the convergences around which such a digital partnership take shape? What would be the key tenets and focus areas of such a trilateral digital connect?

### Building on Bilaterals

Notably, such a tripartite digital partnership would not be out of place, but based in the already strong focus on digital connectivity cooperation between the three actors, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU-India Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025, concluded in June 2020, displays an ardent emphasis on digital connectivity. In May 2021, both partners further affirmed a Connectivity Partnership to enhance India-EU synergies and complementarities, premised on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for inclusive growth. Their broad digital connectivity agenda not only aims to offer a competitive – and more reliable – alternative to China's DSR but also the offers the potential to fundamentally change the regional development landscape.

Similarly, digital cooperation and collaborations in the Indo-Pacific has become an increasingly important facet of the India-Japan special strategic



and global partnership for the new era. In October 2018, India and Japan launched a Digital Partnership focused on information communication technology (ICT) cooperation, including 5G technology, and collaborations in research, innovation and industry via a joint 'Start-up Hub' established by Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Bangalore with support from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Notably, their partnership also includes focus on increased investments; semiconductor and other electronic equipment manufacturing; and cybersecurity, capacity building and human resource cooperation in next-generation technologies. As part of this partnership, both states also

**Tokyo and New Delhi are also coordinating their digital policies under the technological vertical of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) alongside Australia and the US, and the India-Japan Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, which aims to enhance digital connectivity and capacities to support mutual development.**

signed a statement of intent to cooperate on artificial intelligence (AI) and, more recently, a memorandum of understanding for industry-level cooperation in ICT infrastructure (including 5G networks and submarine optical fiber optic cables (such as that between Chennai and Andaman and Nicobar islands). The India-Japan cyber dialogue, launched in 2012, has further helped both states bolster cooperation via regular exchanges on cyberattacks, resilient supply chains, and information and digital systems security.

Beyond India, Japan and the EU are also furthering a new digital partnership agreement, announced alongside the EU's Indo-Pacific

strategy in September 2021, on 5G technologies, quantum computing, artificial intelligence and particularly, semiconductors. Notably, the EU's recent Indo-Pacific strategy document identified India and Japan as its foremost connectivity partners in the region, while pledging to help build a regulatory environment and mobilizing funding for better digital (and physical) connectivity. Japan also features as a key research and innovation partner under the 'Horizon Europe' initiative. The

2021 EU-Japan Summit saw both pledging to collaborate to promote their digital transition, including in setting global standards, enacting a mutual data adequacy agreement, digital economy cooperation, and digital currency development.

Furthermore, digital cooperation is also a focus area

for the three actors via their shared membership of international and regional forums, such as the Group of Seven (G7), which includes Japan and the EU, with India as a special invitee. All three are set to take forward the G7's Build Back Better World initiative with a focus on digital connectivity. Tokyo and New Delhi are also coordinating their digital policies under the technological vertical of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) alongside Australia and the US, and the India-Japan Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, which aims to enhance digital connectivity and capacities to support mutual development. The Platform for India-Japan Business Cooperation in Asia-Africa region can



further enable focused industrial digital (especially telecommunication) sector collaboration. These platforms give bilateral cooperation in the digital arena a regional and global outlook, making the need for trilateral exchanges and coordination all that more important.

### Domains for a Digital Trilateral: Regulation, Industry, and Infrastructure

Bilateral mechanisms, modalities and partnerships have created a foundational framework for three-way cooperation in the technology sector. A Japan-India-EU digital partnership will invariably be shaped by convergences and divergences in three key domains – international regulations, digital economy and industry, and digital connectivity and infrastructure – which form the commonalities of their bilateral partnerships.

**While the EU recognizes China as a systemic rival, both India and Japan are deeply concerned about Beijing's rapidly advancing influence in the region – giving them a shared interest in curbing its promotion of digital governance models grounded in Chinese socialist characteristics.**

#### Regulation

Both Tokyo and Brussels are closely aligned on matters of regulation and international standards under their Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which can translate into cooperation in the digital governance sphere since both share common democratic values and social agenda. The EU-Japan Digital Policy Dialogue is a key mechanism to advance digital regulatory policies; a notable focus of this is standardizing a secure deployment of 5G network and advancing data privacy laws in concert with the private sector.

India can also be a key partner here. In 2020, India banned over a 100 Chinese mobile applications (including TikTok) – a decision it justified based on enforcing platform fairness and privacy rights of Indian citizens, which all three actors share. In fact, the Indian parliament is currently considering a comprehensive Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill that incorporates several elements of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) framework (such as the provisions regarding disclosure of sensitive personal information) but puts in place a broader scope for implementation.

Notably, with China making strides in its eCNY (digital renminbi) rollout and EU-Japan already working together for digital currency development, setting international e-currency norms be another area for collaboration.

Nevertheless, India, Japan and the EU continue to have certain differences in their positions of data flow. For instance, while India's PDP proposed stringent data localization clauses (albeit somewhat diluted from its initial stance) – something the EU is also debating – while Japan stands strongly for free cross-border flow of data. Here, open and frank trilateral consultations on their domestic digital governance norms and standards, and sharing of insights and best practices, can help bring increased alignment to their positions on international standards. India and Japan can utilize the EU's normative power to shape the global framework and provide a

sustainable, transparent and fair alternative to states in the Indo-Pacific as the US and China compete for primacy in the arena. While the EU recognizes China as a systemic rival, both India and Japan are deeply concerned about Beijing's rapidly advancing influence in the region – giving them a shared interest in curbing its promotion of digital governance models grounded in Chinese socialist characteristics.

## Industry

Furthermore, in context of digital economy collaborations, India, Japan and the EU are all proponents of regulating digital platforms to ensure fairness. Japan, in particular, is deeply concerned about the outflow of Japanese talent and technology to China, even as the latter's digital lead grows rapidly. Tokyo further fears that as China-US competition intensifies, both countries will come to dominate the semiconductor industry, all but destroying Japan's own chip manufacturing – seriously harming its economic and national interests. Similarly, the chip crisis has awakened the EU to the importance of access to technology for geopolitical, geoeconomics and geostrategic strength and sustaining its technological independence. The EU has long been forced to hand over valuable proprietary technology to China for continued access to the world's second-largest economy and wealthiest country. For India too, as it moves up the technological value chain towards increased R&D, innovation, product design and testing, analytics, and machine learning, it is entering into

stiff competition with China in its digital economy.

Here, trilateral cooperation can help the three actors prevent market dominance by the great powers over smaller players. They can pool their resources for co-creation and mutual enrichment, thus augmenting productivity via enhanced cooperation in analytics and machine learning to address shared challenges. This can help boost interactions between industries and boosting joint capacity, and thus be a game-changer on the international platform.

## Infrastructure

Lastly, a key tenet of a Japan-India-EU digital trilateral must be digital infrastructure cooperation.

**Trilateral cooperation can help the three actors prevent market dominance by the great powers over smaller players.**

Not only does India have a massive gap in physical infrastructure, but also requires significant long-term financial investments and technical assistance to improve its ICT infrastructure and digital education and training. Japan is already a major investor in India's startup ecosystem and a critical, reliable partner for its digital revolution. India holds immense potential to emerge as one of the world's foremost global technological hub; a combination of increased investments by Japan and the EU, and growing collaborations for R&D and innovation, can offer India a competitive advantage and the three partners a joint leadership role in the region and beyond.

Furthermore, the three actors can coordinate digital infrastructure financing in third countries of the region. The EU has recently ramped up

external financing via new mechanisms like the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) or the ‘Global Europe’ initiative to include supporting the digital economy, in addition to existing ones, like the European Investment Bank (EIB) that has supported Asia-Pacific development for over a quarter of a century. Notably, the NDICI has earmarked almost 80 billion euros for EU-led development projects in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Japan is already recognized as one of the largest and most reliable official development assistance (ODA) partner, with over 70 percent of its aid being disbursed in the Indo-Pacific (particularly Southeast Asia). This assistance is rendered both directly and via the Tokyo-led Asian Development Bank (ADB). Notably, although comparatively limited, India has long been an aid provider in South Asia, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Further, India also holds experience setting up “fibre-optic network to provide satellite connectivity, tele-medicine and tele-education” under the Pan African e-Network project that encompassed connectivity in the e-governance and e-commerce areas.

## Conclusion

Therefore, a trilateral Japan-India-EU digital partnership can be an effective mode of outreach to smaller and middle power states in the region at a time of great geopolitical flux. At present, the Indo-

Pacific has become characterized by a network of ad hoc institutions and minilateral arrangements; here, a trilateral effort to coordinate strategies and plans of action is critical to eliminate the multiplicity and redundancy of competing, and sometimes incompatible, policies and tactics on connectivity. While the EU’s Asia outlook was previously China focused, it is increasingly moving beyond China and the US-China rivalry to closer engagement with India and Japan. Such a new, positive outlook can help take forward the Japan-India-EU trilateral formulation with digital connectivity acting as an Asia-Europe cross continental bridge. Better trilateral collaboration and exchanges can be a way to look at the broader picture and implement shared objectives in a strategic and effective manner. However, such an effort will require all parties to be willing to compromise their national outlooks to come to an alignment on digital policy and connectivity; they must be proactive in seeking, building and sustaining a meaningful partnership..

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**The Indo-Pacific has become characterized by a network of ad hoc institutions and minilateral arrangements; here, a trilateral effort to coordinate strategies and plans of action is critical to eliminate the multiplicity and redundancy of competing, and sometimes incompatible, policies and tactics on connectivity.**

## Making Indo-Pacific alliances fit for deterrence

Source: Stephan Fruehling and Andrew O'Neil, ASPI

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/making-indo-pacific-alliances-fit-for-deterrence/#:~:text=Making%20Indo-Pacific%20alliances%20fit%20for%20deterrence%2021%20Dec,security%20calculations%20of%20Australia%20and%20other%20US%20allies.> 21 Dec, 2021.



As great-power competition intensifies, the role of deterrence and the potential for escalation have taken on renewed importance in the security calculations of Australia and other US allies. How to manage deterrence and escalation is an inherently political question. For deterrence to be effective, allies have to find ways to agree and credibly commit to what they are willing to do for each other. And nowhere is this more important than in relation to the role of US nuclear weapons.

Ahead of the highly anticipated release of the Biden administration's nuclear posture review in early 2022, attention has turned to the role that allies play in US nuclear policy. Recent reporting indicates that US allies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific have pushed back against moves by Washington to limit, in declaratory terms, the

circumstances in which it would consider using nuclear weapons.

While in the past some US allies expressed sympathy for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, none today is willing to sign it, as their focus has turned to the challenges of deterrence and escalation in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. However, allies can't afford to simply react to changes in US policy. They must actively prepare for and seek to manage escalation in a broader geostrategic, technological and political context.

US allies therefore need to become more embedded in, and proficient with, discussions with Washington over escalation and nuclear deterrence. In the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO is rediscovering its integrated approach to deterrence strategy and posture—including the 'sharing' of US nuclear weapons. Even in the Indo-Pacific, long gone are the days when the US and its allies were content with a division of labour that saw Washington manage the risk of great-power conflict with little input from its allies.

Consultations with Japan and South Korea on extended deterrence have created an expectation of greater transparency from Washington over the circumstances in which the US would employ nuclear weapons. Still, alliances in the Indo-Pacific remain far from the necessary political and military discussions to achieve deterrence

**Recent reporting indicates that US allies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific have pushed back against moves by Washington to limit, in declaratory terms, the circumstances in which it would consider using nuclear weapons.**



communication, alignment of force structure and posture, and crisis management. And no framework exists for managing enduring differences about how allies engage their respective populations, and communicate to adversaries, on the sensitive issue of nuclear weapons.

How can US alliances in the Indo-Pacific start building a common understanding of escalation and a common deterrence culture? In our recently published, edited open-access book, leading Indo-Pacific, European and US experts address that very question. Three distinct, but closely related, findings emerge from their analysis.

First, there's a need to move from consultation over US nuclear posture and deterrence, which often entails the US informing allies what has happened, to a more genuine

**Indo-Pacific allies urgently need to more systematically address their own force structures and the 'hardware' cooperation aspects of deterrence in their alliances.**

joint development of assessments, concepts and planning for deterrence. Even if deterrence dialogues and committees established in the US–Japan and US–Korea alliances a decade ago have (in NATO terms) helped 'raise the nuclear IQ' in these alliances, there are limitations that can arise from constrained formats that encourage a perception of the US 'educating' its allies rather than the development of concepts and strategies that guide a common approach.

Second, Indo-Pacific allies urgently need to more systematically address their own force structures and the 'hardware' cooperation aspects of deterrence in their alliances. In Australia's

case, new conventional long-range strike capabilities are emerging, yet thinking about their use and effect remains nascent and focused on the tactical level. In the Japanese and South Korean cases, conventional strike capabilities now provide these allies with greater options for direct influence on the dynamics of escalation. At the same time, the limits of US nuclear posture in the Indo-Pacific—whose visible elements today rest solely on nuclear-capable aircraft based outside the region—are also coming into sharper relief through the increasing vulnerability of these forces, the overuse of strategic bombers for

signalling, and the lack of any significant adjustment in the face of major strategic shifts since US nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the region in 1991.

The third theme to emerge from the volume is the need for governments to properly engage populations about all of these issues. A key lesson from NATO's travails of the 1970s and 1980s is that agreeing on and implementing changes to force structure and posture to improve deterrence capabilities and operational effectiveness are insufficient if these same measures fail to reassure allies' own populations. Like deterrence, reassurance is ultimately psychological, but there's reluctance today in many countries to publicly address requirements for deterrence and escalation management, or even arms control.

The claim of a binary choice between seeking nuclear disarmament and relying on deterrence is

a false one, because it ignores that the ultimate goal of increased security depends on the broader strategic environment in which it is sought. It's time for Indo-Pacific allies, including Australia, to start articulating the value of nuclear weapons for regional security against the threats we face today, even as they remain committed to nuclear disarmament if and when circumstances render that feasible.

Ultimately, developing a shared understanding of escalation dynamics; maintaining political unity about a shared approach to deterrence; moving from consultation to joint assessment, policy and planning; conducting reviews of alliance force structure and posture and their implications for escalation; and engaging in public campaigning for nuclear deterrence are all mutually reinforcing.

Together, these measures would be transformative for US alliances in the Indo-Pacific because they involve accepting a degree of heightened strategic risk that many allies have so far eschewed. Failure to agree on expectations and commitments in relation to deterrence and escalation pathways runs the risk of the US and its allies not being able to take unified action during a crisis.

The adverse implications for the future of US alliances in the Indo-Pacific that would inevitably flow from this should be enough to energise policymakers to strive for closer cooperation on deterrence and escalation.

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## Social Media Corner

### Cherry-picks of the Month

1. *How 2021 Revealed The Curious Case of India's Foreign Policy* - <https://www.indiatimes.com/explainers/news/indias-foreign-policy-557852.html>
2. *India's Conceptualisation of Maritime Security* - <https://amti.csis.org/indias-conceptualization-of-maritime-security/>
3. *The F-35 is the Foundation of Allied Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific* - <https://australianaviation.com.au/2021/12/comment-the-f-35-is-the-foundation-of-allied-deterrence-in-the-indo-pacific/>
4. *Taiwan's push for democratic resilience* - <https://www.financialexpress.com/world-news/taiwans-push-for-democratic-resilience/2390972/>
5. *Biden's Indo-Pacific framework may shape race with China in 2022* - <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/12/7f61e8159f30-focus-bidens-indo-pacific-framework-may-shape-race-with-china-in-2022.html?phrase=taiwan&words=>
6. *ASEAN and the new geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific* - <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/29/asean-and-the-new-geopolitics-of-the-indo-pacific/>
7. *The India–Russia strategic partnership is key to Indo-Pacific stability* - <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/27/the-india-russia-strategic-partnership-is-key-to-indo-pacific-stability/#more-545835>
8. *Philippines Enhances Ties with AUKUS* - <https://amti.csis.org/philippines-enhances-ties-with-aukus/>

### Interviews / View Points

1. *The US-China Contestation; The Indo-Pacific Churn and Afghanistan in the Age of Taliban 2.0* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKyBfTqvhFc>
2. *Baker's Dozen: Considering the Pacific in the Indo-Pacific Region* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDG5sb3qTGI>
3. *Battlegrounds with H.R. McMaster | Australia: Peace & Prosperity Across the Indo-Pacific and Beyond* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-X5L4QFkEM>

## Debates

1. Reflecting on France's Indo-Pacific Strategy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIC7zfICNbw>
2. Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Implications Of The Indo-Pacific Region: Stability Or Confrontations - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-w\\_dNuxP4o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-w_dNuxP4o)
3. Canada, NATO, and the Indo Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwzSpDPPmP4>
4. The Indo-Pacific Operating System: Power, Order and Rules for the 21st Century (Lowy Institute, panel discussion) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIOIRGxWAOI>
2. Reflecting on France's Indo-Pacific Strategy (ORF, panel discussion) - <https://www.orfonline.org/research/reflecting-france-indo-pacific-strategy/>

## Podcasts

1. Europe in the Indo-Pacific: Common ground? - <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/podcast/2021/12/europe-in-the-indo-pacific>
2. What's All the RAUKUS About? The View from Washington - <https://rusi.org/podcasts/bridging-the-oceans/episode-29-whats-all-raukus-about-view-washington>

## Video Links

1. US deploys aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln to Indo Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOc5YsFuWDw>
2. US seeks alliance against China in Indo-Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0269WYoJRnA>



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