



CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

Indo-Pacific Newsletter



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

FROM EDITOR'S DESK

This fortnight witnessed some major moves in geopolitics of the world powers, which will largely play out in this spectrum of cooperation and contest in the Indo-Pacific region. On the Military front, while US moved its B-52 Bombers, F-22 raptor and about 17000 troops in the region, Royal Navy has also deployed its naval might. On the diplomatic front, New Zealand PM has declared firm alignment with US towards Indo-Pacific commitment with EU and Germany towing the line. With the US-China tussle for dominance of Indo-Pacific, the region is likely to become an area of multiple flash points; Taiwan could be the first. It would be interesting to watch the strategic move by QUAD in the backdrop of the open threat by CCP to Japan.

In this era of active Social Media domain, from this issue onwards, we have introduced a SM corner for the readers, that includes you tube links of Interviews, debates and recent developments along with links for Podcast. We would continue to strive to keep you abreast of latest developments in the region.

Jai Hind

Vol 1, No 2, 30 July 2021

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PEEP-IN

Blinken reaffirms ASEAN's essential role in Indo-Pacific

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3bdLUXLeyc>

QUOTE

"New Zealand is not alone in adopting this Indo-Pacific outlook ... Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Germany have also referred to an Indo-Pacific region in reaction to more challenging geopolitics"

**Jacinda Ardern,
PM, New Zealand**

Opinion/Review

What's in a Name? India's Role in the Indo-Pacific

The notion of the Indo-Pacific has recently become widely used, particularly in the United States, India, Japan, and Australia, and has almost replaced the earlier term “Asia-Pacific.” In Russia, this change of geopolitical terminology is usually seen through the prism of the U.S.-China confrontation and Washington's determination to strengthen America's position in that part of the world by engaging India on its side. Yet India is developing its own conceptual constructs, which may carry the same name, but are based on New Delhi's view of the world and national interests.

The term “Asia-Pacific,” which was first coined in the United States, excluded South Asia. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which staged high-profile annual summits from the 1990s through the 2010s, does not include India as a full member. As for India itself, following the end of the Cold War, it began to come up with new geopolitical concepts that reflected the dramatically changed international environment.

The diplomatic and economic facet of New Delhi's strategy began with the “Look East” policy of the P. V. Narasimha Rao government in 1991: an effort to cultivate economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asia, in a marked shift in India's global outlook following the Cold War. It was also seen as an important component of India's decision to open up its economy and take advantage of the dynamic East Asia region.

India's strategic thinking was shaped by the fact that it has serious disputes with Pakistan to its west and China to the north, which limits its overland

communications and trade with those regions. So on the one hand, India looked eastward, and on the other, toward the Indian Ocean. The foundations of India's current Indo-Pacific policy were laid at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, the United States began a policy of rapprochement with India, which led to closer Indo-U.S. ties.

The next stage in Indo-U.S. interaction occurred in the wake of the devastating tsunami of December 26, 2004, which killed some 225,000 people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India. At the initiative of then U.S. president George W. Bush, the United States, Australia, India, and Japan formed a coalition to provide immediate assistance to those affected. Although the coalition lasted merely a week, it formed the basis of the notion of a quadrilateral grouping: the Quad. A proposal to formalize the group was put forward by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2006, but came to nothing.

To balance China's growing might and its expanding influence, Washington and Tokyo began to work to bring New Delhi into the strategic equation.

Since then, the steep rise of China and its increasing assertiveness—evidenced by developments in the East and South China seas, as well as the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole—have triggered a number of policy moves by various countries. To balance China's growing might and its expanding influence, Washington and Tokyo began to work to bring New Delhi into the strategic equation. To achieve that, they modified their strategic concepts around the notion of the “Indo-Pacific.”

True, India is not a significant economic or military player east of the Malacca Straits. But to the west of the straits, its geography makes it a major anchor for any strategy that links the Pacific with the Indian Ocean. India shares maritime and land borders with four out of the ten ASEAN states.

Jutting out 2,000 kilometers into the Indian Ocean, India also sits astride key sea lanes and dominates the western end of the Malacca Straits.

ASEAN countries themselves remained ambivalent: they welcomed the U.S. presence in the region, but since they also enjoy close economic ties to China, they refused to participate in any confrontation with Beijing. The ASEAN reluctance to directly involve itself in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy pushed Washington to take another course. In 2017, as U.S.-Chinese rivalry escalated into confrontation, President Donald Trump's administration dusted off the old Quad format to serve as an instrument of its Indo-Pacific strategy to check China. Trump's successor Joe Biden regards China as the main challenger to U.S. global primacy, and is busy building a "coalition of democracies" aimed at outcompeting China on a wide range of issues, mainly economic.

The Quad grouping, however, remains an instrument of any U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. The goal of that strategy, as articulated in a declassified U.S. government document at the beginning of 2021, is "maintaining U.S. strategic primacy" in the region. For that, Washington needs a credible democratic partner on the Asian continent and in the Indian Ocean area. With that in mind, the United States is willing "to accelerate India's rise and capacity."

New Delhi may, of course, have a different point of view, and is not committed to these goals. Unlike the other Quad nations, it does not have any formal military ties to the United States. But India will not hesitate to take advantage of the grouping to enhance its own political and economic profile in the region.

Even though there is a great deal of activity around the Quad, it is clear that New Delhi is in no position

to play a significant military role outside its neighborhood. Confronting China somewhere in the Western Pacific, 5,000 kilometers away, is not credible when the Chinese are sitting along a large chunk of India's land borders. In any case, India lags behind China in almost all elements of comprehensive national power, including its military. East of Malacca, India can at best play a symbolic role as an ally of the United States and Japan, and seek a payoff in pushing its own economic growth agenda amid the U.S.-Chinese estrangement. It could play a strong security role west of the Malacca straits in the Indian Ocean, where it has considerable natural advantages.

India recognizes the centrality of ASEAN to its Indo-Pacific strategy, but in the region, its key political and economic ties remain anchored in the city-state of Singapore. It has failed to build significant ties with other ASEAN states, even Vietnam, with which it had long had an important relationship. In that sense, it is unable to play a larger role of counterbalancing Chinese power in the region. As of now, India's role in the Western Pacific region remains symbolic, and in the Indo-Pacific context, confined to the "Indo," or the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Even here it is feeling the pressure from China, which has made significant inroads into South Asia and the IOR. India's neighbors, such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar have developed strong ties with Beijing, which has already developed substantial trading links with the IOR as a whole.

India's future ambitions depend on the trajectory of its economy. By opting out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership free trade agreement, New Delhi has forfeited an opportunity to participate in a vital new economic grouping that

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could have added zest to its Indo-Pacific strategy. This has already begun limiting its naval ambitions and the ability to play the role into which many expect the Quad is hoping to evolve: that of an informal military alliance or pressure group.

Source: Manoj Joshi, ORF,

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/whats-in-a-name-indias-role-in-the-indo-pacific/>, 22 Jul, 2021

Opinion/Review

A Missing Link in the Quad: India's Support for Taiwan

In a move to help Taiwan expedite its vaccine campaign, the United States has donated 2.5 million doses. Several developments including the visit of three U.S. senators – Tammy Duckworth, Dan Sullivan and Christopher Coons – to Taiwan in May 2021 signalled continuity in the United States' Taiwan policy. In fact, Washington is pursuing a more action-oriented policy, one that is not aimed at China but instead looks to assist Taiwan in achieving its foreign policy goals.

Apart from the United States, Japan has also come forward to help Taiwan in its fight against the pandemic. Tokyo donated 1.24 million doses in early June and an additional batch of 1.13 million doses this month. Seemingly, the United States, Japan, and even Australia are aligned on Taiwan. In May 2020, the representative offices (de-facto embassies) of the United States, Japan, and Australia in Taiwan issued a joint statement supporting Taiwan's induction to the World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer.

Interestingly, China's coercion toward Taiwan is increasingly perceived as a destabilizing move for the region. Last week, Aso Taro, deputy prime

minister of Japan, hinted that China's possible invasion of Taiwan may be perceived as a threat to Japan's survival, leading Japan to deploy its Self-Defense Forces.

While most like-minded countries have voiced their support for Taiwan and are assessing the implications of China's rising aggression, India has steered clear of issuing any statement on Taiwan. For the first time, on March 12, the Quad leaders met in a virtual setting and also, the four countries used the term "Quad" to refer to the arrangement for the first time. This was indicative of greater alignment among the Quad countries. However, a statement of support for Taiwan was missing. It was a notable omission, as Taiwan has figured in recent joint statements after the Japan-U.S. bilateral summit in May as well as the G-7 meeting in June. Given the Quad is one of the important mechanisms

under the Indo-Pacific framework, India's reluctance to voice support for Taiwan has the potential to harm the prospects of a stronger Quad.

Understandably, the disputed border and the need to manage ties with China have acted as

deterrents for India. However, given China continues to remain visibly reluctant to resolve these long-standing issues and is only upping the ante, this should no longer be a factor in shaping India's Taiwan policy. To put this into perspective, India's cautious approach toward Taiwan is only leaving its Indo-Pacific policy incomplete, but, to some extent, poses challenges to the long-term credibility of the Quad as well. Aligning India's Taiwan policy with that of other Quad countries should not be seen as a move to counter China. It should rather be seen as a move aiding India in further strengthening its Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific vision. This will accrue benefits for

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India's regional aspirations and will make the Quad robust.

It is time India take cues from other like-minded countries and joins the bandwagon. Japan is proactively pushing for Taiwan's meaningful participation on several international platforms, which has helped in shaping other like-minded Asian countries' perception about Taiwan. India shares common values with Japan, and the partnership is only getting deeper. Japan's support to Taiwan might also influence and motivate countries such as India to engage with Taiwan more.

The onus also lies on Taiwan to engage more with other countries in order to maximize their support. President Tsai Ing-wen's government has taken several steps to further strengthen ties. For instance, one of the foreign policy priorities for Taiwan under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has been to reach out to the like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific, and a policy framework was also introduced to carry out this objective. For the first time, Taiwan introduced a policy to engage with six South Asian countries along with the ASEAN member states, Australia and New Zealand.

The New Southbound Policy has since celebrated its five-year anniversary. While the policy has potential and yielded results for Taiwan in the past, it is important for Taiwan to further boost the policy by laying out its own Indo-Pacific vision and placing the New Southbound Policy within the broader context of the Indo-Pacific. This will improve Taiwan's regional as well as international standing. Such a move may very well serve as an answer to China's attempts to shrink Taiwan's International space. Additionally,

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this might motivate India, whose Indo-Pacific policy is inclusive and closely linked to its Act East Policy, to look for ways to incorporate Taiwan.

The discussion on expanding the Quad seems a little premature at the moment, but the four countries could begin by aligning their views on Taiwan. India should realize that greater convergence on issues of mutual interest is of the utmost importance when there seems to be no other way for addressing the China challenge.

Source: Sana Hashmi, The Diplomat, https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/a-missing-link-in-the-quad-indias-support-for-taiwan/?fbclid=IwAR2Rl8YsRyIP0gPm5jz2_z_r0uWfXL9zxH3-rAdYopR78sKEHUz812mSIV8, 16 Jul, 2021

Opinion/Review

A new high in Japan's security ties with Taiwan

The relations between Japan and Taiwan have traditionally been cordial in all areas of their bilateral relations. The outcome of the recent summit between Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and American President Joseph R. Biden offers yet another indication that Tokyo treats Taiwan's defence and security as one of its topmost foreign policy priorities. It also indicates that Tokyo is determined to work with Washington to checkmate any potential Chinese aggression against Taiwan.

In his talk with the United States (US) President Joe Biden in Washington on 16 April 2021, one of the

central themes of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's was to team up with the administration in Washington to preserve the security of Taiwan. The joint leaders' statement included, amongst other issues, a reference to Taiwan, the first since 1969, when Tokyo normalised its ties with Beijing.

Challenges from China

During the meeting, President Biden stated that both the United States and Japan were "committed to working together to take on the challenges from China... to ensure a future of a free and open Indo-Pacific." On his part, Prime Minister Suga also referred to an "agreed recognition over the importance of peace and stability of the Taiwan Straits between Japan and the United States."

In the recent past, Tokyo has displayed its focus on Taiwan's security on other fora as well. In a meeting with his US counterpart Lloyd Austin on 16 March 2021, Japan's Defence Minister Kishi Nobuo

underlined the need to study ways for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to cooperate with the US Forces defending Taiwan in the event of a Chinese aggression. On the occasion, both defence ministers agreed to closely cooperate in the event of a military clash between China and Taiwan.

It may be recalled that in 2016, Kishi had urged for a stronger Japan-Taiwan-US ties. As then Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs under his brother Shinzo Abe's premiership, Kishi said, "As we bolster trilateral relations between Japan, US, and Taiwan, we also hope for the stable development of cross-strait relations."

Besides, Tokyo has recently conducted studies on the viability of military action in case there is a

conflict between US and China over Taiwan. Pertinently, Japan's security laws do allow the SDF to provide logistical support to the US military and partners. The new draft of Japan's white paper says that, "the stability of the situation surrounding Taiwan is important for the security of Japan and the stability of the international community."

Continuity with the past

Significantly, there has always existed a close relationship between Japan and Taiwan in the area of defence and security. Way back in 1969, in his summit meeting with former American President Richard M Nixon in Washington, Japanese Prime Minister Sato Eisaku stated that the maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan area was a very "important factor for the security of Japan." On his part, President Nixon referred to upholding the treaty obligations of the United States towards Taiwan (Republic of China).

In 1972, with the Sino-US détente, Japan recognised the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole representative of the Chinese nation. Subsequently, Japan had to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan. However, Tokyo remained sensitive to Taiwan's defence as an independent nation. Japan conducted its diplomacy in a way that fostered Taiwan's "potential independence" (Kissinger, 2011, pp. 279) while diplomatically recognising the mainland China and securing its economic interests therein. In 1998, then Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo refused to endorse US President Bill Clinton's "three nos policy" which stated that the US did not support independence for Taiwan, or "one China, one Taiwan," or "two Chinas," or its membership in any international bodies whose members are sovereign states.

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Japan conducted its diplomacy in a way that fostered Taiwan's "potential independence" while diplomatically recognising the mainland China and securing its economic interests therein. Importantly, Japan is a democracy. Its government has to honour the public mood that is in favour of backing Taiwan's security. According to a recent Nikkei and TV Tokyo poll, a large majority of Japan's public today would like the government to engage in the pursuit of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The poll says that a huge 74 percent of the Japanese support Tokyo's engagement towards stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Decrease in incursions

One finds that the Suga-Biden security agreement on Taiwan is very meaningful. According to reports, in the wake of the summit, there has been a decrease in Beijing's military activities near Taiwan. In contrast, before the summit, between 1 January and 16 April this year, China sent military jets into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) on 75 days. A total of 257 jets flew into Taiwan's ADIZ during these incursions. A record 25 aircraft flew into the island's ADIZ on 12 April alone.

According to a recent report, over 28 Chinese air force aircraft, including fighters and nuclear-capable bombers, entered Taiwan's ADIZ on 15 June. The latest Chinese mission involved 14 J-16 and six J-11 fighters, as well as four H-6 bombers, which can carry nuclear weapons, as well as various surveillance and early warning aircraft. Not much should, however, be read into these Chinese activities. This incident came after the Group of Seven leaders issued a joint statement scolding China for a series of issues and underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The pattern is China resorts to such military

activities whenever the West is critical of its Taiwan policy.

China today is highly unlikely to take any steps aimed at annexing Taiwan. Beijing must be knowing that with the new Japanese commitment to Taiwan's security, the US could be in a much advantageous position to retaliate against any Chinese aggression against Taiwan. In the new scenario, Washington might use its Japanese bases and Japanese Self Defence Forces' (JSDF) could be a great force multiplier to a possible US-led operation in the region. Needless to mention, as per the exchange of notes between former Japanese Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke and then US Secretary of State Christian A. Herter on January 19, 1960, Washington is supposed to hold prior consultation with Tokyo whenever Japanese bases

are to be used for its military expeditions. But given the nature of defence relationship between Washington and Tokyo, this would be nothing but a mere formality.

Future prospects

In conclusion, with the new Japan-US understanding on Taiwan, Tokyo-Taipei ties have reached a new high in the area of security. Today, both Japan and Taiwan seem to fully appreciate their common need to work together and take all the necessary steps to checkmate any potential Chinese aggression in the region. It should not be surprising if Japanese Prime Minister Suga and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen come together to create a forum to discuss their security issues in the near future.

Already, Taiwanese President Tsai's declared aim is to build an alliance of democracies to defend against any "unilateral aggressive actions." Not long ago, on February 28, 2019, Tsai said, "Taiwan and Japan are confronted with the same threats in

Beijing must be knowing that with the new Japanese commitment to Taiwan's security, the US could be in a much advantageous position to retaliate against any Chinese aggression against Taiwan

the East Asian region.” She stressed security cooperation between the two, saying, “It is vital that talks be raised to the level of security cooperation.”

Source: Abhijitha Singh, ORF, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/new-high-japan-security-ties-taiwan/>, 09 Jul, 2021.

Recent Developments

Japan removes Taiwan from China map in Defense White Paper

TAIPEI (Taiwan News) — In its "Defense of Japan" white paper published on Tuesday (July 13), Japan's Ministry of Defense (MOD) removed Taiwan from a map of China for the first time. In previous years, the white paper merged Taiwan and China in the same chapter and map, drawing criticism from Taiwanese living in Japan. However, the latest version stresses the distinction between the two, indicating a change in policy by Japan Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi. For the first time, Taiwan has been removed from the white paper's chapter on China. Instead, Taiwan has been included in Part I, Chapter 2, Section 3 of "Relations between the United States and China, etc." Although the focus is on the current situation of deepening U.S.-China antagonism, the introduction to Taiwan's military situation has also been incorporated into this section.

In the past, Taiwan was included as a "region" in a map of China in Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 2 titled, "Deployment and Strength of People's Liberation Army." In the new version, Taiwan is completely grayed out from the map of China and its combat theatre commands. Japan's Defense Ministry stressed in the paper that, "Stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan is important for Japan's

security and the stability of the international community." The paper added, "Therefore, it is necessary that we pay close attention to the situation with a sense of crisis more than ever before."

At a press briefing on Tuesday, China Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian responded to the white paper by complaining that Japan has "grossly interfered in China's internal affairs, groundlessly blamed China's normal defense construction and military activity, pointed fingers at China's maritime activity, and hyped up the so-called China threat, which is wrong and irresponsible." On Wednesday (July 14), Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign

Affairs (MOFA) welcomed the changes to the white paper by thanking the MOD for "highlighting the importance of 'stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan' & paying 'close attention to the situation with a sense of crisis more than

ever before."

Source: Keoni Everington, Taiwan News, Staff Writer, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4248204>, 14 Jul 2021.

Recent Developments

Jacinda Ardern aligns NZ's foreign policy with US in 'Indo-Pacific' speech

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has firmly aligned New Zealand's foreign policy with the United States' world view, "embracing" the phrase "Indo-Pacific" to describe the region. The US, United Kingdom, and Australia are among countries that regularly use the phrase "Indo-Pacific", wrapping India into a strategic picture of the Asia-Pacific region as a greater counter-weight against China's growing influence. New Zealand has been a slow adopter of the term.

Ardern gave a foreign policy speech to an audience of diplomats and government officials at the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs' "Standing in the Future: New Zealand and the Indo-Pacific Region" conference, being held at Te Papa on Wednesday. "The Indo-Pacific is to some degree at an inflection point ... The forms of cooperation needed to overcome Covid-19 require countries to let go of narrow nationalistic approaches," she said.

"New Zealand is not alone in adopting this Indo-Pacific outlook ... Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Germany have also referred to an Indo-Pacific region in reaction to more challenging geopolitics," she said. However, she said "Indo-Pacific" was often used to "exclude some nations from dialogue" – meaning China – but New Zealand would not use the phrase a "subtext for exclusion".

Ardern said the world had entered an era of "formidable environmental, health and geopolitical difficulties" and countries across the world faced two paths: "isolationism and nationalism", or "consensus of collective action". She said New Zealand wanted a world where there was respect for rules, consistency in international law, open trade and investment, and transparency in foreign policy objectives and "initiatives beyond borders".

Among other serious concerns for New Zealand included the South China Sea, "including artificial island building, continued militarisation, and activities which pose risks to freedom of navigation and overflight". "Our success will depend on working with the widest possible set of partners,"

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she said. In forming a broad alliance, she said, countries must first apply their focus to the Covid-19 pandemic. She said a "singular focus on vaccinating our own populations with little regard to others is a recipe for variance" in the Covid-19 virus –

referring to the mutations of the virus which make it more transmissible or fatal. New Zealand would be pushing for a new "pandemic treaty" between countries, she said, that would "improve global surveillance, validation and early response; and to strengthen the World Health Organisation".

Ardern has in recent months been making overtures to the US, speaking via video-link to influential forums of decision makers. On Wednesday, she welcomed the Biden administration into the region. "We look forward to working with the Biden administration on regional issues. New Zealand's relationship with the United States has deep roots, built over many decades of cooperation. We share values and have common interests in how the region operates." A major player in the US President's administration, Kurt Campbell, beamed into the event to speak after Ardern. Campbell, a leading diplomat in the US, has been dubbed Biden's "Asia czar" and has a strong connection to New Zealand.

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common interests in how the region operates.” A major player in the US President's administration, Kurt Campbell, beamed into the event to speak after Ardern. Campbell, a leading diplomat in the US, has been dubbed Biden’s “Asia czar” and has a strong connection to New Zealand. "Even during our dark periods, our challenging times we look to New Zealand for inspiration and motivation both as a model for how we can go about our own democracy but also for your leading role in international relations and global politics particularly in Pacific," he said.

"I'm grateful for the role New Zealand plays across the board ... In all our discussion with your excellent ambassador here and with other New Zealand representatives and diplomats there is a constant reminder of our role in supporting Australia and New Zealand.” Campbell said some of China's diplomacy and economic activities seemed to go against global norms and values and there were concerns about some elements of Chinese power and some of its aspirations in the Indo-Pacific. "Our ultimate goal is the maintenance of peace and stability in Asia," he said. "We are determined to maintain that peace and stability through careful engagements, through deterrence, through necessary military actions and through engagements with partners who share our interests."

He wanted to see New Zealand take a stronger role in the Pacific such as controlling illegal fishing; engagement and security and even taking on peacekeeping. "Probably the country that needs to do more is not New Zealand, it is the United States.” He said that maintaining the current status quo across the Taiwan Straits – a flashpoint of tension between Taiwan and China in the South China Sea – is in the best interests of all countries.

Source: Stuff,Nz, Thomas Man chand Lucy Craymer, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/125745920/jacinda-ardern-aligns-nzs-foreign-policy-with-us-in-indopacific-speech?cid=app-iPhone>, 14 Jul 2021

Recent Developments

UK to permanently assign two OPVs to Indo-Pacific region this year

UK State Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has announced that the Royal Navy will permanently deploy two offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) in the Indo-Pacific region. The deployment will take place later in the year. The commitment was announced during Wallace’s two-day visit to Japan.

The secretary met the Japanese prime minister Yoshihide Suga and defence minister Nobuo Kishi. The officials discussed the countries ties in defence

and security and highlighted their common strategic interests. During the visit, the two countries also announced their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and the region’s stability. Over the next few years, the UK will also contribute a Littoral Response

Group (LRG).

British Ambassador to Japan Julia Longbottom said: “The visit to Japan by senior members of the UK’s armed forces and the Secretary of State represents the ever-closer partnership between Japan and the UK and our commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. “The UK is committed to working with Japan to support regional stability and to meet shared global challenges, such as cyber security, combatting global pandemics and ensuring the global systems that promote the free flow of

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trade and knowledge are strengthened and defended.”

The UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG) is currently on its inaugural deployment around the world. Led by Royal Navy’s new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, the CSG is set to visit Japanese ports, namely Sasebo, Okinawa, Kure, Yokosuka, and Maizuru, in September. Wallace said: “The UK’s defence relationship with Japan is the closest it has been in the last century. “Following exercises with the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force in the Gulf of Aden and in the waters off Japan, the upcoming visit of the UK-led Carrier Strike Group to five ports across the country is a clear demonstration of our commitment to maintaining regional security and upholding the rules-based international order with Japan.”

Source: Naval Technology, <https://www.naval-technology.com/news/uk-to-permanently-assign-two-opvs-to-indo-pacific-region-this-year/>, 21 Jul 2021

Military Strategy/ Diplomacy

China threatens to nuke Japan non-stop if it tries to defend Taiwan

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has threatened that it will nuke Japan if the country defends Taiwan. In a video uploaded to Xigua Video, a Chinese online video-sharing platform, China has said that if Japan ‘dares to intervene when it decides to ‘liberate’ Taiwan, it will launch a full-fledged war against Japan, starting with attacks with nuclear bombs.

In the video uploaded on a Chinese Military channel named Liu Jun Tao Lue (roughly means “Military strategies”) on the platform, the CCP said that even

if Japan deploys only one soldier, one plane and one ship in support of Taiwan, it will not respond with equal measure, but instead will start a full-scale war against Japan. ‘We will use nuclear bombs first, we will use nuclear bombs continuously until Japan declares unconditional surrender for the second time’. By ‘second time’, the CCP referred to the surrender of Japan to the allied forces after the nuclear bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.

The video was spotted by Chinese-born human rights activist and author Jennifer Zeng, who posted it on Twitter and her blog. After she shared the details of the video, it was removed from Xigua. Jennifer Zeng shared the video along with English subtitles, based on which this report has been written. The video added that they want to target Japan’s ability to endure a war. ‘As long as Japan realises it cannot afford to pay the price of war, it will not dare to send troops to the Taiwan Strait’, the CCP concluded in the video.

They said that after the first successful nuclear test by China in 1964, they had promised that they will not nuclear bomb against non-nuclear countries, and they will not use it first. However, in the current situation, a need to change this policy has arisen. Therefore, they have decided to make a ‘minor adjustment’ in this policy, which is the ‘Japan Exception’ theory.

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CCP said that several times in the past Japan had tried to harm the interests of China, therefore if a war breaks out between China and Japan, China will take revenge for both current and past ‘crimes’ of Japan. It

said that Japan is the only country to be hit by atomic bomb, and has a deep memory of the affects of atomic bomb attacks. ‘And it takes the United States, which nuked it, lying down. It is exactly because Japan has such a unique feeling that nuclear

deterrence against Japan will get twice the result with half the effort,' the video said.

Saying that by singling out Japan as an "exception", by ignoring the policy of no first use of nukes, CCP said that it is warning Japan and informing the world that if Japan interferes militarily in China's domestic affairs, including the unification of Taiwan by the mainland, nuclear weapons will surely be used against Japan, and will be used continuously until its unconditional surrender. There will be no peace talks in the meantime, the CCP emphasized.

They also added that they will take back the Diaoyu Islands and the Ryukyu Islands. 'We will either manage them or let them be independent,' the video said.

Source: OpIndia, <https://www.opindia.com/2021/07/china-threatens-to-nuke-japan-non-stop-if-it-tries-to-defend-taiwan/>, 14 Jul 2021.

Military Strategy/ Diplomacy – QUAD

How Japan chose where to base its F-35s

MELBOURNE, Australia – Japan's defense minister has confirmed that the U.S. ally will base its Lockheed-Martin F-35B Lightning II Short Take off and Vertical Landing or STOVL fighter jets at the southernmost of Japan's four main islands.

Nobuo Kishi, the Japanese minister of defense, said July 16 that the Japan Air Self-Defense Force or JASDF base of Nyutabaru on the east coast of the island of Kyushu was "the best fit" to deploy the stealthy fifth-generation fighter. The base is currently home to an operational and a training squadron of JASDF Mitsubishi F-15J/DJ Eagle interceptors, and is the southernmost JASDF

combat base on Japan's main islands. He also revealed that the deployment of the F-35B to Nyutabaru will begin in the 2025 fiscal year with six aircraft. An additional two aircraft will arrive in the following year. Japan's fiscal year runs from the 1st of April to the 30th of March of the following year.

Japan has plans to acquire 42 F-35Bs and a total of 157 F-35s. The remaining aircraft are expected to be the Conventional Take Off and Landing or CTOL F-35A variant. The JASDF is already in the process of standing up its second F-35A squadron at Misawa in northern Japan. Japan's defense ministry has already briefed local officials about the planned basing of the F-35B. Kishi noted that support from the local community was vital to its plans, with opposition from local residents already delaying or thwarting the deployment plans of several systems in recent years, including the basing of the country's Bell-Boeing MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft. Basing the F-35B at the east coast of Kyushu would be ideal for detachments to join up with Japan's Izumo-class helicopter-destroyers as they deploy from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force bases at Kure and Yokosuka. Japan is converting the Izumo and sister ship Kaga to operate the F-35B.

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The first stage of work to convert the Izumo has already been completed, with the ship emerging from an availability period in June with newly painted lines on its flight deck for fixed-wing air operations. It is also believed a heat resistant

coating has been applied to the flight deck to cope with temperatures from the F-35B's exhaust. The next stage of the conversion will include rebuilding the front of the flight deck from a trapezoidal to a rectangular shape, along with changes to the ship's internal spaces to accommodate F-35B operations.

These changes will likely create an increase in aviation fuel capacity onboard and provision for armored magazines to store air launched weapons. The modifications to the Izumo are scheduled to be completed in the 2024 fiscal year. Japan's Chugoku Shimbun has reported that the resurfacing and reshaping of the Kaga's flight deck will start later this fiscal year, although the modifications to the second ship's internal spaces will only take place later.

Source: Mike Yeo, Defense News, Asia Pacific, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2021/07/20/how-japan-chose-where-to-base-its-f-35s/>, 21 Jul 2021.

Military Strategy/ Diplomacy

Joe Biden admin expected to continue expansion of bilateral partnership with India due to China factor

The Biden Administration is expected to continue expansion of the bilateral partnership with India and the driving force of the relationship is concern about China's growing economic and military power in the region, according to a Congressional report.

"Many speculate that the Administration would pay more attention to India's domestic developments, including on human rights, but considered broad policies unlikely to change due to the perceived overarching need to counterbalance China", said the latest report on India-US relationship released by independent Congressional Research Service. "Independent observers widely expected the Biden Administration to continue expansion of the bilateral partnership (with India), and most saw concern about China's growing economic and

military power as the driving force of the relationship," said the report by the CRS, which is traditionally prepared for the American lawmakers to make informed decisions.

CRS reports, prepared by independent experts, are not considered as an official report or view of the US Congress. Of late, the US Congress has been making many of these reports public. "Many analysts laud an expected US return to multilateralism - especially given India's recently warmer sentiments toward the Quad initiative - and were eager to see the extent to which the Administration would commit resources prioritising the Indo-Pacific region in its foreign policy," said the report authored by several South Asia experts led by Alan Kronstadt.

The US, Japan, India and Australia had in 2017 given shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region.

In March, President Joe Biden virtually met Quad leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the first Summit of the bloc where he said that a "free and open Indo-Pacific is essential" for all and the US was committed to working with its partners and allies in the region to achieve stability.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims. Beijing has also built up and militarised many of the islands and reefs it controls in the region. Both areas are stated to be rich in minerals,

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oil and other natural resources and are also vital to global trade.

The report notes that despite many areas of sometimes serious discord, the US Congress has remained broadly positive in its posture toward the US-India strategic and commercial partnership. The Biden Administration has indicated that it intends to maintain the expansion and deepening of US-India ties. Congressional legislation and oversight has and can continue to affect the course of US-India relations, including in areas such as resourcing for a US Indo-Pacific strategy, trade and investment (including bilateral defense trade) relations, immigration policy, nuclear proliferation, human rights, and cooperative efforts to address COVID-19 and climate change, among many others, it said.

Observing that President Biden was a strong and consistent advocate of positive US-India relations and US support for India during his 36-year Senate career, the CRS notes that some analysts expect pressure to come on India in issues related to human rights private rather than public channels, with at least one contending that such messaging will be “predictable, but inconsequential.” CRS said that defence trade has emerged as a key aspect of the bilateral partnership. New Delhi seeks to transform its military into one with advanced technology and global reach, reportedly planning up to USD100 billion on new procurements over the next decade to update its mostly Soviet-era arsenal.

Source: *The Economic Times*, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/joe-biden-admin-expected-to-continue-expansion-of-bilateral-partnership-with-india-due-to-china-factor-report/articleshow/84610459.cms>, 21 Jul 2021.

Social Media Corner

Interview / View Point

1. Quadratic equations of the Indo-Pacific" by- Lt Gen P R Shankar PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) Indian Army - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0z3t04JzDA>
2. Future of QUAD and Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific - Admiral Koda Yoji, Japan - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp3jgIwhqHQ>

Debates

1. Cyber Crime and Security: The State of Play in the Indo-Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiAXQ-M-IsY>
2. Recalibrating Geopolitical Relations in the Indo-Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr8FgvRIbRE>
3. Europe Asia online bridge - Security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_LjY6fD1Ig

Podcast

1. Podcast on Indo-Pacific Future-Critical Technology with views from Jennifer Jackett, Professor Claudia Vickers, Dr Amy Parker, Dr Sue Key, Dr Atsushi Sunami, Michael O’Hanlon and Chris Farnham - <https://www.policyforum.net/national-security-podcast-indo-pacific-futures-critical-technology/> (Source: Asia &The Pacific Policy Society, Policy Forum) 22 Jul 2021

Video links

1. B-52 Bombers sent to Indo-pacific Region - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4YmfCRNa44>
2. F-22 Raptors deployed in Indo-Pacific Region -

Indo-Pacific Newsletter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxWc1UOqM_uw

3. 17000 US troops deployed in Indo-Pacific Region -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4EHss6E2KM>

4. Royal Navy deploys its naval assets in Indo-Pacific Region -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsiWfXUnV1U>

5. Jacinda Ardern, PM New Zealand, adopts Indo-Pacific outlook, aligning with US foreign policy -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcLWPFZfZ14>



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