



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

With a smaller majority, Prime Minister Modi and the National Democratic Alliance were re-elected in this month's Indian elections. Following the elections, India's foreign policy resumed with a visit to the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka by Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

During an official visit to North Korea on June 18–19, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a comprehensive partnership pact pledging the two nations to support one another in the case of an external assault. On June 17, US National Security Advisor Jack Sullivan traveled to India for the yearly review meeting of the US-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), which had been postponed twice. On the occasion, a bold and comprehensive Joint Statement was released.

Tensions between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea grew as a result of the Philippines' submission to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf requesting an extension of its continental shelf and an attempt by the Philippine Navy to resupply its outpost on Second Thomas Shoal.

Off Hawaii, Exercise RIMPAC 2024 got underway on June 27. During the inaugural Exercise Freedom Edge, which took place on June 27–29 in the US, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, an agreement reached during the trilateral Camp David summit in August 2023 was realized.

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

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What Will Modi 3.0 Mean for India's Foreign Policy?

Read more about it at :-

<https://thediplomat.com/2024/06/what-will-modi-3-0-mean-for-indias-foreign-policy/>

QUOTE

Dark clouds of coercion and confrontation are casting their shadow in the Indo-Pacific. The stability of the region has become one of the central concerns of our partnership"

- Narendra Modi

Opinions/Review/Expert View

How Will India-Japan Relations Evolve Under Modi 3.0?

Source: Simran Walia | The Diplomat

<https://thediplomat.com/2024/06/how-will-india-japan-relations-evolve-under-modi-3-0/> 12 June 2024



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio talk during a bilateral meeting in New Delhi, India, March 20, 2023.

Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been re-elected to a third straight term in office, joining Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, as the only two Indian leaders to achieve that feat. During his third term, Modi wants to address China, build strategic alliances, address India's long-standing quest for membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), restore relations with neighbors, and take center stage in global affairs.

Modest structural shifts in the international order have contributed significantly to India's emergence as a major force in world affairs. The world's attention has shifted to India, the huge economy with the fastest growth rate in

the world, as a result of the shifting power dynamics and rising disenchantment with China in the West. India has made this moment its own thanks to favorable demographics, its allure as a China substitute, and its advantageous location in the Indo-Pacific.

Regarding India-Japan ties specifically, there have been numerous advancements during the Modi administration, which also marks a full decade in power this year. Bilateral relations have blossomed into a "Special Strategic and Global Partnership" under Modi. Three interrelated pillars – personal diplomacy, shared values, and strategic convergence – are at the center of this shift. These advancements in their bilateral relationship are likely to continue under Modi's third term as India views Japan as a reliable and dispensable partner strategically and economically.

Unprecedented collaboration in fields including investment, technology, infrastructure, and defense has strengthened bilateral ties and encouraged regional stability and economic expansion. India and Japan

Three interrelated pillars – personal diplomacy, shared values, and strategic convergence – are at the center of the deepening relationship.

have exhibited a common strategic vision by pledging to maintain an open, free, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. Maintaining openness, inclusion, and ASEAN's significance in regional affairs while resisting revisionist unilateral acts requires bilateral alignment.

The intimate personal bond between Modi and former Japanese Prime Minister Abe

Shinzo served to further strengthen alignment on Indo-Pacific matters while both were in power (from 2014 to 2020). Under Japanese prime ministers Suga Yoshihide and Kishida Fumio, the two countries have maintained a solid bilateral relationship, which is evidence of their similar strategic view.

Bilateral relations between the two nations are continuously growing. Stronger defense connections have resulted from joint declarations and agreements on defense equipment; bilateral strategic depth has been boosted by the 2020 Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), and mutual logistics support has been improved by the 2+2 defense and foreign ministerial discussion. The Indo-Pacific region has witnessed the establishment of collaboration between the Indian Navy and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in a number of areas, such as maritime security and the advancement of global maritime domain welfare. India and Japan are able to increase marine security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region by enhancing their cooperation with third nations through the logistics support given by the ACSA.

India and Japan have a shared vision for a "Free, Open, and Inclusive Indo-Pacific" (FOIIP). For the sake of preserving regional peace, prosperity, and stability, both Japan and India support the concepts of "liberal democracy," "freedom of navigation," and "rule of law." Collaboration on vital issues including maritime security, counterterrorism,

and regional stability resulted from this common vision. Together, the two armies have actively participated in combined naval drills, intelligence exchange, and the promotion of freedom of navigation throughout the area in order to protect maritime routes. The convergence of national interests reinforces their shared apprehensions about China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, leading to increased collaboration in vital domains including as maritime patrols, intelligence sharing, and defense.

India and Japan have exhibited a common strategic vision by pledging to maintain an open, free, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

Concerns regarding Beijing's strong foreign policy, military build-up, and predatory economic tactics, which affect regional stability, are shared by Japan and India. As a result, effective bilateral and individual policy and action alignment is necessary for strategic coordination and balancing against Beijing, particularly in response to regional security dynamics and in line with national imperatives. India has thus been utilizing alternative institutions to their full potential, particularly "minilateral" ones, by concentrating on certain concerns with like-minded nations that share similar objectives and interests.

For example, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) was founded by Australia, Japan, India, and the United States, since they all have similar security concerns regarding China in the Indo-Pacific region. There are also several emerging trilaterals involving India and Japan with other like-minded countries to counter China's expansionist behavior.

Even though there is currently a limited amount of commerce and investments flowing to and from India and Japan, the two countries' economic cooperation has grown in recent years. Following a 3.5 trillion-yen investment announced under Abe in 2014, Kishida pledged a 5 trillion-yen (\$42 billion) investment in India during his visit to New Delhi in 2023. Japan ranked as India's eighth-largest foreign direct investor in 2020.

There is a lot of space for expansion in bilateral trade as well. Despite India's withdrawal from the 15-country Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations in 2019, Tokyo has persisted in urging India to reevaluate its entry into the free trade bloc, which went into effect in January 2022. With major Official Development Assistance (ODA) supporting important sectors including infrastructure, power, transportation, and the environment, Japan is India's greatest bilateral donor. Japan has also contributed to the development of India's infrastructure through initiatives like the metro rail projects in India and the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail.

The two nations have successfully reconciled accomplishing their own domestic objectives with realizing their common objective of augmenting regional and worldwide stability. For example, their disagreements over the Israel-Gaza and Russia-Ukraine crises have not affected their bilateral relationship or reduced the pace of

their international exchanges. Japan and India are still important stabilizing powers in the Indo-Pacific region, with New Delhi playing a critical role as Tokyo expands its networked regional security outreach.

Further solidifying their bilateral strategic alignment, the two have expanded their collaboration to include development initiatives in third countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. Countering China's regional role and influence remains a common ground of cooperation for India and Japan and they will continue to make efforts through bilateral and minilateral arrangements to counter China's behavior.

Japan and India are still important stabilizing powers in the Indo-Pacific region, with New Delhi playing a critical role as Tokyo expands its networked regional security outreach.

Going forward, India would continue to base its foreign policy on its membership in the U.S.-led Quad while China is still an unabated foe. India's

multilateral engagement would continue to be guided by the Quad's emphasis on a free and open Indo-Pacific. This year, when India is scheduled to host the Quad leaders' summit, Modi 3.0 has a great opportunity to set the agenda for what a third-term Modi government wants to accomplish with the West and how it wishes to collaborate.

Furthermore, cooperation in cutting-edge fields like robotics, renewable energy, autonomous cars, and artificial intelligence has enormous potential to boost both the Indian and Japanese economies through innovation and sustainable growth. Their collaboration will be essential to maintaining security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific

region and beyond as both countries negotiate the challenges of the 21st century.

Modi 3.0: What India's Election means for Australia and the World

Source: LISA SINGH | *The Interpreter*

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/modi-30-what-india-s-election-means-australia-world>

06 June 2024



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a campaign rally in Delhi in May (Anindito Mukherjee/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

This year is monumental for democratic elections around the world. But India's election is what middle and global powers have been fixated on. The largest ever democratic exercise saw more than 642 million participants voting over a six-week period, to elect 543 MPs to the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament). Indian voters have defied predictions, challenging the notion that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would continue its dominance. Securing 240 seats on its own, incumbent Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP is set to form government once again, but only with the support of its coalition partners in the NDA (National Democratic Alliance). This positions Modi as only the second Indian leader to start a third consecutive term, following in the

Governing in coalition, the BJP may need to soften its hardline tactics to deepen ties with its strategic partners.

footsteps of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Internationally, the BJP's third consecutive victory, although with a reduced number of seats, means continuity in a stable and reliable partner for Australia and other global partners. It also means commitment to a multipolar world of inclusive cooperation and an increasingly strong leader for developing countries.

As the fastest growing economy in the world, India has caught the attention of countries wanting to diversify their supply chains away from China. Yet Modi 3.0 will still have much work to do to deliver on the big promise of India becoming the third-largest economy by the end of the decade. Generating more power while cutting pollution, developing more infrastructure, and enabling more foreign investment in manufacturing are key for India to fulfil its promise.

While its global backers – such as Australia, the United States, France and Japan – are central to its economic and security goals, India's "go its own way" approach will ensure its historical ties to Russia remain a feature of its multi-alignment foreign policy. Preserving strategic autonomy will continue to be a hallmark of India's attempt to realise its own potential – moving from a middle power to gaining more appetite on the global power stage.

As China remains a constant adversary, India's participation in the US-led Quad will remain a cornerstone of its foreign policy. And the Quad's focus on a free and open Indo-Pacific will continue to guide India's multilateral cooperation.

With India set to host the Quad leaders' meeting this year, there exists a massive opportunity for Modi 3.0 to set the agenda on what a third term Modi government wants to achieve with the West and how it chooses to cooperate. Picking up the phone and calling President Joe Biden needs to be a first priority.

A Modi 3.0 government will also ensure India's Act East policy, emphasising economic cooperation and strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, continues or is even enhanced through further engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and through its role as a leader of the Global South. India's Neighbourhood First policy, prioritising socio-economic development and bilateral engagement with neighbouring countries, could also get a boost.

India's commitment to, and aspiration for, a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific will require it to intensify its relations with small island states in the region and continue to "be a friend" to its Pacific neighbours, as Modi declared

Preserving strategic autonomy will continue to be a hallmark of India's attempt to realise its own potential – moving from a middle power to gaining more appetite on the global power stage.

India was during his first visit to Papua New Guinea for the India-designed Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) summit last year.

With China as a persistent security concern, the BJP's manifesto commitment to strengthening borders and investing in maritime security through defence partnerships with like-minded partners will continue to align well with Australia's strategic priorities.

And new initiatives such as BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) highlight India's broader regional aspirations. For Australia, this signifies opportunities for expanded collaboration in the Northeast Indian Ocean region, a feature of its Defence Strategy for enhancing regional stability. It also provides an opportunity to build on bilateral defence and security links and information-sharing across the broader Indo-Pacific region.

How India chooses to engage overseas with its expansive Indian diaspora will be an area to watch, as will any new developments regarding the India-Canada relationship. Maintaining people-to-people links with the growing Indian diaspora in Australia while navigating complex bilateral dynamics will be crucial for Australia-

India relations to avoid falling into the Canada playbook.

Australia's trajectory to deepen ties with India, both strategically and economically as a counterweight to China, will only continue. But what this Indian election outcome

may now provide is a more comfortable position for Canberra. Governing in coalition may require a softening of the previous hardline BJP tactics of democratic backsliding to truly enable India's plural democracy to flourish.

India's struggle for independence played a vital role in heightening the political understanding, social consciousness, and awareness of the people of India who after years of colonial subjugation understood the significance and value

of democracy, equality, and civil rights. That understanding has been taken up at this election by a proud nation of 1.4 billion people who have given new life to a modern India that reflects the diversity it stands for.

China, Philippines Pledge to De-Escalate Tensions in South China Sea

Source: Sebastian Strangio | *The Diplomat*

<https://thediplomat.com/2024/07/china-philippines-pledge-to-de-escalate-tensions-in-south-china-sea/> 03 July 2024



Defence Force via Getty Images) Credit: Photo 2371

China and the Philippines yesterday held a meeting aimed at easing the tensions in the South China Sea, following a major clash on June 17 in which Chinese and Philippine personnel came to direct physical blows at a disputed shoal.

In a statement issued last night, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said that Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Maria Theresa Lazaro and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong met in Manila in line with the existing Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea.

The “frank and constructive discussions” came two weeks after a major clash close to Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands.

The pair “had frank and constructive discussions” on the situation in the South China Sea, and “affirmed their commitment to de-escalate tensions without prejudice to their respective positions,” the DFA said.

It added that “there was substantial progress on developing measures to manage the situation at sea, but significant differences remain.” During the meeting, the DFA said, Lazaro stressed that the Philippines would be “relentless in protecting its interests and upholding its sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea.”

The Chinese delegation “urged the Philippine side to immediately stop the infringing and provocative acts in the sea” and “work with China in managing the situation in Ren’ai Jiao to promote de-escalation of the situation and stabilization of bilateral ties,” as a Chinese state media report put it. (Ren’ai Jiao is the Chinese name for Second Thomas Shoal, which Manila refers to as Ayungin Shoal.)

The talks came two weeks after a major clash on June 17, in which the China Coast Guard blocked a resupply mission to the Philippine garrison stationed on Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands.

During the operation, China Coast Guard personnel on motorboats repeatedly rammed and then boarded two Philippine rigid-hulled inflatable boats that were delivering supplies, including firearms, to the BRP Sierra Madre, a warship that Manila grounded on the shoal in 1999. In the ensuing melee, a number of Filipino

navy personnel were wounded, including one who reportedly lost his right thumb. The Philippine military later likened the incident to “an act of piracy.”

The June 17 incident marked the culmination of nearly two years of growing tensions over the shoal, which China appears to have singled out as potentially the most vulnerable of the nine Philippine-occupied features in the Spratly Islands. Since the start of this year especially, it has gone to increasingly forceful lengths to prevent the Philippines from resupplying the small contingent of marines aboard the Sierra Madre.

In light of the recent violent confrontation at the shoal, renewed diplomatic engagement is welcome. While the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism has been in place for some time – yesterday’s meeting was the ninth to be held under its aegis – Chinese and Philippine officials have been largely talking past each other in recent months, dueling in public statements that have been by turns dismissive and highly emotional.

One round of talks is no salve to the mistrust that has developed, and the mutually incompatible claims that underpin it. China is not about to give up its expansive claims to the South China Sea; nor will Manila concede these claims in violation of its own, much more legally-grounded claims. But talks at least improve the chances the two nations will establish a new status quo – one that will prevent each Philippine resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal from becoming a test of

China is not about to give up its expansive claims to the South China Sea; nor will Manila concede these claims in violation of its own, much more legally-grounded claims.

wills with the potential of spiraling into a wider conflict.

Russia's Putin and North Korea's Kim sign mutual defence pact

Source: Josh Smith and Ju-min Park | Reuters

[https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/putin-kim-agree-develop-strategic-fortress-relations-kcna-says-2024-06-18/#:~:text=SEOUL%2C%20June%2019%20\(Reuters\),amounted%20to%20an%20%22alliance%22_20_June_2024](https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/putin-kim-agree-develop-strategic-fortress-relations-kcna-says-2024-06-18/#:~:text=SEOUL%2C%20June%2019%20(Reuters),amounted%20to%20an%20%22alliance%22_20_June_2024)



Russia's President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un attend an official welcoming ceremony at Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang, North Korea June 19, 2024. Sputnik/Gavriil Grigorov/Pool via REUTERS

SEOUL, June 19 (Reuters)

- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a deal with North Korea's Kim Jong Un on Wednesday that included a mutual defence pledge, one of Russia's most significant moves in Asia for years that

Kim said amounted to an "alliance".

Putin's pledge overhauls Russia's entire post-Soviet policy on North Korea just as the United States and its Asian allies try to gauge how far Russia could deepen support for the only country

to have tested a nuclear weapon this century.

On his first visit to Pyongyang since July 2000, Putin explicitly linked Russia's deepening of ties with North Korea to the West's growing support for Ukraine and said Moscow could develop military and technical cooperation with Pyongyang.

After talks, they signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" pact, which Putin said included a mutual defence clause in the case of aggression against either country.

"The comprehensive partnership agreement signed today provides, among other things, for mutual assistance in the event of aggression against one of the parties to this agreement," Putin said.

He said Western deliveries of advanced, long-range weaponry including F-16 fighters to Ukraine for strikes against Russia breached major agreements.

"In connection with this, Russia does not exclude for itself the development of military-technical cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Putin said.

Strategic Balance Shift?

Kim praised Russia for making what he cast as an enormously significant strategic move to support North Korea, which was founded in 1948 with the Soviet Union's backing.

Depending on the exact wording of the pact,

which was not released, it could be a dramatic shift in the strategic balance in Northeast Asia by placing Russia's heft behind North Korea - which faces South Korea, backed by the United States, across the heavily fortified demilitarised zone (DMZ).

While North Korea has a defence treaty with China, it does not have active military collaboration with Beijing like it has developed with Russia over the past year. North Korea also signed a 1961 treaty with the Soviet Union that included promises of mutual support in the event of an attack.

Putin explicitly linked Russia's deepening of ties with North Korea to the West's growing support for Ukraine and said Moscow could develop military and technical cooperation with Pyongyang.

China, the North's main political and economic benefactor, had no immediate response.

Putin's courting of Kim, which has included gifts of limousines and a tour of Russia's new space launch centre, has alarmed the United States and its Asian allies.

"Deepening cooperation between Russia and the DPRK is a trend that should be of great concern to anyone interested in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, upholding the global non-proliferation regime, abiding by UN Security Council resolutions, and supporting the people of Ukraine," a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said.

'Peace-Loving And Defensive'

Putin was greeted by cheering crowds lining the streets of Pyongyang along with children waving Russian flags and a military salute. Kim,

40, greeted Putin at the airport.

After talks, Putin drove Kim around in a luxury Russian limousine. They then switched places and Kim drove Putin. Later, they watched a concert together.

Putin accused the United States, South Korea and Japan of raising tensions on the Korean peninsula and said North Korea had a right to strengthen its own defences.

Kim said the pact would expand cooperation in politics, economy and defence, calling it "strictly peace-loving and defensive" in nature.

"Our two countries' relations have been elevated to the new higher level of an alliance," Kim said.

At the start of their summit, Kim expressed "unconditional support" for "all of Russia's policies", including "a full support and firm alliance" for Putin's war with Ukraine.

Putin said Moscow was fighting the hegemonic, imperialist policy of the United States and its allies, Russian media reported.

"We highly appreciate your consistent and unwavering support for Russian policy, including in the Ukrainian direction," Putin said.

The West slapped on Russia what it cast as the toughest ever sanctions in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine began in 2014

after a pro-Russian president was toppled in Ukraine's Maidan Revolution and Russia annexed Crimea, with Russian-backed separatist forces fighting Ukraine's armed forces.

North Korea "expresses full support and solidarity to the Russian government, army and people in carrying out a special military operation in Ukraine to protect sovereignty, security interests, as well as territorial integrity", Kim told Putin.

Lavish Welcome for Putin

Putin, who had hosted Kim at a summit in September in the Russian Far East that accelerated

Putin's courting of Kim, which has included gifts of limousines and a tour of Russia's new space launch centre, has alarmed the United States and its Asian allies.

the two countries' military cooperation, received a lavish welcome in Pyongyang.

An honour guard including mounted soldiers, and a large crowd of civilians gathered at

the Kim Il Sung Square by the Taedong River running through the capital. The scene included children holding balloons and giant portraits of the two leaders with national flags adorning the square's main building.

Russia has used its warming ties with North Korea to needle Washington, while heavily sanctioned North Korea has won political backing and promises of economic support and trade from Moscow.

The United States and its allies say they fear Russia could provide aid for North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes, which are banned by U.N. Security Council resolutions, and have accused Pyongyang of providing ballistic

missiles and artillery shells that Russia has used in its war in Ukraine.

Moscow and Pyongyang have denied weapons transfers.

Cherry-Picks of the Month

1. Philippines Seeks UN Confirmation of its Vast Continental Seabed in the disputed South China Sea - <https://apnews.com/article/philippines-south-china-sea-continental-shelf-97da6db185774234bedba63c21e944d2>
2. S. Korea, U.S., Japan hold 1st Trilateral 'Freedom Edge' exercise - <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240627006400315>
3. China-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Summit: Redefining Partnerships - <https://www.isdp.eu/china-japan-south-korea-trilateral-summit-redefining-partnerships/>

Debates/ Podcasts

1. Indo-Pacific Statecraft: Deterrence and Diplomacy - <https://shows.acast.com/the-national-security-podcast/episodes/indo-pacific-statecraft-deterrence-and-diplomacy>
2. Modi 3.0 and the World; Hasina in Delhi; Tibet, India and the US; and the Unending Wars - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUBbbFieWTA>
3. Why Modi must Focus on the Indo-Pacific in His Third Term | Vantage with Palki Sharma - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phu3q4raNgc>



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