



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail Aug 5 - 11, 2024

Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press the reply button for your feedback and comments.

U.S.-Australia Strengthen Alliance with a Focus on Indo-Pacific



Figure 1: Australia-U.S. Ministerial (AUSMIN) Consultation held in Maryland U.S.A. / IMAGE/ DOD.gov/

The collaboration between the U.S. and Australia is enhanced to fortify their alliance. The Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosted Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles at Annapolis, Maryland. Both countries have reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the U.S.-Australia Alliance, to ensure a secure and enduring relationship, and to enhance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. Speaking at a joint press event Secretary Blinken [said](#), “At the heart of our work in the Indo-Pacific is our alliance with Australia.” He asserted the crucial importance of the U.S.-Australia alliance, stating that the relationship has grown stronger than ever over the past three and a half years.

The leaders have expressed a strong commitment to enhancing collaboration, both bilaterally and with regional partners and institutions. They are committed to working to achieve a shared vision for the Indo-Pacific, ensuring it is an open, stable, peaceful, and prosperous region that promotes and protects human rights, respects sovereignty, and abides by international law. They have made a commitment to intensify partnerships with Indo-Pacific allies to address mutual priorities such as sustainable development, climate change, security and conflict prevention, cyberspace, digital economy,

technology and connectivity, good governance, health security, and resilience. Additionally, they are dedicated to providing prompt, effective, and comprehensive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The officials are deeply concerned about recent unsafe and unprofessional interactions with Chinese naval vessels and aircraft. These encounters involve freedom of navigation and overflight, which are protected by international law. Both countries intend to maintain their aircraft and vessels in the Indo-Pacific region for an extended period to uphold stability and security in vital international waterways, including the East and South China Seas. Both countries show a strong opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

During the meeting, the officials engaged in extensive discussions on potential collaboration in various areas, including trade, defense, security, climate initiatives, and technology within the region. Additionally, they reaffirmed their dedication to collaborating with regional institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) to strengthen relationships and initiatives in the region. [Read More](#)

Japan Deepens Defense Ties with Vietnam and Cambodia

On his diplomatic tour, Japanese Defense Minister Kihara Minoru embarked on a strategic mission to Cambodia and Vietnam, aiming to fortify defense and security collaborations with key Southeast Asian partners. Notably, Japan and Cambodia [elevated their ties](#) to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” during the visit, signifying a significant advancement in their relationship. The two ministers also delved into detailed discussions on enhancing multilateral cooperation, particularly emphasizing the promotion of Japan-ASEAN collaboration as outlined in the Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE). This milestone underscores Japan's unwavering commitment to fostering comprehensive security measures and regional defense initiatives in Southeast Asia.

Later on, his trip to Hanoi, Mr. Kihara was focused on deepening ties between Japan and Vietnam in the field of defense. He [facilitated the exchange of](#) important documents, including a Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) and a Letter of Arrangement (LOA) that specifically dealt with the transfer of decommissioned material handling vehicles. Notably, this significant event marked the

first transfer of defense equipment between Japan and Vietnam, highlighting the growing collaboration between Japan and Vietnam.

It is important to mention that Japan has become a key player in Southeast Asia, counterbalancing China's increasing assertiveness in the region. Recently, Japan held a military exercise with the Philippines too. South Asian countries see Japan as a reliable and trustworthy partner, especially compared to China's ambitions for regional dominance. [Read More](#)

Multilateral Maritime Drill Commence in the South China Sea

Australia, Canada, the Philippines, and the United States Kicks off military drill in the South China Sea. According to the [joint statement](#), the naval and air force units of the participating nations will collaborate closely in a joint operation. This collaboration aims to improve cooperation and interoperability between their respective armed forces and strengthen the combined efforts of the naval and air forces from four nations in a strategically important maritime area within the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone. The four countries reaffirmed

their joint commitment to enhance regional and international cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific. They also reiterated the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award as a final and legally binding decision on the disputing parties.

In the South China Sea, there is a growing concern over the repeated encounters between Chinese military vessels and the Philippines. A [recent incident](#) involved the Philippines filing a complaint regarding what they deemed as "dangerous and provocative" actions by Chinese forces. Specifically, a Chinese aircraft dropped a flare in the path of a Philippines aircraft, prompting this complaint. [Read More](#)

India Hosts Multinational Exercise *Tarang Shakti* 2024

India is currently [hosting](#) its inaugural multinational air exercise, 'Tarang Shakti 2024,' in the picturesque southern state of Tamil Nadu. This landmark event has attracted participation from over thirty countries, with Australia, Bangladesh, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA, and Singapore showcasing their top-of-the-line fighter aircraft. India's indigenous-made fighter

aircraft Tejas, Mirage 2000, Jaguar, MIG 29 aircraft, and more will participate in the exercise.

The exercise is being carried out in two meticulously planned phases, with the primary goal of displaying India's cutting-edge defense capabilities. Moreover, it serves as a dynamic platform for participating militaries to collaborate and improve their interoperability, fostering stronger international partnerships. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Where is Tyndall Air Force Base located?

- a. U.S.A
- b. France
- c. Australia
- d. Canada

Which country has chosen to transfer its capital to Nusantara?

- a. Malaysia
 - b. Indonesia
 - c. Timor-Leste
 - d. Singapore
-

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ **America's Moody Teenage Ally**, a commentary by Consortium Fellow, Jose Custodio on US Philippines relations. [Read Here](#).
-

Contributions: Indu Saxena