

Defense News Conclave

Stories of U.S. - India Defense Partnership

QUARTERLY NEWS WRAP

Issue #4, July-September 2022

The past quarter witnessed continuing high-level engagements between India and the U.S. to strengthen their strategic partnership, as they celebrated 75 years of bilateral relations. Considerable achievements were realised, driven by a recognition of India's value as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific. Both sides sought to maintain a conducive environment in their high-level meetings.

This quarter saw the two sides meet for the U.S.-India 2+2 Intersessional and Maritime Security Dialogues, where they discussed defence cooperation in detail. In a proud moment, India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was commissioned, marking a flagship day for the Indian Navy. India's new Chief of Defence Staff was also appointed, who will take forward the task of promoting jointness and synergy among India's armed forces.

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited the United States in September, where he held meetings on wide-ranging issues with the Secretary of State and Defense Secretary, among others. Going forward, India-U.S. army exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' and the Malabar exercise with India's Quad partners are scheduled in the coming months.

Through the project titled, '[*Defense News Conclave: Stories of U.S.-India Defense Partnership*](#)', CUTS International aims to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders and the wider public about the importance of U.S.-India defense relations. It also seeks to counter possible wrong narratives based on misinformation/disinformation that seek to undermine the growing defense partnership.

The fourth edition of this Quarterly News Wrap covers prominent developments in U.S.-India defense relations in the past quarter.

HIGHLIGHTS

India-US Navy cooperation vital for defence ties, says Indian envoy Sandhu

Press Trust of India Bureau
August 25, 2022

The [cooperation between the navies of India and the US](#) is one of the most dynamic and significant components of the bilateral defence ties, India's envoy to the US said, underlining that the defence sector has emerged as a major pillar between the two countries, especially in the context of the Indo-Pacific.

United States sees India as its indispensable partner, says White House

Press Trust of India Bureau
August 25, 2022

The [United States sees India as an indispensable partner](#), the White House asserted, even as the two countries are pursuing their own national interests in Ukraine. The White House Press Secretary said that the US-India Strategic Partnership is grounded in our shared commitment to the advancement of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

USD 3-billion deal: India in advanced stage of talks with US for procuring MQ-9B drones

Press Trust of India Bureau
August 21, 2022

India is in an "advanced stage" of negotiations with the US to [procure 30 MQ-9B Predator armed drones](#) for over USD 3 billion to crank up its surveillance apparatus along the frontier with China as well as in the Indian Ocean region. The Indian Navy has been bolstering its surveillance mechanism to monitor growing Chinese activities including frequent forays by PLA warships in the Indian Ocean Region.

Celebrating 75 years of US-India Relations

Mukesh Aghi, Financial Express
August 17, 2022

The US-India relationship has been dubbed as the [most important strategic partnership of the 21st century](#). I have witnessed how the relationship has moved beyond symbolic platitudes between the world's oldest and largest democracy to robust engagements across trade, defence, climate and technology.

Atmanirbhar push: PM Narendra Modi for innovation in defence products

Ajai Shukla, Business Standard
August 16, 2022

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech called upon the private sector to embrace innovation, in order to play a key role in the Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative. Voicing his oft-stated conviction that "India can make for the world," the PM commended [the military for taking Atmanirbhar Bharat into the realm of technological innovation](#).

Indian defence attache now has unescorted access to Pentagon, says US Air Force Secretary

Press Trust of India Bureau
August 16, 2022

The Indian defence attache now has [unescorted access to the Pentagon](#). Such a move is aligned with the trust and cooperation shared with India, said US Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall, highlighting the close relationship and India's status as a major defence partner.

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

General Anil Chauhan takes over as Chief of Defence Staff

Press Information Bureau, Government of India

September 30, 2022

General Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM [assumed office as the Chief of Defence Staff](#) (CDS) on September 30, 2022. General Chauhan will also be the Principal Military Advisor to the Raksha Mantri on all Tri-Service matters as well as head Department of Military Affairs as Secretary. He will also be Permanent Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC).

Readout of U.S.-India 2+2 Intersessional and Maritime Security Dialogues

U.S. Department of Defense

September 8, 2022

On the defense side, Assistant Secretary Ratner and his counterparts discussed a [range of leading regional security issues](#), including recent developments in East Asia. The officials also reviewed progress toward operationalizing major bilateral initiatives on information-sharing, defense industrial cooperation, and joint service engagements to support combined, multi-domain operations.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi commissions India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant in Kochi

Press Information Bureau, Government of India

September 3, 2022

[INS Vikrant](#) is designed by Indian Navy's in-house Warship Design Bureau and built by Cochin Shipyard Limited, a Public Sector Shipyard under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. INS Vikrant has been built with state-of-the-art automation features and is the largest ship ever built in the maritime history of India.

India-US Special Forces Joint Exercise Culminates at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh

Press Information Bureau, Government of India

August 28, 2022

The [21-day joint training](#) provided an opportunity for the Special Forces from both nations to train in Air Borne Operations, Special Operations and Counter Terrorism operations in a joint environment. The exercise was conducted in two phases; the first phase involved combat conditioning and tactical level special missions training exercises and the second phase included 48 hours of validation of training received by both contingents in the first phase.

DRDO & Indian Navy successfully flight-test Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile off Odisha coast

Press Information Bureau, Government of India

August 23, 2022

Defence Research & Development Organisation and Indian Navy successfully flight-tested [Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile](#) (VL-SRSAM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. The flight test was carried out from an Indian Naval Ship against a high-speed unmanned aerial target for demonstration of vertical launch capability.

POLICY MATTERS

<p>A shift towards indigenisation: 'Make in India' fortifies defence spending <i>Ajai Shukla and Devangshu Datta</i> September 29, 2022</p>	<p>An analysis of defence capital expenditure indicates increased spending during the last four or five years, along with a discernible shift towards indigenisation. Adjusted for inflation, capital allocations to the defence sector have grown at a compounded rate of around 7 per cent between 2011-12 and 2022-23.</p>
<p>Atmanirbhar Bharat: Indian weapons set to rule the roost <i>Huma Siddiqui, Financial Express</i> September 12, 2022</p>	<p>For the first time, the Indian defence industry is participating in the global supply chain in a significant way. It is supplying to leading Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) worldwide, which is a testament to Indian products' quality and workmanship. This is evident from the fact that nearly 50 percent of the Indian defence exports from the Indian defence industry are going to leading OEMs in the USA.</p>
<p>Cabinet Committee on Security approves Tejas 2.0 mega project <i>Rajat Pandit, Times of India</i> September 1, 2022</p>	<p>Building on the success of the Tejas light combat aircraft, India approved the development of a much more capable and powerful version of the indigenous jet, which will be followed by another mega project for an ambitious fifth-generation stealth fighter. Tejas jets are desperately required by the Indian Air Force to bolster the number of its fighter squadrons, which are down to just 32.</p>
<p>Navy pushes for third aircraft carrier after INS Vikrant to retain edge over China in Indian Ocean Region <i>Rajat Pandit, Times of India</i> August 25, 2022</p>	<p>With China aggressively building new aircraft carriers and a blue-water navy to counter the US and project power around the globe, the Indian Navy is now pushing hard for its long-standing case for a third and much bigger aircraft carrier to retain its combat edge in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The prevalent view is that the new carrier should be at least 65,000-tonne.</p>
<p>India must reassess its maritime strategy <i>Arun Prakash, Hindustan Times</i> August 22, 2022</p>	<p>Since any disruption of seaborne traffic will have repercussions for China's industry, economy and political stability, we must be prepared to exploit this vulnerability, should the situation demand. By the same logic, we must be prepared to see a steady rise in PLAN presence in Indian Ocean waters (and ports). Consequently, this would be a good juncture for India to undertake a reappraisal of its maritime capabilities as well as its maritime strategy.</p>
<p>Defence Ministry sets up apex committee to carry out performance and efficiency audit <i>The Economic Times</i> July 15, 2022</p>	<p>The defence ministry has set up an apex committee to conduct performance and efficiency audit of capital procurements, logistics, inventory and maintenance of assets of the armed forces. The committee, headed by the Defence Secretary, will advise the Defence Minister on measures for overall improvement in strengthening of internal oversight and risk management framework in various aspects of functioning of the ministry.</p>

DEFENSE TRADE

HAL signs agreement establishing footprint in Malaysia to export weaponry

Ajai Shukla, Business Standard
August 18, 2022

With [Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd \(HAL\) having fielded the Tejas Mark 1A fighter](#) in a Malaysian tender for 18 fighter lead-in trainers, the company is preparing for what would be the first success in exporting the Indian fighter. In addition to offering the Tejas LCA in Kuala Lumpur's global tender for 18 advanced jet trainers, HAL sees business opportunities in Malaysia for maintenance and upgrade of their Sukhoi-30MKM and Hawk trainer fleets.

'A great feat' for India: In a first, US Navy ship comes to Chennai for repairs

ANI Bureau
August 08, 2022

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar termed a US Navy ship arriving in India for repairs for the first time ever as a "[great feat and recognition for L&T Shipyard](#)". Adding a new dimension to the burgeoning India-US strategic partnership, US Navy Ship (USNS) Charles Drew arrived at Kattupalli shipyard in Chennai for undertaking repairs and allied services.

Hitting the mark on defence exports

Harsh V Pant and Aditya Bhan, Business Standard
July 27, 2022

While it may be prudent to initially focus on certain medium to high technology exports such as the BrahMos cruise missile, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher, the advanced light helicopter Dhruv and the Akash air-defence system, efforts must be targeted at [providing end-to-end defence solutions](#) over the longer run.

Indian defence firms seek protection from exchange rate variation

Ajai Shukla, Business Standard
July 19, 2022

India's private defence firms had last campaigned for ERV protection after being bruised by the rupee's fall from Rs 44 a dollar in October 2010 to below Rs 56 just a few months later. Even "indigenous" defence systems contain many imported components and sub-systems, so [any depreciation in the rupee's value raises India's production costs](#) and hits profitability.

Indonesia to buy BrahMos Missile from India? Talks in advance stage

Huma Siddiqui, Financial Express
July 19, 2022

India's Act east Policy will get a boost when [another export order](#) for shore based anti-ship variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile by year end is inked. The missile that Indonesia is expected to import from India is going to be fitted onboard its warships. A team from BrahMos Aerospace joint venture between New Delhi and Moscow has already visited Indonesia shipyard to study the possibility of fitting the missile.

India's defence exports hit ₹13,000-cr mark, highest ever

Rahul Singh, Hindustan Times
July 08, 2022

India's [defence exports reached their highest level](#) in 2021-22, with the figure hitting the ₹13,000-crore mark, an outcome of the government's policies to boost the export of military hardware to friendly foreign countries. India's defence exports recorded nearly a six-fold increase between 2017 and 2021, shooting up from ₹1,520 crore to ₹8,435 crore during that period, according to defence ministry data.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

<p>Boeing says its Super Hornet fighter makes economic and operational sense <i>Ajai Shukla, Business Standard</i> August 24, 2022</p>	<p>Addressing a media gathering in New Delhi, Boeing officials divulged plans to indigenise components and sub-systems, strengthening the company's Make-in-India claims and building on a successful track record of contributing to India's indigenous aerospace and defence ecosystem.</p>
<p>Defence Ministry to unveil Atmanirbhar Bharat-II for indigenous production of core technologies <i>Dalip Singh, The Hindu Businessline</i> August 02, 2022</p>	<p>The next level of reforms under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme will include promoting indigenous development and production of core technologies in Public-Private Partnership mode and liberalising testing and certification of products, which have so far been a government preserve. The Ministry of Defence is set to give a big R&D push in core technologies which India is traditionally lacking.</p>
<p>Marching towards Atmanirbhata <i>Chiraag Samaddar, Financial Express</i> July 26, 2022</p>	<p>Given that civilian technologies are now far ahead of military technology, an appropriate enabling eco-system that promotes civil-military technology fusion is becoming crucial for developing the national A&D industry. This is the key advantage that the private sector enjoys due to its diverse portfolio of products.</p>
<p>PM Modi unveils 'SPRINT challenges' for Indian Navy <i>Financial Express Bureau</i> July 18, 2022</p>	<p>PM Modi unveiled 'SPRINT challenges', an initiative aimed at boosting the usage of indigenous technology in the Indian Navy. This collaborative project of the National Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) and the Defence Innovation Organisation is named SPRINT – Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through iDEX, NIIO and TDAC.</p>
<p>IAF Centre of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence to redefine air combat <i>Manish Kumar Jha, Financial Express</i> July 12, 2022</p>	<p>The IAF Centre of Excellence (COE) for Artificial Intelligence under the aegis of UDAAN (Unit for Digitisation, Automation, Artificial Intelligence and Application Networking) was inaugurated. The AI COE with high end compute and big data storage capabilities, coupled with full spectrum AI software suites, would substantially enhance operational capability of IAF.</p>
<p>India takes initial step towards building stealth combat drones with maiden flight <i>Rajat Pandit, Times of India</i> July 1, 2022</p>	<p>India conducted the maiden flight of an unmanned autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator. This flight marks a major milestone in terms of proving critical technologies towards the development of future unmanned aircraft and is a significant step towards self-reliance in such strategic defence technologies.</p>

INDO-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENTS

<p>INS Satpura and P8 I Maritime Patrol Aircraft Arrive in Darwin, Australia to Participate in Multinational Naval Ex Kakadu <i>Press Information Bureau, Government of India</i> September 13, 2022</p>	<p>INS Satpura and a P8 I Maritime Patrol Aircraft of the Indian Navy reached Darwin in Australia, for participation in the multinational Exercise Kakadu – 2022, hosted by the Royal Australian Navy. The two week-long Exercise, both in harbour and sea, involves ships and maritime aircraft from 14 navies. During the harbour phase of the exercise, the ship’s crew will engage in operational planning interactions and sports activities with participating Navies.</p>
<p>Japan-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise – Jimex 2022 <i>Press Information Bureau, Government of India</i> September 13, 2022</p>	<p>This edition marks the 10th anniversary of JIMEX, which began in Japan in 2012. It also coincides with the 70th anniversary of establishing of diplomatic relations between India and Japan. JIMEX 22 seeks to consolidate the high degree of interoperability that exists between maritime forces of the two countries, through complex exercises in the surface, sub-surface and air domains.</p>
<p>Singapore's efforts to strengthen India's connect with ASEAN to further New Delhi's Act East policy: Indian envoy <i>Press Trust of India Bureau</i> August 17, 2022</p>	<p>Singapore's efforts to strengthen India's connect with the ASEAN will further New Delhi's Act East policy as well as the shared commitment to international law and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, the Indian envoy here said, aboard the INS Saryu docked at Singapore's Changi Naval Base.</p>
<p>Shinzo Abe played key role in revival of Quad, says Jaishankar <i>Dipanjani Roy Chaudhury, The Economic Times</i> July 23, 2022</p>	<p>Strengthening of India’s bilateral ties with each of its three partners - USA, Japan and Australia - between 2007 and 2017- contributed majorly to revival of Quad and former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe played a big role in the process, said foreign minister S Jaishankar. He conceptualised the Indo-Pacific Region. Abe was bold and entrepreneurial, according to Jaishankar.</p>
<p>Indian Navy’s INS Satpura and P8I participate in the multilateral naval exercise RIMPAC <i>Financial Express Bureau</i> July 8, 2022</p>	<p>INS Satpura and one P8I maritime patrol aircraft are participating in the exercise which spans over six weeks of intense operations and training aimed at enhancing interoperability and building trust among Navies of friendly foreign countries. 28 countries, 38 warships, 09 land forces, 31 unmanned systems, 170 aircraft and over 25,000 personnel are participating in the multi-dimensional exercise.</p>

RELEVANT EVENTS AND VISITS

S. No.	Events/Visits	Major Outcomes
1.	<u>INS Sunayna participates in Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Exercise at Seychelles</u> (September 28, 2022)	Maiden participation in capacity building exercise <i>Operation Southern Readiness</i> conducted by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)
2.	<u>Visit of External Affairs Minister to the United States of America</u> (September 18-28, 2022)	Meetings on wide-ranging bilateral and global issues with the Secretary of State and Defense Secretary, among others
3.	<u>Indian Navy's P8I Aircraft Participates in Exercise Kakadu</u> (September 27, 2022)	Maiden participation of the P8I provided an enhanced exposure to the aircrew, augmenting the understanding of the varied nuances of collaborative Anti-Submarine and Anti-Surface Warfare operations in a complex multi-threat scenario
4.	<u>Quad Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA</u> (September 23, 2022)	Discussions to deepen Quad multilateral cooperation in support of advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is inclusive and resilient
5.	<u>Indo-US Coast Guard Joint Exercise "Abhyas-01/22"</u> (September 19, 2022)	Strengthening the joint working level relationship towards enhancing interoperability in the field of maritime search and rescue, boarding operations and other maritime law enforcement duties
6.	<u>Japan India Maritime Exercise 2022</u> (September 18, 2022)	Both sides engaged in advanced level anti-submarine warfare, weapon firings and air defence exercises. Shipborne helicopters, fighter aircraft and submarines also participated in the exercise
7.	<u>Raksha Mantri's telephonic conversation with US Secretary of Defence</u> (September 14, 2022)	Reviewed the multi-faceted India-US defence cooperation and reiterated mutual commitment to further strengthen military-to-military ties
8.	<u>13th Edition of India - USA Joint Special Forces Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2022</u> (August 28, 2022)	Enhancing joint Air Borne Operations, Special Operations and Counter Terrorism operations

9.	<u>INS Satpura Arrived at San Diego Harbour, USA</u> (August 13, 2022)	The first time an Indian Naval Warship has reached the west coast of North America, thus demonstrating the capability of the Indian Navy to deploy across the globe
10.	<u>INS Satpura Showcases her Professional Prowess in The Pacific Ocean During RIMPAC – 2022</u> (August 02, 2022)	Participated in Anti-Submarine, Anti-Ship and Anti-Air Warfare exercises with multi-national navies in the Pacific Ocean during the sea phase, apart from undertaking cross-deck landings of Indian Naval helicopter on foreign warships and replenishment at sea
11.	<u>Meeting of the Leaders of India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and the United States (I2U2)</u> (July 14, 2022)	Shared vision to harness the vibrancy of their respective societies and entrepreneurial spirit to tackle some of the greatest challenges confronting the world



U.S. Consulate General
Kolkata

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