



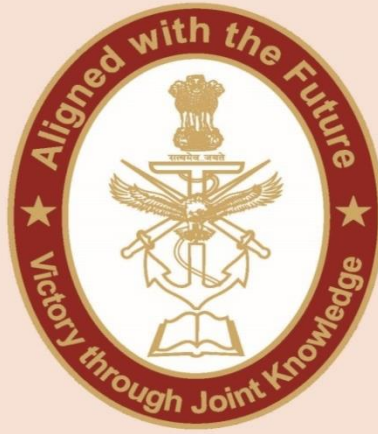
COMMENTARY

AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE: INDIA AND THE WORLD

A REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 2022

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CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



CENJOWS

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Is there a strategy, the government of the day is adopting to secure India's insurance in global politics and thereby emerge as a thought leader besides contributing to global peace?

India's Military diplomacy is only assuming greater proportions each passing month. This article reviews the developments in September this year. Before that, a concise review some major developments in July and August, would be in order.

In July, India engaged with Australia, participating in Ex Pitch Black, also offering the fighter trainer on a G2G, in turn Australia committing to supply critical minerals and materials for Indian Space, defence and EV programs. INS KOCHI', the largest destroyer ship in the Indian Navy, with 8,000 tonnes of displacement visited Safaga Egypt from 28 to 30 June signalling expansion in defence partnership. The destroyer also participated in a PASSEX in which it closely cooperated with the Egyptian Navy. India and Egypt enjoy cordial defence relations and undertake various activities in the fields of training, joint exercises, ships and aircraft transits, defence exhibitions. The first-ever India Air Force-Egyptian Air Force Joint Tactical Air Exercise, 'Desert Warrior', was held in late October 2021. India engaged with US for aeroengines for fighter program, joint projects in I2U2 summit, US recommending a CAATSA waiver, and more.

August was more interesting, with the Indian Navy monitoring Chinese vessel movement for Hambanbota port, French AF Rafales stopping over for Indo-pacific deployment, enhanced relations with Malaysia, Philippines (considering the ALH DHRUV), and handing over of the maritime surveillance aircraft to Sri Lankan Navy. IAF with 3 x Su 30 MKI and 6 x Pilots and Egyptian AF in a Tactical Leadership Program, thus continuing engagement with Egypt. India engaged with Thailand, Bangladesh, and Vietnam (procurement of Indo-Israeli Barak 8 under discussions).

With this brief background, Let us now review the events of September. India engages with Japan, US, Armenia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Singapore and Gulf in an outreach to enhance military cooperation, co-development, co-production, amongst others.

The engagement with Egypt has come about by design, with defence ministers on both sides meeting with a detailed agenda to promote cooperation. There is an endeavour to enhance military diplomacy and a deeper cooperation with the Gulf nations.

Armenia, a nation that has always stood by India at the UN, is already looking beyond its only strategic ally, and with a keen eye on India, has exhibited intent to procure UAVs, UCAVs and EW systems from India besides others. India manages to maintain good relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan too.

The famous statement by Hon'ble PM to stop the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, also echoed by our EAM, S Jaishankar, has only excited the world of the statesmanship, our leadership is exhibiting, in word and deed. Extending Line of credits, gifting military platforms, becoming a preferred source of import, have all added up to the military diplomacy in the region and beyond. A recap of the military exercises with foreign countries between August and now are indicative of the following:-

- (a) Joint exercise "Ex VINBAX: with Vietnam People's Army.
- (b) Royal Army of Oman Contingent for Joint Exercise Al NAJAH-IV in India.
- (c) India part of 17-nation 'Pitch Black' exercise in Australia
- (d) Indian, US Special Forces 3-week joint exercise in the mountains in India.
- (e) IAF participates in bilateral exercise in Malaysia
- (f) Indian Sukhoi fighter jets, C-17 aircraft land in Australia

- (g) India, Vietnam joint military exercise
- (h) Indian Army Contingent in Exercise Vostok- 2022 at Sergeevsky, East Military District Russia.
- (j) Japan – India maritime exercise
- (k) In addition to all of these, there have been a number of port calls by our warships.

Japan Wants to Join India's Self-reliance Journey. Offers Expertise for Building Fighters and Subs.

Indo-Japan relations have reached the next levels with a deeper engagement in defence(2+2), space and materials, with an agreement to cooperate in the future fighter program AMCA and others. Details of the cooperation with Japan and other countries during September are enumerated below.

Ambassador of Japan to India Satoshi Suzuki highlighted various sectors where the two sides could collaborate – like building naval vessels and submarines, participate in the AMCA project, parts, components, and materials which are used in making these different platforms, find items that can match the needs of India, and offered that companies from his country would be able to cooperate at the component or material level. Also, after the 2+2 in Tokyo, between the two defence ministers, following agreements were reached:-

- (a) Enhancing the Defence Equipment and Technological Cooperation between India and Japan is one of the key priority areas.
- (b) India and Japan reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral defence ties and agreed to hold the first joint fighter jets exercise as well as enhance defence co-operation.
- (c) Proposed engagements in emerging and critical technological domains.
- (d) Japanese defence companies to look at opportunities in investing in the Indian Defence Corridors.
- (e) Enhance maritime cooperation including Maritime Domain Awareness.

(f) India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) shares many commonalities with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). India has also developed maritime cooperation with regional partners in consonance with the inclusive vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

India-US Defence Engagement

India and the US discussed ways to further strengthen the strategic partnership by launching the inaugural emerging defence capabilities dialogue later this year. This was announced at the conclusion of the India-USA 2+2 Inter-sessional meeting and the Maritime Security Dialogue.

India and the United States also continued to strengthen their values-based partnership. Both sides "affirmed their shared desire to enhance maritime security internationally and strengthen cooperation towards a free, open, and inclusive maritime order that would support security, inclusive growth, and prosperity. The discussion also touched upon regional issues with discussion of events in South Asia, the Indo-Pacific, and the Indian Ocean Region.

ORF and AMCHAM in India co-hosted a closed-door roundtable on the India-US defence partnership. A potential area of bilateral cooperation discussed was on quality control and quality assurance for the Indian defence companies. Industry partners have noted the stringent requirement of the Indigenous Content in Defence Acquisitions. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative's focus should be expanded from equipment and technologies to include cooperation on Titanium and rare earth metals, which are critical elements of modern defence equipment.

Armenia may Acquire Indian EW Technology, Drones & Anti Drone Systems

It's been over a year and a half since Pashinyan dragged Armenia into catastrophe in the 44-day war. Azerbaijani soldiers continue to occupy parts of Armenia and Artsakh and attack their people. In view of survival of the nation heavily dependent on a single ally, reports have emerged that Armenia is in active negotiation with India over the purchase of Electronic Warfare Systems, besides UAVs, UCAVs, radars and others.

RM Holds Bilateral Talks with His Mongolian Counterpart in Ulaanbaatar

Delegation-level talks between the Raksha Mantri and his Mongolian counterpart are indicative of effective & practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements, reaffirming their commitment to fully implement the Strategic Partnership and reiterating their resolve to reinvigorate the India-Mongolia Joint Working Group (JWG), which will meet in India later this year and inauguration of Cyber Security Training Centre, built with assistance from Government of India, at National Defence University in Ulaanbaatar by the Raksha Mantri.

Top Quad Officials Discuss Regional, Global Developments

A two-day meeting of top Quad officials was held in New Delhi where the representatives from Australia, India, Japan, and the US discussed regional and global developments, reaffirming their vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. They also reviewed ongoing cooperation and progress of initiatives announced under the Quad Framework. South Korea has recently indicated an interest in being a part of Quad plus.

Bangladesh Shares Wish List of Military Hardware for Procurement from India

Marking some progress on the delayed implementation of the \$500 million defence Line of Credit (LoC) extended by India to Bangladesh, Dhaka has recently shared a wish list of military platforms and systems that its armed forces would like to procure from India. This includes:-

- a) Bangladesh Army has approved procurement of 11 Mine Protective Vehicles from the Tata Group, five Bridge Layer Tanks (BLT-72), a variant of T-72 M1 tank used as a Bridge Layer Tank that is designed & developed by CVRDE and R&DE (Engineers) at a cost of approximately \$10 million.
- b) Seven portable steel bridges (Bailey) at a cost of around \$2.2 million.
- c) 11 Mine Protective Vehicles from the Tata Group at an approximate cost of \$2.2 million.
- d) Mahindra XUV 500 cross-country vehicles.
- e) Hard top vehicles from Mahindra at an approximate cost of \$2.35 million.
- f) Heavy recovery vehicles; armoured engineer reconnaissance vehicles.

- g) Bullet proof helmets.
- h) Modernisation and extension of automobile assembling unit for a Bangladesh machine tools factory, which is a proposal from Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Private Limited.
- i) Two types of explosives at a cost of over Rs 4 crore.
- j) 21 types of raw materials at a cost of around Rs 3 crore.
- k) 10 types of tools at a cost of Rs 6.6 crore.
- l) The Bangladesh Navy has proposed the procurement of a logistics ship, floating dock, oil tanker, and an ocean-going tug.
- m) Also seek assistance in construction of warships from the defence shipyards.

France, US Tussle to Sell Fighter Jets for India's Homemade Aircraft Carrier

Dassault Aviation has offered to equip India's homemade aircraft carrier with Rafale jets. But the French firm faces stiff competition from America's Boeing, which is pitching F-18 fighter planes for the new vessel.

Iran Signs Formal MoU to Join SCO; to Become Permanent Member at 2023 India Summit

Iran has signed a memorandum of commitments to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), giving boost to India's focus on an inclusive connectivity agenda in the Eurasian region that would function parallel to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

US Agrees to Transfer Key Defence Tech (Predator Drone) to India, Offers AIM-120D and JASSM-ER with Indian Navy F/A-18 SH Bk-III

The Raksha Mantri announced that the US has agreed to transfer a key defence technology to India which remains confidential as of now which is likely to be the ToT of Predator-Armed drones so that India can locally manufacture these drones. Eyeing the 26 Carrier Borne Fighter deal of the Indian Navy, the US has now offered the 160 kilometres range AIM-120D AMRAAM beyond visual range air-to-air missile and the 925 kilometres range AGM-158B-2 Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile – Extended Range (JASSM-ER) with the Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet Block-III as a weapons package.

India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable in Delhi to Boost Economic Cooperation

India is hosting the maiden India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR), a new ministerial platform between the two countries to boost economic cooperation. The ISMR is a new ministerial platform between Singapore and India which seeks to deepen existing cooperation and identify opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration in new and emerging areas.

RM & His Egyptian Counterpart General Mohamed Zaki hold Bilateral Talks in Cairo.

The two Ministers agreed to identify proposals for expanding cooperation between the defence industries of India and Egypt in a time-bound manner. The meeting discussed ways to enhance military and security cooperation between the two countries, especially with regard to cooperation in joint manufacturing, transfer, and localization of technology, with the aim of exploiting the capabilities and infrastructure available in the two countries, as well as cooperation in the field of training, rehabilitation, and joint exercises. Also, India has offered full ToT, so that LCA Tejas can be manufactured locally at the Arab Organization Facility that is equipped to manufacture fighter jets. South Korea has offered its FA 50 light attack fighter jets with the same offer to Egypt. India is looking to use Egypt as a base to export LCA-Tejas in the African and Middle-eastern markets for which it is also offering re-export clearance along with Full ToT , including training of the crew.

Security and Defence Cooperation Deepening between India and Gulf Nations

Since 2014, India has prioritised improving the relations with the Gulf nations especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UAE and defence cooperation evolved as one of the important areas for furthering bilateral engagements. The first MoU on defence co-operation between India & Saudi Arabia was signed in 2014. Bilateral Defence interaction between India and UAE has been steadily progressing over the years. Recently, UAE military and MIL have signed an agreement for supply of ammunition. Defence cooperation between Oman and India goes back by decades. India-Oman joint naval exercises are a calendar event since 2017. In May 2016, a tripartite agreement was reached between India, Iran and Afghanistan to develop the Iranian port of Chabahar, with India providing \$500 million towards its development.

MoD Asks Bullet Proof Jacket. OEMs to Ensure no Chinese RAW Material is Used.

The decision was taken in reaction to a dispute over bulk-purchased bulletproof jackets for the Army that included a high proportion of Chinese components. A tender issued by the Coast Guard has a clause stating the ban on raw materials from China, mandating such certification. The contract for 746 jackets mandates that competing Indian vendors have to submit a certificate specifying that raw materials will not be imported from China. The Indian Army, which has already inducted BPJs with Chinese content, is likely to float tenders for procurement of protective gear in the future as emergency financial powers have been granted by the defence ministry.

To sum up, there is a larger grand strategy out there, wherein one can see, hear and feel the levels at which India is pursuing military diplomacy. Next month, while I hope to share more on engagements and outcomes, I look forward to reaching out with for an update on the MoD, its policies, procedures and procurements.

CERTIFICATE

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