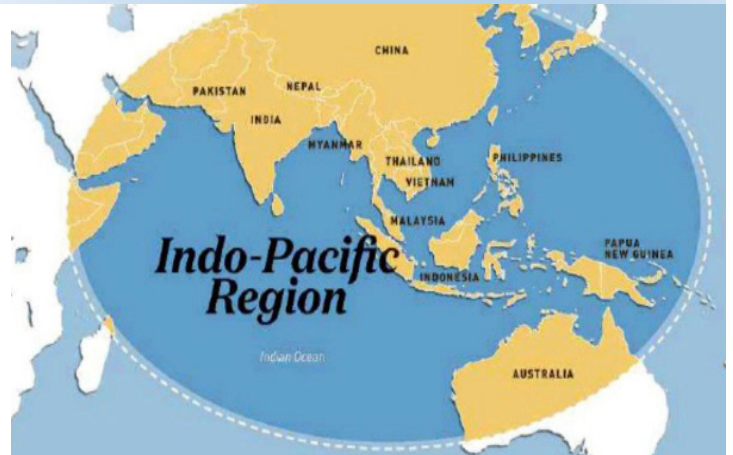




CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

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 the Editor's Desk

During the month, two Indo-Pacific summits garnered media interest. Japan firmly aligned itself with the US-led West during the first meeting, which took place on April 10 between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Kishida. Second, a second US-led trilateral in East Asia emerged with the US-Japan-Philippines summit on April 11.

From April 24-26, 2023, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to China to continue the dialogue that started at the Biden-Xi Summit in November 2023. Despite a meeting with President Xi Jinping during the tour, there are still a number of highly controversial subjects.

A coordinated Australia-Japan-US-Philippines maritime cooperation effort in the South China Sea on April 7 attempted to strengthen deterrence while China persisted in its assertive moves in the area.

On April 18, Australia released its National Defence Strategy 2024. On April 19, India started supplying BrahMos missiles to the Philippines. As part of the Coalition Maritime Force, an Indian warship executed the first narcotics interdiction operation successfully on April 13. On April 4-5, Indian and Japanese ASW aircraft conducted joint exercises off the coast of Japan.

This month we present specially selected opinions and cherry picks covering all this and more. Do check out our Social Media Corner for some engaging and insightful content, including debates, interviews and podcasts from eminent experts.

Jai Hind

Vol III, No 12, 07 May 2024

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BrahMos For Philippines: A Symbolic Win In The Choppy Indo-Pacific

Read more about it at :-

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/brahmos-for-philippines-a-symbolic-win-in-the-choppy-indo-pacific>

QUOTE

“Japan and the US are building a stronger defense partnership and a strong Indo-Pacific than ever before”

- US President
Joe Biden

Opinions/Review/Expert View

Allies in focus:

The US-Japan-Philippines Summit

Source: Pratinashree Basu & Don Mclain Gill | ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/allies-in-focus-the-us-japan-philippines-summit> 16 April 2024



The first Japan, the Philippines, and the United States (JAPHUS) trilateral summit on 12 December illustrated the urgency among the three countries to collectively play larger and more proactive roles as responsible stakeholders of the regional rules-based order beyond the traditional hub-and-spokes framework amidst the exacerbating security conditions in the West Philippine Sea, the East China Sea, and Taiwan Strait.

Thus, the push for a trilateral arrangement reflects the shared interest of Washington, Manila, and Tokyo to deepen their integration and improve collective response and self-defence at a time when China seeks to pursue its expansionist interests at the expense of international law.

Discussions at the summit formally commenced the trilateral partnership and covered inclusive economic growth and resilience alongside support for the IPEF, partnering in the development of critical emerging technologies, and advancing clean energy supply chains.

The 2023 US Department of Defence report, which highlights China as the primary competitor capable of challenging the international order through its actions in the South and East China Seas and the Taiwan Strait, underscores the urgency of addressing China's growing assertiveness in the region. These two concerns are key motivators for the summit, where the three leaders reinforced their dedication to peace and security across the Indo-Pacific and globally. Discussions at the summit formally commenced the trilateral partnership and covered inclusive economic growth and resilience alongside support for the IPEF, partnering in the development of critical emerging technologies, and advancing clean energy supply chains. The two most important developments were first, the announcement of the Luzon economic corridor as part of the first Partnership for Global Infrastructure

and Investment corridor. This initiative aims to bolster connectivity between key Philippine hubs: Subic Bay, Clark, Manila, and Batangas. As part of this endeavour, the three nations pledge to expedite investments in pivotal infrastructure projects encompassing rail networks, port enhancements, clean energy, semiconductor supply chains, agribusiness, and civilian port upgrades at Subic Bay. Second, the joint statement reaffirmed US alliance commitments as ironclad and underscored the trio's unwavering commitment to maintaining peace and security in the Indo-Pacific in the context of the People's Republic of China's

(PRC) dangerous and aggressive behaviour in the South and East China Seas as well as the Taiwan Strait.

With a focus on maritime security, the leaders' Joint Vision Statement emphasised the need to keep the Indo-Pacific's maritime domain free, open, and rules-based. Along with the clear emphasis on the need to adhere to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 Arbitral Ruling, which nullified China's expansive claims within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, more trilateral maritime activities were announced. Once the Philippines and Japan conclude the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), the logistics of such exercises will be further improved. More importantly, the document also highlighted the necessity for the novel trilateral to integrate itself within the existing network of minilaterals in the region, including the QUAD, AUKUS, and the US-Japan-South Korea trilateral. This is crucial in ensuring that JAPHUS activities will be supplemented by other significant partnerships based on shared goals in the Indo-Pacific.

Japan's strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific has evolved alongside its "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) strategy and this trilateral alliance, underscores Japan's strategic recalibration in response to the shifting power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in light of the escalating US-China rivalry. Japan's engagement in this trilateral format is a strategic endeavour aimed at bolstering its regional security posture, enhancing

diplomatic leverage, and deepening its already well-established security ties with its longstanding ally, the United States, alongside a key regional partner, the Philippines.

Bearing in mind how collective resilience is crucial for the success of JAPHUS, it is clear that the Philippines trails behind in terms of its defence and economic capabilities. In this light, the Summit witnessed several important breakthroughs that aimed to enhance the Philippines' security and economic resilience. For instance, a bipartisan bill was introduced to

Once the Philippines and Japan conclude the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), the logistics of such exercises will be further improved.

the US Congress, which would provide the Philippines with US\$2.5 billion in five years to boost the Southeast Asian country's defence capabilities and fast-track its military modernisation program. In addition, the Luzon Economic Corridor was also launched. This infrastructure and development project is the first of its kind in the region under the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.

Once operational, this will provide coordinated investments in high-impact infrastructure projects and generate more jobs in the country as well. Enhancing the Philippines' economic vitality is in the best interest of the trilateral to better address China's multi-dimensional power projection in the region, which largely banks on leveraging its asymmetrically interdependent commercial ties with its smaller neighbours. Moreover, the economic corridor will also better position the Philippines within the semiconductor supply chain and allow the Southeast Asian country to better utilize and leverage its critical resources

such as nickel. However, given the size of such a project, it will be important for Washington to ensure its long-term commitment given past impediments due to bureaucratic challenges in funding such projects. However, there have been positive and coordinated efforts in the US to take part in the Philippines' growth story. This includes the US\$ 1 billion investment plan to boost the Philippine innovative economy.

With a strengthened as well as an expanded scope of security collaboration with the United States and the Philippines, Tokyo can enhance its strategic depth, boost its deterrence potential vis-à-vis regional aggressions, and reinforce efforts aimed at the maintenance of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Leveraging Japan's longstanding support in the region, particularly through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the trio intends to collaborate with multilateral bodies and private entities to attract substantial, transformative investments.

The Washington-Tokyo partnership, built on a foundation of shared democratic values and strategic interests, has successfully navigated the complexities of the post-Cold War era and remains a key pillar of regional and global security. In recent years, Japan and the US have sought to modernise and expand their alliance in response to the shifting security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. Japan's adoption of new defence guidelines and its efforts to increase defence spending and capabilities, including the acquisition of advanced US military technology, signify a more proactive

stance in regional security. The three countries are already in talks for setting up a joint cyber defence framework, to safeguard government agencies and critical infrastructure.

While the Summit can be described as successful given the practical and forward-looking plans all three states have forged, the need to maximise and sustain the momentum of this emerging trilateral will be one of the largest challenges. Strategic alignment on Taiwan between the US, Japan, and the

Enhancing the Philippines' economic vitality is in the best interest of the trilateral to better address China's multi-dimensional power projection in the region, which largely banks on leveraging its asymmetrically interdependent commercial ties with its smaller neighbours.

Philippines may vary with the Philippines' strategic position and large Filipino population in Taiwan marking it as a key, yet less certain, player facing potential economic and humanitarian crises in a Taiwan conflict scenario. Japan's deepening engagement with the US and

the Philippines must navigate the complex dynamics of regional diplomacy, historical sensitivities, and the diverse strategic priorities of the involved parties. For instance, the summit occurs amid concerns over US-Japan relations due to President Biden's opposition to Nippon Steel's acquisition of US Steel and the potential implications of Trump's possible return to the presidency. Therefore, the US, the Philippines, and Japan must consistently engage in network-based coordination mechanisms, while also providing a platform for politicians and decision-makers from all three countries to regularly meet and discuss shared objectives and concerns. National politics must smoothly align with foreign policy goals to ensure continuity despite changes in domestic political systems.

Global Partners: Key Takeaways from Prime Minister Kishida's State Visit

Source: Kenneth R. Weinstein & William Chou | Hudson.org

<https://www.hudson.org/security-alliances/global-partners-key-takeaways-prime-minister-kishida-japan-state-visit-ken-weinstein-william-chou> 11 April 2024



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delivers remarks during a joint press conference with US President Joe Biden in the Rose Garden at the White House on April 10, 2024, in Washington, DC. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

US-Japanese Global Leadership

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and President Joe Biden concluded 70 agreements during Kishida's visit, demonstrating that the United States–Japan alliance has become a relationship of

peers. Former Prime Minister Taro Aso noted in January that the US and Japan were a “G2” that would lead the way in establishing global political, economic, and security norms. This bilateral partnership would work to “uphold and bolster the free and open international order based on the rule of law that has allowed so many nations to develop and prosper,” Kishida said in yesterday's joint statement.

US-Japan joint leadership is far more palatable than a Washington-Beijing G2, which Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed in 2013

and reiterated in 2023. Xi's G2 would treat the rest of the world as spoils to be divided up between Beijing and Washington—a far cry from China's self-proclaimed stance as champion of the Global South.

In his congressional address, Kishida acknowledged that this leadership is a significant burden, especially as “the international order that the US worked for generations to build is facing new challenges, challenges from those with values and principles very different from ours.” It is only natural for Americans to feel “an undercurrent of self-doubt . . . [of] what your role in the world should be.”

Kishida sought to reassure Americans who are skeptical about global engagement, noting that neither Japanese nor American leaders want to “leave our children a society where human rights are suppressed, where political self-

US-Japan joint leadership is far more palatable than a Washington-Beijing G2, which Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed in 2013 and reiterated in 2023.

determination is denied, where our lives are monitored by digital technology.” Kishida vowed that Japan would work side-by-side with the US to avoid such a future, pointing to Japan's transformed security outlook, increasing defense budget, and active global diplomacy as proof of Tokyo's evolution from a “reticent ally” to a burden-sharing partner in a world of geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geo-ideological competition.

Cooperation and Leadership with Other Partners

The latticework of US-Japan–led partnerships in Asia embody Washington and Tokyo's cooperation. This includes the QUAD (US–Japan–Australia–India), the US–Japan–South

Korea trilateral relationship, the US–Japan–Philippines trilateral dialogue, exercises between the US and Japan with Australia and the United Kingdom, and growing discussion of Japan joining Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US in AUKUS Pillar II. Through these self-reinforcing multilateral frameworks, Japan and other US allies can work together more directly, rather than solely through the US in a hub-and-spoke model.

The need for enhanced diplomatic cooperation between the US and Japan also applies to the Global South—particularly Southeast Asia, where Japan should take the lead. The rules-based order that encourages the free flow of capital, information, and goods has supported peace and prosperity in Southeast Asia for more than four decades. But this order is increasingly under threat from China’s unlawful and aggressive seizure and claims of territory and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the South China Sea. This occurred most recently with the China Coast Guard’s gray-zone water cannon attacks on Philippine ships over the Second Thomas Shoal.

More than 60 percent of global trade flows through Southeast Asian waters, so China’s territorial aggression should worry leaders worldwide. Yet much of Southeast Asia remains publicly noncommittal on questions of the free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), which former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe introduced. Their stance is based on a wide range of rationales that go as far as dismissing FOIP as a canard for US-China competition

More than 60 percent of global trade flows through Southeast Asian waters, so China’s territorial aggression should worry leaders worldwide.

rather than a collection of principles that support mutual security and economic growth. Japan’s multigenerational economic presence in Southeast Asia and continued infrastructure investment means that Tokyo is well positioned to communicate the value of working together to uphold international norms in this vital region.

The US–Japan–Philippines trilateral was an opportunity to implement many of these ideas in both the security and economic realm. Japan and Australia joined the Philippines and the US in a freedom of navigation exercise through the South China Sea on April 7. Japan also contributed air surveillance radars to the Philippines and will soon conclude a reciprocal access agreement (RAA) with Manila to allow Japanese troops to train on Philippine soil. The trilateral talks also promised considerable Japanese and American investment in the Philippines, including port, rail, and clean energy infrastructure as well as semiconductor manufacturing. The aim is to demonstrate how working with Japan and the United States can advance security and prosperity within Southeast Asian nations and the region as a whole.

Partnerships in Operational Command and Control and the Defense Industrial Base

A strengthening US-Japan partnership is also apparent in the summit’s focus on greater operational command and control coordination between US and Japanese forces during a crisis. The two forces have traditionally operated in isolation. But growing security uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific is forcing change. That change includes Japan’s development of a

Joint Operational Command (J-JOC) and the likely introduction of a Japan-based US operational command. The two commands would be able to work closely together in a crisis. The agreement also includes cooperation in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), networked air defense with Australia, and enhanced missile defense coordination in the region.

Expanding cooperation also extends to the defense industry. Bottlenecks plague the US defense industrial base, particularly in the construction and maintenance of naval vessels that Washington would need in an Indo-Pacific conflict. During his visit to Hudson Institute last October, Defense Minister Minoru Kihara championed the idea of using Japanese commercial shipyards to conduct maintenance and repair of US Navy ships, rather than forcing US ships to travel several thousand miles to American home ports. Ambassador Rahm Emmanuel has also supported this solution.

Last, the summit produced plans to formalize such cooperation through a Forum on Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition, and Sustainment (DICAS), led by the US Department of Defense and the Japanese Ministry of Defense. DICAS will “identify priority areas for partnering US and Japanese industry, including co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment,” particularly of air defense missiles. In the future, the US and Japan should seek to increase defense industrial and technological cooperation ties with other partners like Australia, the UK, and South

Korea. These partnerships would likely examine the development of unmanned aerial systems, cyber capabilities, and hypersonic missiles.

An Integrated Approach to Trade, Technology, and Economic Security

The summit’s agreements and joint statement show that Tokyo and Washington increasingly understand that trade, economic security, and technology are inextricably linked. This, as Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Principal Director of Economic Security Kazumi Nishikawa explained at Hudson on April 5, requires an integrated approach to these issues.

The summit’s agreements and joint statement show that Tokyo and Washington increasingly understand that trade, economic security, and technology are inextricably linked.

Such a mindset is apparent in the joint statement’s promise to launch “a new high-level dialogue on how we implement our respective domestic measures and maximize their synergies and impacts, including the US Inflation Reduction Act [IRA 2022] and Japan’s Green Transformation (GX) Promotion Strategy.”

This is a response to Japanese officials’ frequent complaints that America haphazardly applies economic security regulations and industrial policies, often with little warning or consultation with key stakeholders. These stakeholders, who are often Japanese, are harmed the most. The Biden administration’s electric vehicle mandate and battery subsidies in IRA 2022 are the primary examples of this pattern. Yesterday’s joint statement suggests these Japanese concerns have finally gained traction.

The summit factsheet also contains numerous cooperative emerging technology and critical minerals initiatives. Affected sectors include artificial intelligence, semiconductor research and packaging, quantum technology, fusion energy, and telecommunications. As Nishikawa explained, METI proposes an integrated approach to technology that promotes the development of emerging technologies, protects existing technological leadership, and prevents overdependency on any one source for mature technologies.

Media attention on the fact sheet concentrated on developing emerging technology. But the plans to address supply chain vulnerabilities in critical minerals and mature technologies, such as legacy semiconductors, may be more significant as these agreements require Washington and Tokyo to immediately implement policies to address ongoing Chinese economic coercion.

Japan Looks Regionally

After his meetings in Washington, Kishida will go to North Carolina to visit Toyota's battery plants and Honda's aircraft plant. This visit is in part a response to polarization in Washington during an election year that has created political roadblocks for bilateral economic relations. This includes Biden's opposition to Nippon Steel's acquisition of US Steel, not for national security or antitrust reasons but for what appears to be purely political grounds.

The solution, in the minds of many Japanese government and business officials, is to look

more regionally. It is no coincidence the summit factsheet includes the states and municipalities of planned Japanese investment in the US. As Governor Eric Holcomb noted in his speech at Hudson on April 5, states can offer practical, businesslike approaches to investment that welcome Japanese companies.

As Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) New York president Satoshi Miura noted, Japan remains the largest investor in the United States, and Japanese companies employ nearly one million Americans. Japanese industry and related organizations, such as

Japanese and South Korean firms to attract investment while also seeking to create rifts in the two countries' improving economic and security cooperation with Washington as the Sino-U.S. rivalry heats up.

the Keidanren, continue to emphasize their commitment to contributing to America's economy and society. Increasingly, they are looking for new, more vocal ways to express those promises outside of Washington.

Conclusion

Prime Minister Kishida's state visit to Washington marks the significant advances in security, economic, and technological cooperation between Japan and the US under his government. The 70 agreements he concluded with President Biden confirm that Japan is America's most important ally—a key and equal partner in maintaining the rules-based international order that has brought security and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific.

Time will tell if the US and Japan are able to implement such an ambitious program, but Kishida and Japan deserve a great deal of credit for making the necessary security and economic policy choices that have made these commitments possible.

US, Australia, Japan and Philippines Plan more Naval Exercises to Counter Beijing's Influence

Source: harici.com

<https://harici.com.tr/en/us-australia-japan-and-philippines-plan-more-naval-exercises-to-counter-beijings-influence/>

03 May 2024



The defence chiefs of the United States, Japan, Australia and the Philippines have announced plans to hold more naval exercises as they seek to increase cooperation against China.

The officials met at the US Marine Corps base Camp H.M. Smith in Hawaii for a series of bilateral and joint talks.

The meeting is part of US efforts to increase cooperation among its allies to counter Beijing's influence in the region.

The quadrilateral talks come less than a year after the first quadrilateral meeting between the countries' defence chiefs on the sidelines of the Asian security forum known as the Shangri-La Dialogue.

As tensions rise in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, where the four countries' militaries conducted their first joint patrols in April, the countries are strengthening defence

ties by focusing on maritime cooperation. This week, the US and the Philippines conducted live-fire exercises in the disputed waters, while four Chinese ships fired water cannon at a Philippine vessel for violating territorial waters.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, who hosted the meeting, said at the joint press conference that the four countries wanted to "conduct more naval exercises and activities" to improve the interoperability of their forces.

Austin criticised China's recent actions as "irresponsible behaviour" that "flouts international law" and recalled the mutual defence treaty with the Philippines: "I can only say that you have heard me and the President say many times that our commitment to the treaty is unwavering."

Similarly, Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. called the discussion of hypothetical scenarios "unproductive". He said

the quadrilateral meeting was about sending a common message in the face of a "unilateral declaration by a single actor".

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said his counterparts discussed the

"increased tempo" of defence exercises in the face of global challenges to the "rules-based order".

Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara said the Mutual Access Agreement (RAA) negotiated with the Philippines will strengthen bilateral relations and help advance maritime cooperation among the four countries.

"We are united in strongly opposing any

US and the Philippines conducted live-fire exercises in the disputed waters, while four Chinese ships fired water cannon at a Philippine vessel for violating territorial waters.

attempt to unilaterally change the status quo in the South China Sea through the use of force or any activity that would raise tensions in the region,” he said.

The bilateral meeting between Kihara and Austin followed a summit between US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Washington in April. The two sides also announced plans to hold a “2+2” meeting between their leaders and senior defence officials.

The defence ministers of the US, Japan and Australia also held their 13th trilateral defence ministers’ meeting and signed an agreement on defence science and technology cooperation.

Containment Strategy

Beijing believes that Washington, through its allies in the region, is pursuing a strategy of containment of China and raising tensions in the Asia-Pacific.

In a speech last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping described the United States as “the power behind the containment, encirclement and suppression” of China. The Biden administration denies this.

Financial Times columnist Edward Luce, who was also a speechwriter for US Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers during the Clinton administration, had previously taken up this containment debate.

Luce stated that the US policy of containment of China is now very obvious as follows: “The original idea of containment, set out in George Kennan’s 1947 Foreign Affairs article, was more modest than the

undeclared containment that is now US policy.”

“Kennan’s advice was twofold: Stop the expansion of the Soviet empire; and promote Western democracy,” Luce wrote, describing the US approach to China today as “a higher level of containment”..

Australia’s New National Defence Strategy: Mostly Continuity but with Some Change

Source: Mick Ryan | CSIS

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/australias-new-national-defence-strategy-mostly-continuity-some-change#:~:text=Therefore%2C%20Australia%20has%20traditionally%20embraced,approach%20that%20are%20seeing%20change> 03 May 2024



Photo: CPL Ben Dempster/Royal Australian Air Force/ Getty Images

A new National Defence Strategy (NDS) was recently released by the Australian government. The document is aligned with the 2023 Defence Strategic Review and was released alongside a Defence Integrated Investment Program, which includes platform and weapons priorities.

One of the foundational ideas of the document is that Australia is adopting what is described as a “strategy of denial” as a key pillar of defense planning. Placing deterrence at the center of defense strategy is hardly a new concept, but it is one that

“Defence capabilities will be developed so we can continue to be able to deter or defeat any credible armed attack.”

has not been well developed in Australia's defense thinking. In the Australian context, deterrence is a term that has generally lacked the specificity and investment that is characteristic of other powers such as the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

Deterrence, or the phrase "to deter," is also frequently used in Australia's contemporary strategic documents, especially in the no-longer-produced defense white papers. The 1994 defense white paper noted that "defence capabilities will be developed so we can continue to be able to deter or defeat any credible armed attack." The 2009 defense white paper described how "the principal task for the ADF is to deter and defeat armed attacks on Australia." In 2016, this strategic task was described as the need to "deter, deny and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests."

Australia has traditionally embraced a defense strategy that focuses on deterrence by denial. The new National Defence Strategy is largely a continuation of this approach.

The 2020 Defence Strategic Update noted that "it is the Government's intent that Australia take greater responsibility for . . . [its] own security. It is therefore essential that the ADF grow its self-reliant ability to deliver deterrent effects." But as Stephan Fruhling and Andrew O'Neil write in *Alliances, Nuclear Weapons and Escalation*, "in Australia's case, deterrence has emerged as a prominent concept in the country's 2020 Defence Strategic Update. Yet, the underlying concept remains highly abstract and focused on capabilities rather than the political credibility or circumstances underlying how these capabilities would be used."

The new National Defence Strategy goes some way in addressing this issue. However, the lack of a theory of conventional deterrence

for middle powers reflects an intellectual gap in contemporary deterrence and strategic studies. It is a topic that would benefit from additional investment.

Despite this, a deterrence by denial approach is the most appropriate one for Australia. The alternatives, deterrence by punishment or retaliation, are probably well beyond Australia's resources. Therefore, Australia has traditionally embraced a defense strategy that focuses on deterrence by denial. The new National Defence Strategy is largely a continuation of this approach. It is the resourcing and force structure elements of achieving this deterrence by denial approach that are seeing change.

The resources to be made available to the Australian military are described in the strategy and the accompanying integrated investment plan. Australia's defense budget is planned to be doubled in the coming decade. This will permit investments in maritime, intelligence, logistics, aerial, and land capabilities, including long-range surveillance and strike systems. Investment in submarines (17 percent of the total budget) will be the largest single budget item over the coming decade. This is larger than the total budgets for land (16 percent) or air forces (14 percent). Any significant growth (or overruns) in submarine programs will inevitably eat into the capabilities and readiness of other domain forces.

Overall, the strategy outlines a large array of military investments that are appropriate for Australia's geography and strategic outlook. But three key challenges remain.

First, there is the question of whether the current government is moving fast enough. The

Australian government has spent the past two years studying the strategic environment. The NDS provides a plan to respond to that environment, but it may not deliver the right capabilities at the right time to achieve the strategic deterrence effect the government desires. Many of the major platforms, including most of the navy's new surface fleet and the nuclear-powered submarines, won't arrive until at least the 2030s (if production stays on schedule). Some risk mitigation is provided by the faster delivery of munitions, such as the Precision Strike Missile, the Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile, and Tomahawks. However, the pace at which the ADF is introducing uncrewed systems is extraordinarily slow. Despite investment in advanced systems such as the Ghost Bat and uncrewed submersibles, these are very small fleet acquisitions. As such, the ADF still appears to be resisting the lessons of Ukraine and elsewhere in the massed use of uncrewed surveillance and strike drones in the air and in the maritime environment.

A second challenge is scale. Although in five to ten years the ADF may still be big enough to comprise an effective deterrent and response force, even after the investment plan is delivered, Australia's military will still only be composed of a small force of around 80,000 personnel. This force size can be useful for regional engagement and providing bespoke contributions to U.S. operations, but the question is whether the future ADF will be large enough to pose a threat in the minds of potential adversaries. Like other nations, Australia is currently experiencing recruiting problems, and the all-volunteer force model is under pressure. Perhaps a squandered opportunity

for the NDS was the lack of discussion about national mobilization. The industrial, societal, and personnel aspects of rapidly expanding defense capacity in times of peril are logical elements of a deterrence strategy. These elements are also ones that need to be communicated to the Australian public. This is a strategic conversation that the current government appears unwilling to have publicly.

A final challenge is that the NDS is an orphan document in the national security enterprise. One of the characteristics of this government is that it has resisted the development of a national security strategy which would align national security objectives (not just military strategy) with the full array of national resources. Australian strategist and academic Rory Metcalf has eloquently made the case for such a strategy in recent years. The orchestration and prioritization of national security aims and resources, made available for scrutiny to taxpayers, is a crucial missing piece of Australia's national security enterprise.

Notwithstanding these issues, the National Defence Strategy is a timely update that explains Australia's strategic circumstances as well as the trajectory of the current government's policy. The improvements in military capabilities that will be delivered over the coming years, particularly in land, air, and naval long-range strike systems, will give Australia an improved capacity to implement a deterrence by denial strategy. They will also ensure a useful response capability for challenges in the South Pacific and beyond and the ability to work closely with the United States, Japan, and other regional partners. The key challenges moving forward will be the rapid

National Defence Strategy is a timely update that explains Australia's strategic circumstances as well as the trajectory of the current government's policy.

and disciplined implementation of the strategy as well as Australia's ability to adapt to further changes in the strategic environment.

India-South Korea-US Trilateral Technology Cooperation

Source: Wondeuk Cho & Simran Walia | *The Diplomat*

<https://thediplomat.com/2024/04/india-south-korea-us-trilateral-technology-cooperation/> 16 April 2024



Credit: Depositphotos

In March 2024, South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held their 10th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in Seoul, marking the first such gathering in almost six years. A week later, in their trilateral technology dialogue, the United States, South Korea, and India explored possibilities for collaboration in key emerging technology fields such as semiconductors, biotechnology, space, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum technology.

Together, these events mark a trajectory toward deeper strategic cooperation between South Korea and India in the Indo-Pacific era. Both countries have now gained significant momentum to bolster their bilateral partnership beyond the confines of their existing special strategic partnership, paving the way for a new

chapter that is anticipated to endure for the next five decades and beyond.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral summit on the occasion of the 2023 G-20 meeting, where they evaluated the ongoing cooperation between the two countries, particularly in advanced manufacturing such as electric vehicles. Acknowledging the growing significance of cooperation in key technological domains among countries that share common values, they agreed to further broaden the scope of supply chain collaboration, especially within emerging sectors such as IT and electronics.

In the current geopolitical environment, the Indo-Pacific region needs minilateral frameworks with like-minded countries for mutual concerns and objectives. The decision to create this trilateral in the technology domain emerged from the inaugural South Korea-U.S. Next Generation Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue in Seoul held

South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held their 10th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in Seoul, marking the first such gathering in almost six years.

in December 2023. During a review meeting, recent advances also saw the United States and India broaden the scope of the India-U.S. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET). Biotechnology,

key minerals, processing methods for rare earths, digital connectivity, digital public infrastructure, and innovative materials were among the topics discussed.

Shared values, including a dedication to democracy and maintaining the rules-based international order, form the basis of the "defining partnership" between the United

States and India. The U.S. is committed to supporting India's rise to prominence as a major global power and considers India an important partner in ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The involvement of the U.S. and India in the Quad framework shows the wider need for both nations to engage in such minilaterals and trilaterals for the security of the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2022, South Korea unveiled its new Indo-Pacific policy, making it quite evident that the country wants to become a "Global Pivotal State." Seoul also aims to work with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region and contribute to the peace and stability of the region. With South Korea being a key economic tiger in Asia, India is eager to venture into new fields such as critical and emerging technologies, semiconductors, green hydrogen, human resource mobility, nuclear cooperation, and supply chain resilience.

Similar to India as a fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific rules-based order, South Korea too is cautious about China's antagonistic response to the Quad. While South Korea is not a member, the four-nation group's ongoing emphasis on topics like infrastructure development, climate change mitigation, pandemic control, and emerging technologies aligns with Seoul's priorities. The U.S., India, and South Korea have converging interests in their Indo-Pacific strategies involving potential avenues of cooperation.

India contributes to the South Korea-U.S.

alliance as a democracy with comparable objectives concerning critical and developing technologies. India's increasing domestic market, aspirations to become a semiconductor pioneer, and relationship with South Korea as a regional partner with shared democratic and sovereign ideals all play a part in this.

In India, the United States and Korea have teamed up to pursue shared development objectives, a major partnership that was revealed in New Delhi. Their respective international development organizations, USAID and KOICA, have formalized their relationship

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through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to advance common global development objectives. With the help of this MOU, USAID and KOICA will pool their resources and expertise to address critical issues in India, including women's economic empowerment, disaster and climate

resilience, digital literacy, and opening up opportunities for trilateral cooperation with the Indian government. The alliance wants to promote innovative collaborations, boost local economic trade, and give new digital and entrepreneurial resources to support local livelihoods.

The new communication mechanism between the U.S., South Korea, and India is among the first diplomatic agreements on technology cooperation signed by New Delhi. India also takes part in the Quad's collaboration on other technologies, such as 5G and 6G.

The trilateral technology dialogue will have

significant economic effects. This alliance can transform the manufacturing landscape and foster employment growth in these nations by acting as a driving force behind improvements in the global technology markets. The combined technological might of India, South Korea, and the United States might encourage the development of innovation hubs, increase exports, and improve investments.

The tech dialogue might significantly influence the global tech competition. This collaboration could act as a restraint on China's growing technological hegemony, especially in areas like 5G and artificial intelligence.

To maintain a balance of power and thwart China's goals in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States, South Korea, India, and other nations anticipate that AI will be a key component of their defense and security plans. Innovation and data-sharing in the AI space could help these partners offset their growing fears about China's military might.

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The trilateral cooperation on critical and emerging technologies is a crucial and promising area for improving the bilateral relationship between India and South Korea. However, to strengthen strategic trust and evolve into true strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific, trilateral cooperation is not enough. Both South Korea and India must establish more cooperative platforms in areas of mutual interest going forward.

For instance, given the significant interest both countries have in the defense industry, there

is a pressing need to approach the expansion of cooperation in this field more vigorously. South Korea's export of K-9 self-propelled howitzers to India and local production there are undoubtedly positive examples. Now is the time to broaden this scope and actively consider cooperation between the two countries on maritime weapon platforms.

Additionally, in response to growing maritime terrorism, piracy activities, illegal fishing, and other security threats in the Indian Ocean region, it is worthwhile for both countries to not only utilize existing regional multilateral platforms such as IORA and IONS to enhance cooperation on maritime security and maritime domain awareness, but also consider joint bilateral exercises. Such maritime security

cooperation is not only vital for India, as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean, but also holds critical benefits for South Korea, which holds a strategic interest in the Indian Ocean as a crucial sea line of communications.

The three nations should further work on fortifying their partnership to protect their interests and maintain the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region. A trilateral dialogue between India, the U.S., and South Korea ensures equal stakes and obligations in technology-sharing without the added burden of requiring India to give up some of its traditional policy independence.

In addition to building a strong international technology infrastructure and investment model to support innovation and the health of the economy, the alliance should seek to

work together on the responsible use of AI in surveillance and intelligence sharing to make the most of this trilateral technology dialogue. By establishing common data protection standards, this partnership would also gain from enhancing cybersecurity infrastructure and bolstering supply chain resilience.

Cherry-Picks of the Month

1. Will Success in Agalega Compensate for India's Assumption Island Debacle? - <https://thediplomat.com/2024/03/will-success-in-agalega-compensate-for-indias-assumption-island-debacle/>
2. US-Japan-Philippines Trilateral isn't just about Development: China is at its Core - <https://theprint.in/opinion/us-japan-philippines-trilateral-isnt-just-about-development-china-is-at-its-core/2034896/>
3. Answering big Questions about Türkiye in the Indian Ocean - <https://www.orfonline.org/research/answering-big-questions-about-t-rkiye-in-the-indian-ocean>
4. Analysing Japan's 'Free and Open International Order' - <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-analysing-japans-free-and-open-international-order-3464866/>

5. US, Japan, Australia and Philippines to Hold South China Sea Exercises - <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-japan-australia-philippines-hold-maritime-cooperative-activity-2024-04-06/>

6. India is a Top-Tier Security Partner, says Australia's New National Defence Strategy - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-is-a-top-tier-security-partner-says-australias-new-national-defence-strategy/article68091354.ece>

CAPS Experts- Infocus

1. India delivers BrahMos to Philippines: What does it mean for South China Sea - <https://capsindia.org/india-delivers-brahmos-to-philippines-what-does-it-mean-for-south-china-sea/>
2. Japan's outreach to the Pacific Island Countries in the Indo-Pacific - <https://capsindia.org/japans-outreach-to-the-pacific-island-countries-in-the-indo-pacific/>

Debates/ Podcasts

1. 'Manila More Pro-Active In Leveraging Its Position In The World Now' - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ws7dI6WRg_Q
2. Understanding India's Anti-Piracy Missions & Evolving Maritime Strategy - <https://www.ipcircle.org/podcast/episode/248f482d/ep45-understanding-indias-anti-piracy-missions-and-evolving-maritime-strategy>



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