



House of Commons  
Defence Committee

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# UK Defence and the Indo-Pacific

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**Eleventh Report of Session 2022–23**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 17 October 2023*

## The Defence Committee

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## Summary

The Indo-Pacific region is critical to the UK's economic and security interests. The Indo-Pacific Tilt, as outlined by the Government in the 2021 Integrated Review, is recognition of the importance of the region.

There are, however, significant challenges to the rules-based international order and key flashpoints in the region which raise security threats for the UK and the wider global community. These flashpoints include ongoing border disputes between India and China; territorial disputes in the South China Sea; and a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

The Committee supports the Government's assessment that China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is "an epoch-defining and systemic challenge". We are particularly concerned by the CCP's wider goal to achieve regional and global dominance—and the increasingly aggressive means by which it is pursuing this—which highlights the long-term and strategic threat that China poses to the rules-based international order. It appears that China intends to confront Taiwan, whether by direct military action or 'grey zone' attacks, in the coming years.

With conflict over Taiwan potentially only years away, the Government and the UK Armed Forces must ensure that they have plans for the UK's response, as currently, the UK's regional military presence in the Indo-Pacific remains limited and the strategy to which it contributes is unclear. The Ministry of Defence should pursue closer cooperation with partners, including the US and France, and regional allies, to prepare for a range of actions by China against Taiwan.

The Committee welcomes the announcement of AUKUS, as well as the efforts of the Government to strengthen the UK's relationships with Japan and India. The Government must continue to build on these relationships and foster further defence collaboration. Meanwhile, the UK should reaffirm its commitment as a reliable partner to countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific through engagement with ASEAN, its relationship with the Quad, and the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Although we welcome the progress made in the region, we reject the notion that the 'tilt' has been 'achieved' from a Defence perspective. With only a modest presence compared to allies, little to no fighting force in the region, and little by way of regular activity, UK Defence's tilt to the Indo-Pacific is far from being achieved. If we aspire to play any significant role in the Indo-Pacific this would need a major commitment of cash, equipment and personnel, or potentially rebalancing existing resources.

The UK Government's future strategy for the Indo-Pacific is still unclear. Therefore, we urge the Government to create a single, cross-government Indo-Pacific strategy, and within this, the Ministry of Defence should include a comprehensive defence and diplomatic response to the growing threat posed by China under the CCP.



# 1 Introduction

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1. We launched this inquiry in January 2022 in order to examine the UK’s tilt to the Indo-Pacific, as set out in the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (‘Integrated Review’).<sup>1</sup> Our goal was to assess the UK’s defence standing in the Indo-Pacific, the UK’s regional relationships and how to strengthen these further through defence.

2. We thank all those who gave evidence to this inquiry. We received written evidence from a number of contributors and held four oral evidence sessions. The first evidence session was with: Meia Nouwens, Senior Fellow for Chinese Defence Policy and Military Modernisation, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS); Professor Alessio Patalano, Department of War Studies, King’s College London; and Professor Steve Tsang, Director, SOAS China Institute. The second session was with: Dr Marcus Hellyer, Senior Analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI); Professor Rory Medcalf, Head of National Security College, Australian National University; Ben Bland, Director, Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House; and Dr Rob Yates, Lecturer, University of Bristol. The third session was with: Brigadier (ret.) Ben Barry, Senior Fellow, IISS; and Veerle Nouwens, Senior Research Fellow, Asia-Pacific, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI); John Hemmings, Senior Director, Indo-Pacific Foreign and Security Policy, Pacific Forum; and Seth Jones, Director, International Security Programme, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The final session was with: Baroness (Annabel) Goldie, Minister of State, Ministry of Defence; Nick Gurr, Director, International Security, Ministry of Defence; Brigadier Adrian Reilly, Head of International Security, Ministry of Defence; and Shimon Fhima, Director of Strategic Programmes, Ministry of Defence.

3. We also visited Australia in June 2022 and India in July 2023 to gather additional first-hand evidence to inform our inquiry. In Australia we visited Canberra, Adelaide and Sydney, meeting senior figures from the national and regional governments, national parliamentarians and think tanks, and diplomatic representatives of the Governments of Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. In India we visited New Delhi and Mumbai, meeting the Raksha Mantri (Defence Minister) and Chief of the Defence Staff, alongside other representatives of the Indian Government and armed forces, as well as academics, think tanks, and representatives of the defence industry. This Report is informed by what we heard during these visits as well as by our evidence.

4. In August 2023, the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) published a related report into the Indo-Pacific, which included conclusions and recommendations on defence alliances and partnerships.<sup>2</sup> We note where relevant throughout this Report both where our views align and where we diverge.

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1 [Global Britain in a competitive age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

2 ‘Tilting Horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific’, Eighth Report of Session 2022–23, HC 172, Chapter 4

## 2 UK Government approach to the Indo-Pacific

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### Why is the Indo-Pacific relevant to UK prosperity and security?

5. In the 2023 Integrated Review Refresh, the Government stated that the Indo-Pacific is “critical to the UK’s economy, security and our interest in an open and stable international order”.<sup>3</sup> According to the Government:

- More than 1.7 million British citizens live in the Indo-Pacific;
- The UK’s trading relationship with the region was worth over £250 billion in 2022;
- By 2030, the Indo-Pacific is expected to account for more than 40% of global GDP;
- 60% of global trade passes through shipping routes in the Indo-Pacific, meaning that regional security has a direct impact on households in the UK.<sup>4</sup>

6. We heard that the UK’s Indo-Pacific ‘tilt’—announced in the 2021 Integrated Review—is a recognition of the region as “the global centre of strategic gravity” and a “zone of maritime connectivity with the global system”.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as noted by Ben Bland, Director of the Asia-Pacific programme at Chatham House, whilst the Indo-Pacific is an economically fertile region, it is also the “key crucible for geopolitical competition between China and the west”. He highlighted the South China Sea and Taiwan as two of the region’s “most concerning flashpoints”, both of which raise significant security concerns for the UK.<sup>6</sup>

### *The changing security context in the Indo-Pacific: China’s leading role*

7. The Indo-Pacific region hosts numerous, complex, potential geopolitical flashpoints. These include: disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea; escalating tensions concerning Taiwan; tension and friction on the Korean Peninsula; an ongoing military and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar; the “global chokepoint” Malacca Strait;<sup>7</sup> and several territorial and border disputes. The greatest threat from an international security perspective is posed by the Chinese Communist Party and its confrontational behaviour, given its global ambitions.<sup>8</sup> As such, the various challenges to international security (and therefore, relevant to the UK) that we set out below are related to China.

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3 [Integrated Review Refresh 2023 p22](#)

4 [UK commitment to Indo-Pacific reaffirmed as global summit takes place in Singapore](#)

5 Q44

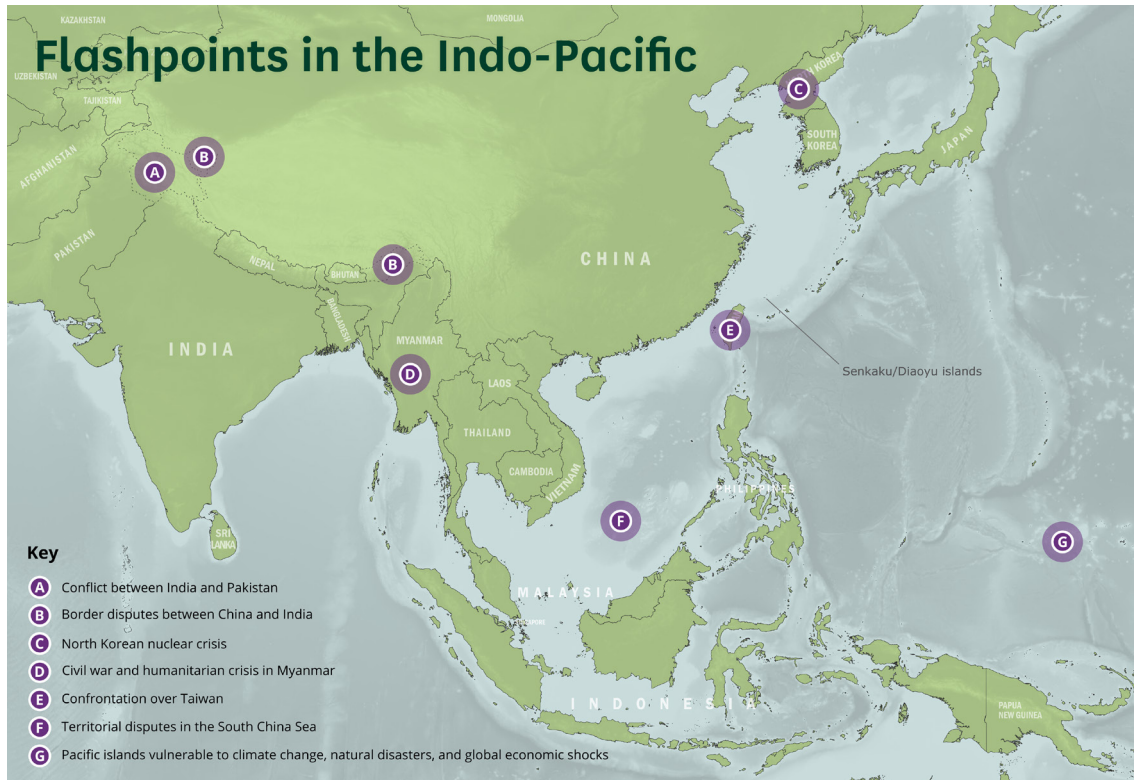
6 Q64

7 [WTO Report - making trade work for the environment, prosperity and resilience p26](#)

8 Q23



Figure 1: Flashpoints in the Indo-Pacific.



Source: [Council on Foreign Relations - Global Conflict Tracker](#), [United States Institute of Peace - Why We Should All Worry About the China-India Border Dispute](#), [UK Small Island Developing States Strategy 2022–2026](#)

8. In particular, many witnesses highlighted the concerning trend of growing Chinese expansionism in the Indo-Pacific in recent years, both in territorial waters and the skies. Meia Nouwens, Senior Fellow in Chinese Defence Policy and Military Modernisation at International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), explained:

We have seen the PLA in essence take at least three of the islands—the three with the largest military bases—under its control, despite promises it made in the past to the United States that it would not do so. [...] China’s long-term trajectory here is control, not necessarily in the sense that no other countries would be allowed to operate in the South China sea, but in the sense that any and all operations in the South China sea—around areas that China claims—would be done with China’s approval and according to Chinese interests.<sup>9</sup>

9. In order to substantiate this “control”, the CCP has militarised artificial islands in these contested waters, reportedly arming them with anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, amongst other capabilities.<sup>10</sup> Steve Tsang, Director of the SOAS China Institute, explained that the Chinese Government believes that “maritime territories claimed by the Chinese Government, are properly Chinese and that they therefore have every right to do whatever they want with them”.<sup>11</sup> Tsang highlighted that the Chinese Government “reinterpret(s) its “promises”: “having reassured the world that they would not militarise the islands they claim [in the South China Sea], those islands that they have built on are














9 Q19

10 [China has fully militarized three islands in South China Sea, US admiral says | South China Sea | The Guardian](#) Q25

11 Q25

now full of military installations”.<sup>12</sup> Baroness Goldie, Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, told us that China’s “military basing [on] these islands” is “unacceptable” and a breach of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in addition to the militarisation of artificial islands, China’s naval expansionism is fuelling rising tensions in the South China Sea due to the ongoing territorial disputes between China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. Seth Jones, Director of the International Security Programme at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), warned us that this “broader expansion of Chinese power and influence” appears to be “Chinese revanchism”, and may lead to the emergence of conflict.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 2: Declared annual defence budget of selected countries in the Indo-Pacific.**

Country	2022 budget (\$bn)	% of GDP	% increase 2013-2022
 US	877.0	3.5%	3%
 China	292.0	1.6%	63%
 India	81.4	2.4%	47%
 South Korea	46.4	2.7%	37%
 Japan	46.0	1.1%	18%
 Australia	32.3	1.9%	47%
 Taiwan	12.5	1.6%	14%
 Pakistan	10.3	2.6%	46%
 Indonesia	9.0	0.7%	9%
 Bangladesh	4.8	1.1%	68%
 New Zealand	2.8	1.2%	55%
 Cambodia	0.6	2.1%	96%
 Fiji	0.1	1.4%	16%

Source: SIPRI - Military expenditure in Asia and Oceania, 2022 , SIPRI - Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2022

### *China’s role in the changing security context*

10. China is rapidly militarising, with a growing military budget each year. This militarisation is a driver of increasing regional tensions, and has reportedly “fuelled an arms race across the region”.<sup>15</sup> In the Integrated Review Refresh, the Government identified China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as an “epoch-defining and systematic challenge” to which the UK will respond through a new three-part approach, ‘Protect-Align-Engage’.<sup>16</sup> The Defence Command Paper Refresh, published in July 2023, added:

12 Q25

13 Q151

14 Q131

15 [Asia’s quiet militarization threatens to turn the region into a powder keg | CNN](#); [Asia’s arms race: potential flashpoints from Taiwan to the South China Sea | Asia Pacific | The Guardian](#)

16 Under Protect, the UK will strengthen and prioritise national security protections including in the areas of the economy, democratic freedoms, critical national infrastructure, supply chains, and science and technology. Under Align, the UK commits to deepening cooperation and increasing alignment with allies. Under Engage, the UK will engage with China directly to foster a positive trade and investment relationship whilst avoiding dependencies and protecting national security. Further details can be found on page 31 of the Integrated Review Refresh [Integrated Review Refresh](#)

Escalating tensions in the Indo-Pacific, driven by China's actions, present a direct challenge to a region that we believe should remain free and open for the prosperity of all. However, as the IRR set out, the UK does not accept that China's relationship with the UK, or its impact on the international system, are set on a predetermined course.<sup>17</sup>

11. We heard that there is increasing concern regarding the “power projection and expanding capabilities” of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA),<sup>18</sup> and that the PLA has been preparing for decades for conflict over Taiwan.<sup>19</sup> Professor Steve Tsang, stated that, ultimately, President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping wants China to “achiev[e] dominance in the Asia-Pacific region” as a “critical step towards China regaining its rightful place, from their perspective, in the world as whole”.<sup>20</sup>

12. In order to meet such goals, in its 14th Five-Year Plan, the CCP states that it will “ensure achievement of the centennial objective of building a [modernized] military by 2027”.<sup>21</sup> This will be achieved through strengthening battle readiness, accelerating the technology of the military, and increasing “strategic capability” to defend national sovereignty, amongst other measures.<sup>22</sup> Building on the 2027 objective, the CCP seeks to develop the PLA into a “world-class military” by 2049, the centenary of the founding of the PRC.<sup>23</sup> According to Professor Tsang, China's increasing military capacity and modernisation reflects the “new assertive approach of the Chinese Government under Xi Jinping”.<sup>24</sup>

13. The CCP's goals for a modernised and world-class military are supported by persistent increases in defence spending. In 2023, the Chinese Government announced an annual defence budget of \$224.8 billion, an apparent increase of 7.2% on the previous year.<sup>25</sup> China's defence budget has nearly doubled since 2012<sup>26</sup> and has increased by approximately \$15.64 billion since the 2027 military objective was announced in 2021.<sup>27</sup> There are, however, questions as to whether Chinese defence spending is accurately and transparently reported.<sup>28</sup> The IISS think tank accounts for this uncertainty by estimating an additional 33% spend to the officially declared budget.<sup>29</sup> We heard that the driving force behind the increase in the Chinese Government's defence spending is threat perception.<sup>30</sup>

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17 [Defence Command Paper 2023](#)

18 Q119; China refers to its Armed Forces, including the three Services, as the People's Liberation Army.

19 Q16

20 Q23

21 [14th Five Year Plan - English Translation.pdf](#) p131. The People's Republic of China 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives for 2035 (“the 14th Five-Year Plan”) was published in May 2021. Translation by the Center for Security and Emerging Technology at Georgetown University.

22 [Outline of the People's Republic of China 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social.pdf](#) p130–131. English translation by the Center for Security and Emerging Technology, Georgetown University

23 Q27, and [US Department of State - Military-Civil Fusion and the People's Republic of China](#). There are rumours that this deadline may be moved in upcoming Chinese annual defence report - [China eyes accelerated plan for 'world-class military,' Japan says - The Japan Times](#)

24 Q25

25 [Xinhua - China's 2023 defense budget to rise by 7.2 pct](#)

26 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p147–148

27 This calculation does not account for inflation. Calculations based on 2023 military budget of \$224.8 billion, and 2021 military budget of \$209.16 billion, according to CSIS [Understanding China's 2021 Defense Budget \(csis.org\)](#)

28 Q3

29 Q3

30 Q3

### *Tensions in the South China Sea and Taiwan*

14. Within the Indo-Pacific region, possible conflict between China and Taiwan in the coming years is the most pressing and urgent concern for many western governments. Professor Alessio Patalano of King's College London's Department of War Studies, stated that Taiwan is the "largest outstanding sovereign matter", as from the Chinese Government perspective, "Taiwan is a province of China".<sup>31</sup> Meia Nouwens told us that the Chinese armed forces have been in preparation for a conflict over Taiwan for decades as Taiwan is one of China's "core interests".<sup>32</sup> In April 2023, Joseph Wu, Taiwan's Foreign Minister, told British media that he is preparing for possible conflict with China in 2027,<sup>33</sup> whilst in February 2023, General Mike Minihan, a former deputy commander for US Indo-Pacific command, said he believes that "Xi's team, reason, and opportunity are aligned for 2025".<sup>34</sup> Professor Patalano echoed this sentiment as he told us that:

2027 is the centenary of the PLA, so it has been tasked with being capable enough to phase the need to deploy and recall outstanding soldiering for territorial disputes, particularly Taiwan. 2035 is another important deadline for the world-class military, all building up to 2049.<sup>35</sup>

In September 2023, Taiwan's Defence Ministry raised concerns over a sharp rise in Chinese military activities close to the island and the resulting "serious challenges" to security.<sup>36</sup> Taken together, the evidence tells us that a conflict over Taiwan could be only a matter of years away.

15. It is worth noting that whilst an invasion of Taiwan has been frequently discussed by commentators, there is also now serious concern over a more ambiguous scenario of a de-facto economic blockade of Taiwan or a grey-zone, hybrid attack.<sup>37</sup>

16. Conflict over, or a blockade affecting, Taiwan would have an acute global impact and directly affect UK households due to the significant flows of trade and shipping through the region: 48% of the world's 5400 operational container ships passed through the Taiwan Strait in the first half of 2022.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Taiwan produces 92% of the world's most advanced semiconductor chips, which are essential to the manufacture of military equipment,<sup>39</sup> as well as everyday consumer electronics. The economic consequences, in addition to the civilian casualties, of a conflict in Taiwan would "dwarf the war in Ukraine", with the further possibility of nuclear escalation.<sup>40</sup> The Foreign Affairs Committee has noted similar concerns about the global impact of hostile action in Taiwan.<sup>41</sup>

17. Seth Jones told us that a conflict with Taiwan may "emerge as part of a broader expansion of Chinese power and influence", as Taiwan is just one element of a much

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31 Q26

32 Q16

33 [The Guardian - Taiwan foreign minister warns of conflict with China in 2027](#) ; [The Independent - Taiwan's foreign minister says country is preparing for possibility of war with China in 2027](#)

34 [The Guardian - US general's 'gut' feeling of war with China sparks alarm over predictions](#)

35 Q27

36 [Reuters - Taiwan urges China to stop 'destructive' military activities](#)

37 [Taipei Times - Economic blockade more likely than war: deputy minister](#)

38 [Bloomberg - Taiwan Tensions Raise Risks in One of Busiest Shipping Lanes](#)

39 Beijing to Britain briefing, 11 June 2023

40 Q132 Seth Jones

41 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#), August 2023, paragraph 66

broader effort by the CCP to increase its “global military power, diplomatic influence and economic power”, exemplified by expansionism of Chinese military bases across the Indo-Pacific.<sup>42</sup> Professor Tsang explained that:

Ultimately, the Chinese Government under Xi Jinping are not looking to replace the United States, but are expecting to become the world’s first nation, and the most respected and admired country in the world—the centre of the world.<sup>43</sup>

18. Professor Tsang went on to caution that the first step in achieving this aim is to resolve the Taiwan situation in favour of China, and that includes going toe-to-toe with the United States. For the CCP, that is the first step to fundamentally changing the global order.<sup>44</sup>

**19. The Chinese Government’s wider goal to achieve regional and global dominance—and the increasingly aggressive means by which it is pursuing this—highlight the long-term and strategic threat that China poses to the rules-based international order. It appears that China intends to confront Taiwan, whether by direct military action or ‘grey zone’ attacks, in the coming years. Any conflict in Taiwan will have formidable consequences across the globe and risks the international rules-based order. *The Government and the UK Armed Forces must ensure that they have plans for the UK’s response—co-ordinated with allies and partners—to a range of actions by China against Taiwan. The Government should set out these plans to the Committee in a classified private briefing.***

### *Modernisation of the Chinese armed forces*

20. Over the past decade the PLA has been strengthening its armed forces in order to meet its goals for modernisation by 2027 and building a world-class force by 2049.<sup>45</sup> Since 2016, the PLA has undergone “significant restructuring” across the combatant, command-and-control, and joint command levels,<sup>46</sup> with varying levels of advancements across the forces. Historically, the army has been the dominant force of the PLA but as a result of modernisation efforts, the air force and navy are now priorities.<sup>47</sup> Witnesses gave us the following assessments of the PLA’s three Services:

- **Army:** In 2022, the PLA Army had an estimated 975,000 active duty personnel in combat units.<sup>48</sup> Whilst the PLA has concentrated on modernising equipment through the implementation of new and upgraded weapons systems, the ground force “still widely employ a mix of modern and obsolete tanks and armoured fighting vehicles”.<sup>49</sup> However, in terms of heavy equipment, Meia Nouwens believes the PLA are confident that the army has successfully become a force that can “rapidly mobilise and perform trans-theatre and cross-theatre operations”.<sup>50</sup>

42 Q131 Seth Jones

43 Q23

44 Q23

45 [Council on Foreign Relations - China’s Modernizing Military](#) ; [Xinhua - Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous](#)

46 Q26

47 Q10

48 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p46

49 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p46–47

50 Q5

Seth Jones highlights that the number of Chinese military bases in the Indo-Pacific region has also increased in recent years, extending to the Solomon Islands, and further afield to Djibouti.<sup>51</sup>

- **Navy:** According to the US Department of Defense, the PLA Navy is the largest in the world numerically, with approximately 340 ships and submarines, “largely composed of modern multi-mission ships and submarines”.<sup>52</sup> There appears to be a third aircraft carrier close to completion, and a fourth that could possibly be nuclear-powered.<sup>53</sup> In 2022, the Liaoning aircraft carrier, the first aircraft carrier built by China, conducted exercises close to Taiwan. These exercises have continued in 2023 as the Liaoning undertook “air defense, anti-submarine training and confrontation drills close to actual combat”.<sup>54</sup> According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a US think tank, the entry of China’s first aircraft carrier was, for some, “a symbol of China’s global power: for others, it represented a significant first step toward a more muscular and assertive Chinese navy”.<sup>55</sup> However, we heard that the ability to man and maintain these three aircraft carriers to the required level poses an ongoing challenge.<sup>56</sup>
- **Air force:** The PLA’s Air Force and PLA Navy Aviation “together constitute the largest aviation force in the Indo-Pacific”, with the Air Force continuing to modernise with the delivery of domestically built aircraft.<sup>57</sup> Meia Nouwens told us, however, that the PLA has an air force of “multiple generations” and capabilities, although in some areas, such as air-to-air missiles, PLA capabilities outmatch those of the UK.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, questions remain as to “the air force’s ability to project power at great distance”, as the required logistics and capabilities are progressing slowly.<sup>59</sup>

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51 Q131

52 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p50

53 Q5, and “China’s newest aircraft carrier, the Fujian, is expected commission in 2024”. [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p51

54 [Aircraft carrier group conducts series of successful exercises - Chinadaily.com.cn](#)

55 [How does China’s first aircraft carrier stack up? | China Power Project \(csis.org\)](#)

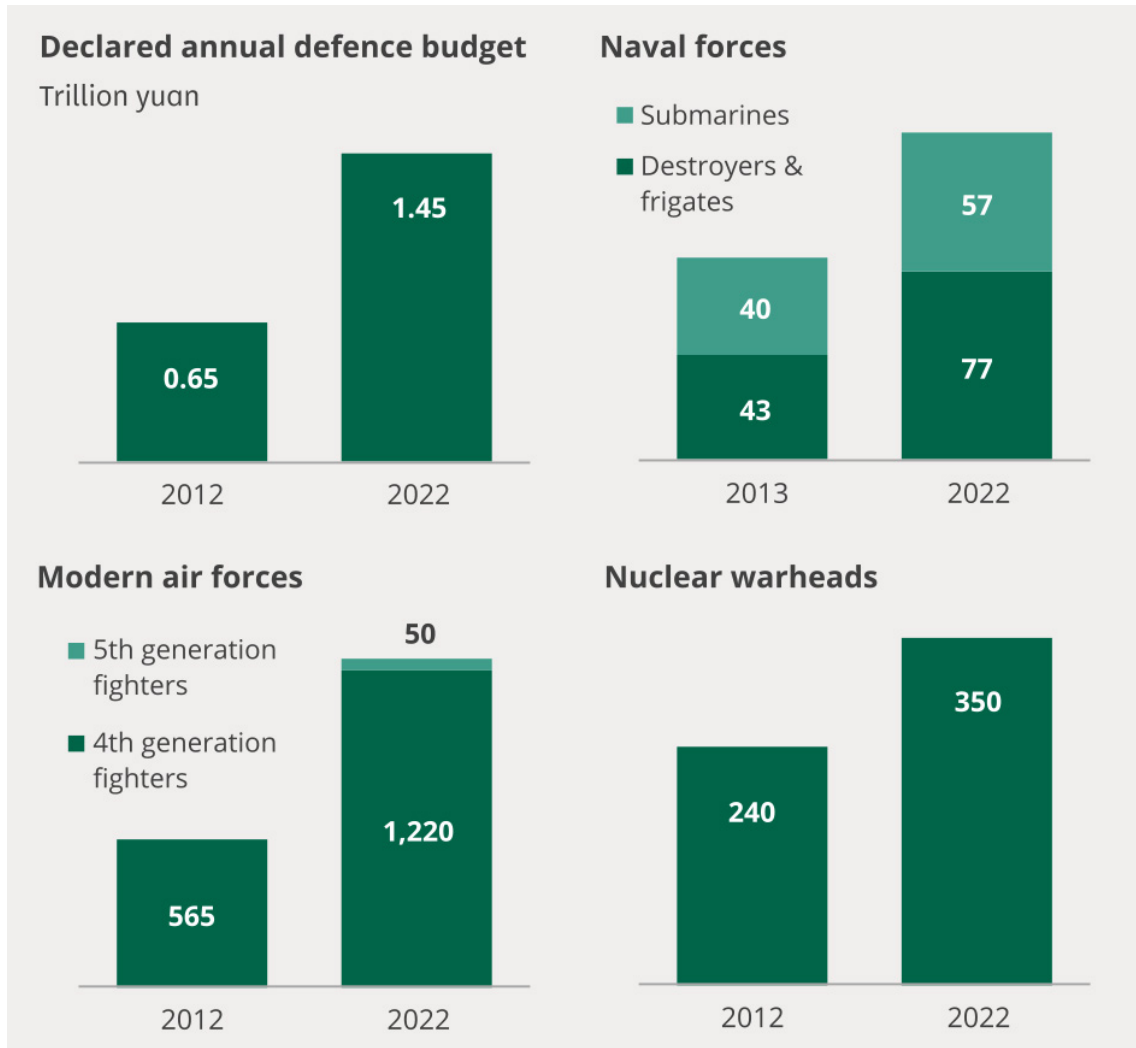
56 Q5

57 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p59

58 Q5



















59 Q5

Figure 3: The modernisation of China’s People’s Liberation Army.



Source: [Japan Ministry of Defense - Defense of Japan 2023](#) booklet p2

**Figure 4: Naval and air force capabilities of China’s People’s Liberation Army compared with the UK’s armed forces.**

Naval capabilities					
<b>Destroyers</b>		<b>Frigates</b>		<b>Principal amphibious ships</b>	
 China	42	 China	41	 China	11
 UK	6	 UK	12	 UK	2
<b>Cruisers</b>		<b>Ballistic missile submarines</b>		<b>Aircraft carriers</b>	
 China	7	 China	6	 China	2
 UK	0	 UK	4	 UK	2
Air force capabilities					
<b>Combat capable aircraft</b>		<b>Fighter ground attack aircraft</b>		<b>Electronic intelligence aircraft</b>	
 China	2,566	 China	1,182+	 China	4
 UK	201	 UK	153	 UK	3

Source: [IISS Military Balance 2023](#)

21. Although the three services of the PLA have undergone modernisation with a focus on equipment, we heard that critically, modernisation of equipment does not necessarily equate to improvements in capability.<sup>60</sup> The PLA is not as experienced, and likely not as capable, in coordinated combat under network-centric conditions.<sup>61</sup> The PLA has failed to prioritise and incentivise jointness and the ground forces continue to have “entrenched power” structurally,<sup>62</sup> undermining the PLA’s ability to maximise capacity in combined army operations. The human capabilities of the forces have often not followed the same modernisation trajectory.<sup>63</sup> However, according to the US Department of Defense, the Central Military Commission “sought to improve PLA combat readiness, interoperability, and training through the 14th Five-Year Plan”.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, China has an advantage in terms of timing in its regional proximity to likely conflicts in the South China Sea or with Taiwan.<sup>65</sup>

### *Military-civil fusion and innovation*

22. China’s military modernisation efforts have focussed on innovation and the adoption of emerging technology, including the policy of military-civil fusion. China’s 14th 5-Year Plan stated the ambition to “deepen military-civilian S&T collaboration and innovation” including in the areas of “maritime, aerospace, cyberspace, biotech, new energy, AI, quantum technology, and other fields”.<sup>66</sup> We heard that this policy has been implemented in China for several years and is now being prioritised and incentivised in ways not previously seen.<sup>67</sup> As a tangible demonstration of this, it is reported that “almost every provincial and municipal government has formed local-level [military-

60 Q13

61 Q14

62 Q5, Q10

63 Q13

64 [2022 China Military Power Report \(CMPR\) \(defense.gov\)](#) p74

65 Q14

66 [14th Five Year Plan - English Translation p131](#)

67 Q21



civil fusion] development committees led by party officials and rolled out development plans”.<sup>68</sup> Whilst China’s military-civil fusion efforts are widely commented on, we heard that the effectiveness of this fusion can be overestimated, and there have been difficulties in bringing together private companies and state-owned enterprises, the latter of which dominate the Chinese defence sector.<sup>69</sup>

23. China has historically relied on foreign technology transfer for its defence needs, but this reliance is receding and expected to be largely eliminated by 2028.<sup>70</sup> According to Meia Nouwens, China can increasingly “innovate and depend on the domestic, indigenous defence industrial capacity to a greater extent”, although some inefficiencies remain in the process.<sup>71</sup> There continue to be reports, however, that the Chinese Government is using “espionage efforts” and “stealing” secret US military technology.<sup>72</sup> Some of China’s latest military technology, such as its fifth-generation fighter jet, the J-20, and the commonly called Type-004 domestically-built aircraft carrier, appear to be largely based on Western designs.<sup>73</sup> The Intelligence and Security Committee has also highlighted Chinese activity in the UK as China seeks to “acquire Intellectual Property using covert and overt methods to gain technological supremacy”.<sup>74</sup>

**24. The Committee supports the Government’s assessment that China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is “an epoch-defining and systemic challenge”. China seeks to erode the current rules-based international order by exploiting weaknesses in the system. Rather than looking to act as the world’s policeman in a mutually beneficial system, China’s interest is in establishing dominance over its wider region to purely Chinese advantage. In military terms, China’s publicly stated ambition to “fight and win” global wars by 2049 illustrates the threat it poses to international security. An important waypoint is China’s goal of establishing a fully modernised military—and a peer adversary of the United States—by 2027. *The Government should carry out an assessment of China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to consider whether it should be labelled as a threat to national and international security.***

## The UK’s ‘Tilt’ under the 2021 Integrated Review

25. In March 2021, the Government published the Integrated Review, which outlined the cross-government response to deepening and proliferating security challenges. A key element of this response was the framework for the UK’s Indo-Pacific ‘Tilt’ which emphasised the economic importance of, and the challenges faced in, the region, ranging from climate concerns to maritime security and geopolitical competition, linked to global rules and norms. The Review stated that the UK “will be the European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific—committed for the long term, with closer and deeper partnerships, bilaterally and multilaterally”. The Indo-Pacific tilt outlined in the 2021 Review was, “primarily not one of defence policy”, rather

68 [Commercialized Militarization: China’s Military-Civil Fusion Strategy - The National Bureau of Asian Research \(NBR\)](#) para 6

69 Q21

70 Q4

71 Q3

72 [Fox News - China has stolen US military secrets to create formidable J-20 knockoff of America’s F-22 Raptor](#)

73 [New York Post - China reportedly stole US military technology for its J-20 fighter](#), [The Drive - New Chinese Carrier Concept Looks A Lot Like U.S. Navy’s Ford Class](#)

74 Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, [China](#), July 2023

of foreign policy.<sup>75</sup> The Review, did however, still focus on strengthening the UK’s defence and maritime security coordination, including enhancing engagement with established partners and regional security groupings.

26. Following this, the UK Government published the Integrated Review Refresh in March 2023 to reflect the changes in the global context since the 2021 Integrated Review, including the consequences of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The 2023 Refresh stated that the UK had delivered the original ambition for the tilt, and the target is now to ensure this increased regional engagement is an “enduring and permanent pillar” of UK foreign policy.

27. The Ministry of Defence also published an updated Defence Command Paper in July 2023. The Paper stated that, since 2021, the Ministry of Defence has “more than delivered on the defence commitments we made to the tilt”, through an increased regional presence; the deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier and her Carrier Strike Group; and expanded regional engagement through the network of Defence Attachés, regular deployments, and exercises with allies.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the Defence Command Paper states that the Government “will now maintain the progress we have made, putting the tilt on to a long-term, strategic, sustainable footing, including through delivering on our campaigning approach: strengthening our presence, deepening our partnerships, robustly defending international norms and values, and helping grow regional resilience”.<sup>77</sup>

### *The UK’s approach to security in the Indo-Pacific*

28. As a result of the significant flashpoints and growing hostilities in the Indo-Pacific, Baroness Goldie told us that the region is likely “to get more tense” over the next 10 years.<sup>78</sup> Most countries in the region, however, want the area to remain stable and open,<sup>79</sup> and the UK has joined with regional powers, including the US, Canada and Japan, in advocating for a free and open Indo-Pacific.<sup>80</sup> Baroness Goldie told us that the UK’s “optimum presence” in the region is “designed partly to address geopolitical tensions”, but also to enable the free flow of trade, highlighting the UK’s regional interests and its approach to managing risk and seizing opportunity in the region.<sup>81</sup>

29. Regarding the nature of a potential conflict in the region, we heard that on the one hand, China has the ability to “challenge regional interests below the thresholds of conflict”, but also that “high intensity conflict against a peer-adversary will likely be startlingly fast in escalation and lethal in character”.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, in anticipation of the interplay between possible hybrid and conventional conflict, the UK should “establish a greater forward-positioned, multi-domain force capable of operating across the security spectrum”, with cyber and outer space capabilities as a core element.<sup>83</sup>

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75 [RUSI - Unnecessary Delay: The Integrated Review Refresh 2023](#)

76 [Defence’s response to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p84

77 [Defence’s response to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p85

78 Q148

79 Q152

80 [U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#) ; [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy \(international.gc.ca\)](#) ; [Free and Open Indo-Pacific | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan \(mofa.go.jp\)](#)

81 Q149

82 Mr Brett Thomas ([INP0004](#)) para 12 and 13

83 Mr Brett Thomas ([INP0004](#)) para 16

30. Baroness Goldie told us that the UK’s increased presence in the region “is not directed at any one nation”, but to contribute to the broader regional security and stability.<sup>84</sup> For the UK there is, however, the fundamental issue of geographical distance which can be a barrier to the UK’s influence in the region,<sup>85</sup> although most nations in the region have broadly welcomed the increased UK presence.<sup>86</sup>

31. The UK has responded to the escalating tensions in the Indo-Pacific by increasing military deployments to the region. The UK is increasing its forward presence through the deployment of Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) from 2021, Littoral Response Group (LRG) in 2023, and a Type 31 frigate later in the decade.<sup>87</sup> We heard praise for the deployment of the two OPVs,<sup>88</sup> and that the LRG will be a “very useful contribution” once deployed,<sup>89</sup> noting the valuable non-combatant role they can play in building relationships and supporting regional responses to crises, and also the importance of demonstrating UK interoperability with allies.<sup>90</sup> For example, HMS Spey rapidly delivered crucial humanitarian aid to Tonga in January 2022, following an underwater volcanic eruption and tsunami.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, HMS Tamar carried out patrols to ensure the enforcement of United Nations sanctions against North Korea, thereby contributing to the rules-based international order.<sup>92</sup> According to the Ministry of Defence, the deployment of the LRG will “build on the achievements of the CSG by demonstrating enduring UK interest and presence in the region”.<sup>93</sup>

32. This permanent presence was enhanced by the deployment of the Carrier Strike Group, which made its maiden voyage to the Indo-Pacific in 2021. This deployment was described by Baroness Goldie as “a major part of [the UK’s] tangible demonstration of the tilt”.<sup>94</sup> During its 2021 deployment, the CSG engaged and undertook exercises with numerous countries in the Indo-Pacific including Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam and Australia.<sup>95</sup> We heard that the deployment had a strong military and political impact in the region, while the UK’s ability to cooperate operationally with the Netherlands and the US demonstrated the navy’s interoperability.<sup>96</sup> As highlighted by the Ministry of Defence, however, the UK’s regional aims cannot be achieved through a singular CSG deployment,<sup>97</sup> therefore, in May 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak committed to again deploying the CSG to the region in 2025.<sup>98</sup>

33. The MOD also highlights the role of permanent basing in supporting the UK’s military presence in Brunei, Singapore and the British Indian Ocean Territory,<sup>99</sup> as well

84 Q134

85 Mr James Rogers (Director of Research at Council on Geostrategy); Mr Patrick Triglavcanin (Research Assistant at Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#)) para 13

86 Q152

87 [Defence in a competitive age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p30

88 Ben Barry Q98, Q99

89 Ben Barry Q98

90 Q152

91 [HMS Spey delivers crucial aid to Tonga following devastating tsunami \(mod.uk\)](#)

92 [HMS Tamar enforces UN sanctions against North Korea \(mod.uk\)](#)

93 Ministry of Defence ([INP0015](#)) page 1

94 Q134

95 [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

96 Dr Jie Sheng Li (Freelance Research Analyst at Self) ([INP0002](#)) page 4; Mr James Rogers (Director of Research at Council on Geostrategy); Mr Patrick Triglavcanin (Research Assistant at Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#)) para 15

97 Ministry of Defence ([INP0015](#)) page 4

98 [PM to agree historic UK-Japan Accord ahead of G7](#)

99 Ministry of Defence ([INP0015](#)) page 1

as a permanent joint operating base in Diego Garcia.<sup>100</sup> However, these bases are not substantial and do not represent any degree of fighting force in the region. For example, the UK's presence in Singapore takes the form of a small logistics facility known as the British Defence Singapore Unit. In 2019, the MOD said that the unit is made up of five military personnel, two civil servants and 21 locally employed contractors.<sup>101</sup>

34. We have heard calls for the UK to establish more bases in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>102</sup> However, Veerle Nouwens, Senior Research Fellow in the Asia-Pacific at RUSI, told us that basing remains a “very sensitive issue”:

It is on the sovereign territory of other states, and it must be according to what they are comfortable with. I do not see how you could get around that. So if this is a serious ambition—if this is a serious request on the part of the UK—then those conversations need to be happening behind the scenes, because it is just incredibly sensitive. That is not because the UK wants to shy away from China, but it is really about understanding the comfort levels and the perspectives of the states in the region, who are there permanently.<sup>103</sup>

35. This increased military presence has also been supported by a “substantive increase in UK defence diplomacy”, and enhanced relationships with regional allies and partners. There has, for example, been the creation of a new British defence headquarters in Canberra and an increase in the number of defence diplomats in Singapore, Japan, and Korea.<sup>104</sup>

36. In contrast with the UK's presence, the United States has a dedicated command for the region. Whilst it is not a fair and direct comparison given the difference in size and resourcing between the UK and the US, the US' commitment to the region is clear to see. The US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) is one of six geographic unified combatant commands of the US armed forces. The Command is based in Hawaii and has personnel stationed and deployed throughout the region. Approximately 375,000 US military and civilian personnel are assigned to the Command.<sup>105</sup>

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100 Mr James Rogers (Director of Research at Council on Geostrategy); Mr Patrick Patrick Triglavcanin (Research Assistant at Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#)) para 17

101 [WPQ 227935](#); [WPQ 139415](#)

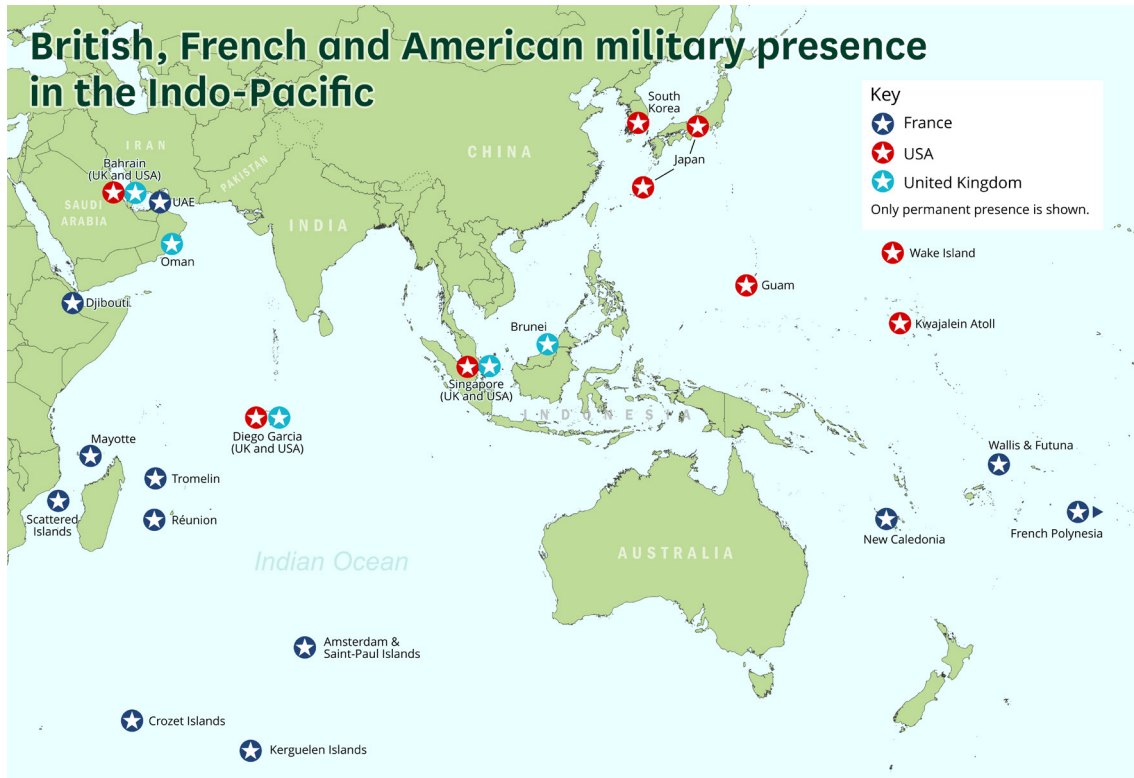
102 Written evidence 13.4–5

103 Q104

104 Q96, Q110

105 US INDOPACOM, [About](#)

Figure 5: British, French and American military presence in the Indo-Pacific.



Source: The Henry Jackson Society - *Global Britain in the Indo-Pacific* (2018) p17, Congressional Research Service - *U.S. Defense Infrastructure in the Indo Pacific* (2023) p9, France in the US - *France and Security in the Indo-Pacific* (2019) p7

37. Perhaps a fairer comparison to make would be that of France. France launched its Indo-Pacific strategy in May 2018 and updated it in February 2022, before the invasion of Ukraine. France is present in the region via its overseas territories and 93% of its exclusive economic zone (sovereign sea) is in the Indian and Pacific oceans. The region is home to 1.5 million French people as well as 8,000 soldiers.<sup>106</sup> Dr Walter Ladwig, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King's College London, explained that “France is a natural partner for Britain in the Indo-Pacific” as a result of their “compatible” priorities for the region and the mutual challenge of balancing interests in the Indo-Pacific and those in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>107</sup> Dr Ladwig therefore suggests that “a collaborative approach with France would allow the pooling of resources and potentially create a foundation for mutually beneficial tri-lateral engagement with regional partners like India”.<sup>108</sup>

38. In the 2023 Defence Command Paper Refresh, the UK Government stated that together with France, the UK's closest European ally, it will explore opportunities to “demonstrate for the first time the sequencing of more persistent European Carrier Strike Group presence in the Indo-Pacific”, as well as seeking to enhance joint military capabilities and industrial cooperation.<sup>109</sup>

106 Ministry of External Affairs, [The Indo-Pacific region: a priority for France](#)

107 Dr. Walter C. Ladwig III (Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King's College London) ([INP0012](#)) para 15

108 Dr. Walter C. Ladwig III (Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King's College London) ([INP0012](#)) para 16

109 [Defence's response to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p77

39. It is worth pointing out that the 2021 Integrated Review stated that its goal was to “be the European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific”.<sup>110</sup> It is also worth noting that the 2023 Integrated Review Refresh said that the Government has “delivered the original IR ambition for a ‘tilt’”.<sup>111</sup>

40. Brigadier (ret.) Ben Barry, Senior Fellow at IISS, told us that the rapidly changing operating environment of the Indo-Pacific requires the UK to have a “proper grand inter-agency strategy for the UK to approach to China”,<sup>112</sup> and to continue close cooperation and engagement in the region with allies such as Australia, Japan and France. In accordance with this, Baroness Goldie told us that the UK is working bilaterally and multilaterally to be “a constructive partner to countries in the region who we believe share similar values and objectives”<sup>113</sup> and that the “aggregate presence of all the like-minded nations we have in the area ... is a powerful presence”.<sup>114</sup>

### The Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific: inextricably linked?

41. The Government’s commitment to the Tilt has prompted questions as to where the UK should concentrate its finite security and defence capabilities: the Euro-Atlantic theatre—the UK’s home region to which it is committed to through NATO, and in which there is currently a major war; or the Indo-Pacific—a region which hosts a complex nexus of geopolitical flashpoints, in which the UK is still establishing and nurturing its presence and status. The Integrated Review Refresh stated that Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security are “inextricably linked”, leading to the development of a “new network of ‘Atlantic-Pacific’ partnerships” between allies that share this view.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, Baroness Goldie was clear that whilst the UK’s “Euro-Atlantic security obligation remains a priority” in the short-to-medium term, the UK will continue to build on actions in the Indo-Pacific, together with partners and allies.<sup>116</sup>

42. We heard a range of views on the Government’s approach in explicitly linking the two theatres and its increased allocation of limited resources to the Indo-Pacific while maintaining that the Euro-Atlantic is its security priority. Meia Nouwens, for instance, agreed with the Government view that the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic are connected in their security and prosperity, and the UK has vested interests in this.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Nouwens states that the UK needs to be present in the region, not just for domestic interests, but to “uphold the rules-based international order in a region where it has been heavily contested in the last few years”.<sup>118</sup> Brigadier (ret.) Ben Barry also emphasised the importance of the UK’s role in the Indo-Pacific, saying that due to the economic significance of the region and China’s “malign” behaviour, the UK cannot retreat from the region.<sup>119</sup>

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110 [Integrated Review 2021](#), p. 66

111 [Integrated Review Refresh 2023](#), p. 22

112 Q110

113 Q152

114 Q151

115 [Integrated Review Refresh 2023](#), p. 7

116 Q133

117 Q1

118 Q1

119 Q111

43. Witnesses also discussed the implications of the UK’s geographical distance from the region for decisions on force deployment. John Hemmings, Senior Director of Indo-Pacific Foreign and Security Policy at the Pacific Forum, suggested that the UK need not devote resources to the region permanently. He instead argued that the UK should focus on the closer Euro-Atlantic theatre—particularly following the renewed invasion of Ukraine while maintaining a steady drumbeat of deployments to the Indo-Pacific, such as the CSG, as these deployments send a positive message to allies.<sup>120</sup> Seth Jones, however, emphasised the “huge tyranny of distance, time and space” between the UK and the Indo-Pacific,<sup>121</sup> which presents a fundamental challenge.

**44. The UK’s regional military presence in the Indo-Pacific remains limited and the strategy to which it contributes is unclear. This contrasts to both the US—a global and Pacific power—and to France—a more comparable actor to the UK in terms of geography, scale, and military capability. Without a larger permanent presence it is unlikely that the UK would be able to make a substantial contribution to allied efforts in the event of conflict in the region. In order to deliver this, the Government must make a choice as to whether it will increase resources in the region, or rebalance current resources towards the Indo-Pacific. *The Ministry of Defence should pursue closer cooperation with the United States and France and continue to pursue basing with other regional allies. All of these efforts should be consolidated into a single, cross-government strategy for the Indo-Pacific which states how the UK’s military instruments should be utilised in both peacetime and during conflict.***

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120 Hemmings Q130

121 Q130

## 3 UK Defence Relationships in the Indo-Pacific

45. The Integrated Review 2021 and Integrated Review Refresh 2023 both emphasised the importance of alliances and developing bilateral and multilateral relationships.<sup>122</sup> The Integrated Review Refresh said:

we will prioritise working through partners and institutions, and building deep relationships anchored in decades-long economic, technological and security ties. We will also more closely align our efforts with partners pursuing Indo-Pacific strategies, including ASEAN, Canada, the EU, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US.<sup>123</sup>

46. Since the Integrated Review 2021, the UK Government has sought to develop certain relationships. Below, we set out some of the relationships that are key to the UK's tilt to the Indo-Pacific.

### United States

47. The US is the UK's closest ally, as well as an Indo-Pacific power, with the Biden Administration publishing its strategy for the region in February 2022.<sup>124</sup> We heard that the UK and US share similar ambitions for the region and that the UK should continue to pursue alignment and close cooperation there.<sup>125</sup> The UK-US relationship in the region has further developed as UK defence personnel are embedded in US headquarters, and there are now "UK personnel embedded in US headquarters".<sup>126</sup>

48. In June 2023, the UK and the US announced the Atlantic Declaration economic partnership. The Declaration references the steps taken to "deepen our unrivalled defence, security, and intelligence relationship across every theatre in the globe in which we cooperate, recognizing the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific".<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the Declaration commits the countries to utilising the US-UK Indo-Pacific Dialogue to support ASEAN, partner with the Pacific Islands, and contribute to regional peace and stability.<sup>128</sup>

### Australia

49. Australia is another key and enduring ally to both the UK and the US in the Indo-Pacific. We heard that Australia prioritises a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific, while expecting "further contestation over ideas and influence, directly affecting Australia".<sup>129</sup> In the past five years Australia has taken "assertively defensive steps" and bolstered domestic security measures including foreign interference laws and critical infrastructure

122 [Integrated Review 2021](#), p66

123 [Integrated Review Refresh 2023](#), p24

124 [U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

125 Mr Brett Thomas ([INP0004](#)) para 18

126 Reilly Q153

127 [The Atlantic Declaration](#) p1

128 [The Atlantic Declaration](#) p1

129 [Chapter three: A stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific](#) chap 3

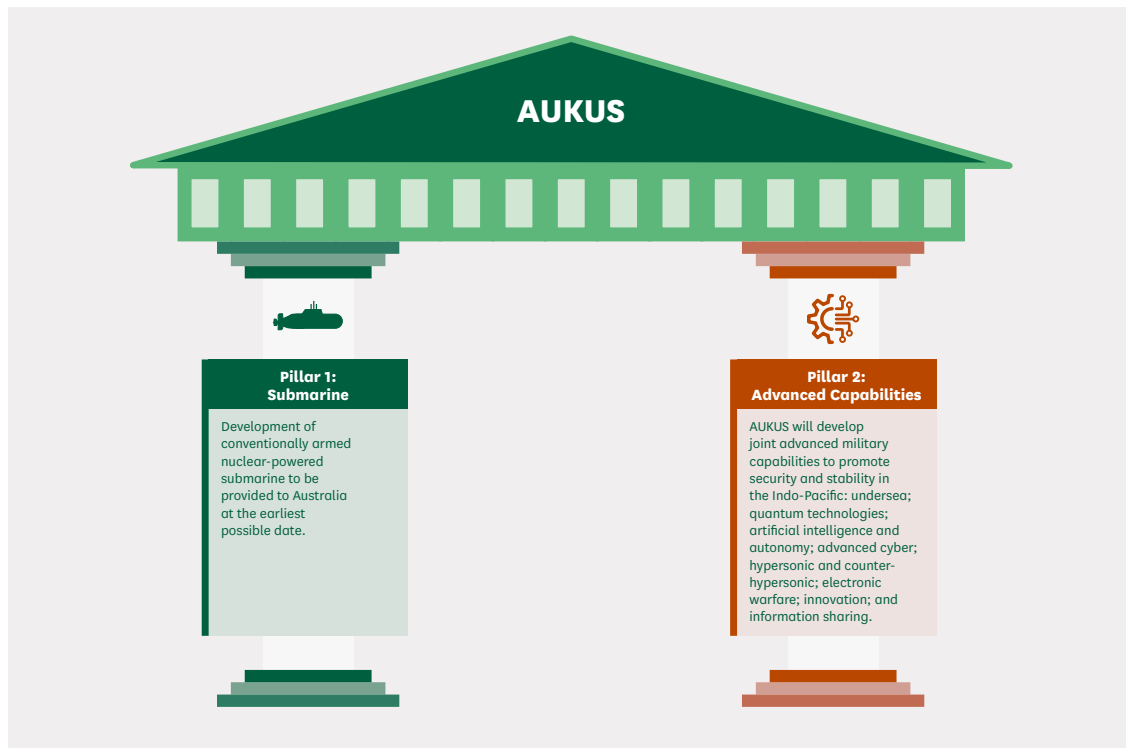


partnerships.<sup>130</sup> There is also a “firm bipartisan commitment” from the Australian Government to modernise the country’s defence forces, and intensify relationships with the US, Japan and India.<sup>131</sup> Professor Rory Medcalf, Head of the National Security College at the Australian National University, told us that this hardening of security sits within the context of a “fundamentally disruptive strategic environment” which is subject to “the challenge of China’s authoritarian power” in the region.<sup>132</sup>

## AUKUS

50. In September 2021, Australia, the UK and the US announced the landmark AUKUS trilateral security partnership. The AUKUS partnership is comprised of two key pillars. The first is to support Australia in acquiring conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSN) by the earliest possible date. Through the second pillar, AUKUS will jointly develop advanced military capabilities to promote security in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>133</sup> There are eight advanced capabilities under the second pillar: undersea capabilities; quantum technologies; artificial intelligence and autonomy; advanced cyber; hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities; electronic warfare; innovation; and information sharing.<sup>134</sup>

Figure 6: The two pillars of AUKUS.



Source: [UK Gov - Fact Sheet: Implementation of the Australia–United Kingdom–United States Partnership \(AUKUS\)](#)

130 Medcalf Q49

131 Medcalf Q49

132 Medcalf Q49

133 [Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS | The White House](#)

134 [Fact Sheet: Implementation of the Australia – United Kingdom – United States Partnership \(AUKUS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

51. This announcement was followed by a further one in March 2023 which provided more detail on the phased approach to delivering the first pillar of the partnership. The Government stated that this phased approach will involve greater embedding of military and civilian personnel between AUKUS forces starting in early 2023. In the early 2030s, the US intends to sell Australia three Virginia class submarines. In the late 2030s, the UK will deliver its first SSN-AUKUS to the Royal Navy.<sup>135</sup> Australia will deliver the first SSN-AUKUS built in Australia to the Royal Australian Navy in the early 2040s.<sup>136</sup> In June 2023, Australian ambassador to the US Kevin Rudd highlighted that the goal of the partnership is a “seamless” defence and technology industry between the countries.<sup>137</sup> In the 2023 Defence Command Paper, the UK Government outlined the “distinct advantages” of AUKUS, which include bolstered warfighting capability; enhanced interoperability; and collaboration on research and development.<sup>138</sup>

52. The AUKUS nations also announced a new Submarine Rotational Force (West) (SRF-West), which will see rotational visits by existing UK and US SSNs. SRF-West is expected to consist of one UK Astute class SSN and up to four US Virginia class SSNs. The plan will initially start with longer and more frequent visits to Australia, and for SRF-West to commence as early as 2027. The US will begin its longer visits from 2023 and the UK will join from 2026. The rotational force is intended to enhance Australia’s ability to operate and own its own nuclear-powered submarines.<sup>139</sup>

53. In October 2023, the Government announced that £4 billion of contracts were awarded as part of the AUKUS programme. This phase has been signed with several UK businesses - BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce and Babcock - and will progress the design, prototyping and purchase of the main components for the first UK SSN-AUKUS submarines.<sup>140</sup>

54. Witnesses generally welcomed the partnership, and this sentiment was shared by those we met during our visit to Australia in support of this inquiry. Dr Rob Yates of the University of Bristol described AUKUS as a concrete response to the splintering security environment<sup>141</sup>—not only as a means of developing nuclear-powered submarines, but also as way to build resilient supply chains and industrial capacity, and as a forum in which to share intelligence and sensitive technology with key allies and partners.<sup>142</sup> Dr Marcus Hellyer of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) praised AUKUS as a tangible demonstration of collaboration and unity, and a partnership which offers a “very trusted pooling of the industrial research and innovation capabilities” of close allies as a “capacity-building capstone” to accelerate the development of advanced science and technology capabilities.<sup>143</sup> He added that the partnership presents significant opportunities for the UK to accelerate development and benefit from US and Australian technologies.<sup>144</sup>

135 [Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS: 13 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-13-march-2023)

136 [Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS: 13 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-13-march-2023)

137 [Factsheet: Implementation of the Australia – United Kingdom – United States Partnership \(AUKUS\) \(pmc.gov.au\)](https://pmc.gov.au/implementation-of-the-australia-united-kingdom-united-states-partnership-aukus)

[The United States, Britain, and Australia Announce the Path Forward for AUKUS \(csis.org\)](https://www.csis.org/analysis/the-united-states-britain-and-australia-announce-the-path-forward-for-aukus)

[Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS: 13 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-13-march-2023)

[Rudd foresees ‘seamless’ AUKUS defense industry — Radio Free Asia \(rfa.org\)](https://www.radiofreeasia.org/news/aukus-defense-industry)

138 [Defence’s response to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\) p81](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114444/Defence's_response_to_a_more_contested_and_volatile_world.pdf)

139 Australian Government Defence, [The AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarine Pathway](https://www.defence.gov.au/news/2023/03/13/aukus-nuclear-powered-submarine-pathway), 13 March 2023

140 [£4 Billion UK contracts progresses AUKUS submarine design - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/4-billion-uk-contracts-progresses-aukus-submarine-design)

141 Q84

142 Q127

143 Hellyer Q51, Q42, Q50

144 Q51

Moreover, Professor Medcalf told us that the reaction of the CCP to AUKUS suggests that China views the partnership as a genuine threat to its ability to sculpt the regional security ecosystem.<sup>145</sup>

55. Witnesses also pointed to the challenges involved in implementing the partnership. For example, Dr Hellyer and Professor Medcalf thought it essential that the Government remains realistic and alert to the magnitude of the challenge posed by the timeframes, cost, infrastructure and regulation required to deliver this ambitious programme.<sup>146</sup> Such challenges are likely to be heightened by the lack of clarity over key details of the programme: for example, Baroness Goldie was unable to tell us how many SSN-AUKUS submarines will be built for the UK or with which weapons systems the submarines will be equipped.<sup>147</sup>

56. There have been suggestions that AUKUS should include critical minerals as an additional area of focus within Pillar Two of the agreement in order to diversify and address global supply chain issues.<sup>148</sup> These supply chain vulnerabilities were highlighted when we visited Australia in June 2022, where we also heard about China's prominent role in the end-to-end process of mining and refining minerals, leading to widespread dependence on the part of other countries. This suggestion comes as both the UK and Australia have recently published their respective critical minerals strategies in order to create more resilient supply chains and cooperate with each other in this area.<sup>149</sup>

57. The UK Government said that the AUKUS will “support a peaceful and rules-based international order” and will “strengthen alliances with like-minded allies”.<sup>150</sup> We heard that AUKUS does not necessarily need to be limited to Australia, the US and UK, and that there is scope for wider participation.<sup>151</sup> We heard that, as valued allies in the region, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea would be ideal candidates to cooperate with AUKUS on several of the advanced capabilities listed under Pillar Two, particularly given the advanced technological power of Japan and South Korea.<sup>152</sup> The Foreign Affairs Committee have recommended that Japan and South Korea be invited to join an AUKUS technological defence cooperation agreement.<sup>153</sup> We note the sensitivity of Pillar Two capabilities, and the close intelligence relationship developed by the three existing AUKUS partners over many decades. We recognise therefore the need for caution in involving other nations, however desirable this otherwise might be.

**58. We welcome the announcement of the SSN-AUKUS class submarine, including the increased port visits and the Rotational Force, in maintaining a coherent regional presence. The UK must, however, be realistic and cognisant of the significant hurdles for all AUKUS partners in constructing nuclear-powered submarines. A fundamental**

145 Medcalf Q51. For example, (translated by author) “ Violation of nuclear non-proliferation commitments? With the AUKUS expansion imminent, Blinken claimed to be open to New Zealand” [“违背核不扩散承诺? AUKUS扩员在即, 布林肯声称向新西兰敞开大门\\_腾讯新闻 \(qq.com\)”](#); [Global Times - AUKUS nuke submarine deal a threat to global security, intl NPT regime: report](#)

146 Q56, Q57

147 Q144

148 [PGM: AUKUS and critical minerals, with the Honourable Kim Beazley AC | Australian Strategic Policy Institute | ASPI](#)

149 [UK Critical Minerals Strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), [Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030 | Department of Industry, Science and Resources](#)

150 [UK, US AND Australia launch new security partnership - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

151 Hellyer Q53

152 Hellyer Q53, [The Guardian - New Zealand may join Aukus pact's non-nuclear component](#)

153 HC 172 (2022–23), para 101

challenge is the continuing lack of clarity about how many submarines will ultimately be built, the cost, and the availability of a skilled workforce. *We call on the Government to set out in its response to this Report the anticipated timescale for producing a detailed plan on: how much it expects SSN-AUKUS to cost, how it will address the skills shortage, and how many SSN-AUKUS class it will produce. It should also set out any existing plans so far as they exist.*

59. AUKUS offers a tangible opportunity to respond to growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific. Through Pillar 1 AUKUS, the UK can tackle shared challenges together with our allies, with the goal of upholding the rules-based order. Moreover, Pillar 2 offers an immediate avenue for developing the UK's defence capabilities, and to access and share critical intelligence and technology. *In the short term, Pillar 2 should be expanded to secure and diversify supply chains for munitions and critical minerals. In the medium term, the Government should consider opportunities to involve other likeminded nations and allies in activities related to the advanced capabilities involved in Pillar Two, but only if this can be achieved without compromising the strong relationships developed between the three AUKUS partners.*

## Japan

60. A longstanding advocate of a 'free and open Indo-Pacific', Japan has made this goal the cornerstone of its 2022 National Security Strategy and its 2023 presidency of the G7.<sup>154</sup> In the past year, the UK and Japan have taken significant steps to strengthen and institutionalise what Professor Patalano described as an already strong and well-developed defence cooperation relationship.<sup>155</sup> Broader aspects of the UK and Japan's relationship are set out in the Foreign Affairs Committee's recent report.<sup>156</sup>

61. Reflecting what we heard was Japan's growing interest in developing industrial capabilities in cooperation with partners,<sup>157</sup> in December 2022, the UK, Italy and Japan announced the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP). Through this programme, the coalition of countries will work together to develop next-generation fighter jets with advanced capabilities by 2035, with other likeminded countries anticipated to buy into the programme.<sup>158</sup> In the 2023 Defence Command Paper, the Government states that GCAP "exemplif[ies] our commitment to deepening the relationships between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions, and to facing the threats of the future together".<sup>159</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a UK think tank, highlights that GCAP "reflects a wider convergence of strategic interests between Japan and the UK, informed by shared concern over the security challenges posed by China and Russia, combined with ambitions to sustain and develop their respective defence-aerospace industries".<sup>160</sup> While

154 [National Security Strategy of Japan](#), December 2022

155 Q42

156 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#), August 2023, paragraph 172–200

157 Q42

158 [PM announces new international coalition to develop the next generation of combat aircraft - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

159 [Defence's response to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) p80

160 [IISS - Italy, Japan and the UK launch a new combat-aircraft programme](#)

Professor Justin Bronk of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), a UK defence think tank, raised concerns regarding the UK's capacity to fund GCAP,<sup>161</sup> IISS has argued that Japan's financial support for the programme will boost its viability.<sup>162</sup>

62. In January 2023, the UK and Japan also signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement, which includes provisions to: cement the UK's commitment to the Indo-Pacific; accelerate defence and security cooperation; allow them to deploy forces in one another's countries; and enable both forces to deliver more complex military exercises.<sup>163</sup> Notably, the UK is the first European country to have such an agreement with Japan and is only the third country to do so after Australia and the US.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, in May 2023, the UK and Japan agreed a new global strategic partnership through the Hiroshima Accord. The Accord seeks to reinforce existing defence and technology cooperation through, for example: establishing new defence dialogues; deepening defence space cooperation; and integrating supply chains, in order to achieve "interoperable, resilient, and cross-domain" defence cooperation.<sup>165</sup>

**63. We welcome the Government's practical efforts in strengthening ties with Japan. Japan is an invaluable ally in the region given its geo-strategic location. As Japan enhances its own defence posture, the UK should build on these valuable commitments to continue strengthening UK-Japan defence cooperation and remain steadfast allies in the pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The UK should plan a programme of joint exercises with the Japanese armed forces, and continue collaboration on science and technology programmes as part of the Hiroshima Accord.**

## India

64. Both in evidence and during our visit, we heard that the UK-India relationship is one of "enduring importance"<sup>166</sup> and will become ever more critical. India will not only remain the fastest growing economy in the world according to the World Bank,<sup>167</sup> it also has the largest national population globally,<sup>168</sup> is increasing its defence spending,<sup>169</sup> and is a nuclear power (albeit not officially recognised under the Non-Proliferation Treaty). Critically, as the world's most populous nation, it provides an important counterweight, alongside other regional democracies, to the activities of China in the region.

65. Baroness Goldie told us that the UK is continuing to enhance its strategic partnership with India through close engagement, and the UK is particularly strengthening the bilateral defence partnership and collaboration on technology.<sup>170</sup> A formal expression of this can be seen in the UK-India 2030 Roadmap, announced in 2021, the stated goal of which is to elevate the bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).<sup>171</sup> Defence and security cooperation is a key element in delivering the Roadmap's

161 [RUSI - The Global Combat Air Programme is Writing Cheques that Defence Can't Cash](#)

162 [IISS - Italy, Japan and the UK launch a new combat-aircraft programme](#)

163 [UK-Japan defence agreement 2023 - House of Commons Library](#)

164 [UK-Japan defence agreement 2023 - House of Commons Library](#)

165 [The Hiroshima Accord](#)

166 [PM meeting with Indian Prime Minister Modi: 16 November 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

167 [India Times - World Bank: India to remain fastest-growing major economy](#)

168 [United Nations, UN DESA Policy Brief No. 153: India overtakes China as the world's most populous country | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)

169 [Reuters - India raises defence budget to \\$72.6 bln amid tensions with China](#)

170 Q145

171 [2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

vision for “a more secure Indian Ocean Region and Indo-Pacific”.<sup>172</sup> Under the Roadmap, the two governments aim to achieve this by: enhancing cooperation on defence and international security partnerships and frameworks; improving maritime cooperation; conducting joint exercises and military exchanges; promoting collaboration on defence technology and innovation; and enhancing cooperation on cyber security and counter-terrorism concerns. Alongside the Roadmap, there have been supporting agreements, including Enhanced Defence Cooperation.<sup>173</sup>

66. Relating to this cooperation, Nick Gurr, Director of International Security at the Ministry of Defence, pointed to the stronger defence relationship that has manifested through a recent logistics Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) enabling UK ships to use Indian facilities with greater ease; an agreement on the exchange of maritime shipping information; science and technology frameworks; and significantly increased high-level bilateral contact, including with the chiefs of defence staff.<sup>174</sup>

67. Nick Gurr also told us that there is scope for a “mutually beneficial and rich capability dialogue with India”.<sup>175</sup> Some witnesses were supportive of UK efforts to build closer relationships with India and enhance cooperation. Dr Ladwig described India as the country which “will affect the success of the regional tilt more than any other partner or policy”.<sup>176</sup> This sentiment is supported by John Hemmings who suggests that the UK-India relationship “could become a greater enabler” of cooperation,<sup>177</sup> whilst Ben Barry reiterated this by noting that India would welcome greater cooperation with the UK.<sup>178</sup>

68. However, we also heard that the UK’s ambitions for the relationship could be challenging to achieve. Dr Ladwig, while praising the “impressive and achievable” scope of the Roadmap, thought that it would be difficult to cooperate on such a number of cross-cutting policy issues.<sup>179</sup> Barry also reminded us that whilst the UK has ambition to collaborate much further with India, it would need to allocate the resources to fulfil those ambitions across the three primary domains.<sup>180</sup>

69. India is also relatively dependant on Russia for military equipment. According to a 2020 working paper by the Stimson Center, 70% to 85% of India’s military platforms are of Russian origin. India’s current aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya, was converted from a Russian Navy decommissioned cruiser carrier.<sup>181</sup> The ‘backbone’ of the Indian air force is the Russian Su-30.<sup>182</sup> However, we heard that India is conscious of its dependence and intends to reduce it. Professor Patalano told us:

In 2018, India’s dependency on Russia for defence imports had been decreased to about 35%. So yes, 70% of their equipment is still of Russian

172 [2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-india-prime-ministers-announce-enhanced-defence-cooperation)

173 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-india-prime-ministers-announce-enhanced-defence-cooperation>

174 Q145

175 Q146

176 Dr. Walter C. Ladwig III (Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King’s College London) ([INP0012](#)) para 14

177 Q130

178 Q101

179 Dr. Walter C. Ladwig III (Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King’s College London) ([INP0012](#)) para 14

180 Q101

181 Naval Technology, [INS Vikramaditya Aircraft Carrier](#)

182 Institut Montaigne, [Indian Military Dependence on Russia](#), July 2022

origin but not the new stuff. Over the years, they have already tried to reduce their dependency on Russia quite significantly. That has opened up opportunity, most notably with the United States.

Also, as part of the 2030 road map with the UK, the defence industry and defence co-operation are at the heart of that conversation. The Indians are painfully aware of that dependency from Russia, the problems it brings about and the vulnerability it creates in so far as China is concerned.<sup>183</sup>

70. While this may present an opportunity for the UK to collaborate with India on defence procurement, Shimon Fhima, Director of Strategic Programmes at the Ministry of Defence, highlighted the additional challenge for the UK as India seeks to reduce dependency on foreign countries in its defence supply chain, as seen through the ‘Made in India’ drive.<sup>184</sup>

71. When we visited India in July 2023, we discovered that, while the UK supplied India with most of its military equipment until the 1960s, more recently countries such as France, Israel and the United States have been more successful in achieving defence sales. While there may be a range of reasons for this, one area frequently mentioned by those we met was that the UK Government had a less joined-up approach to defence sales than other countries. While there are defence opportunities in India for UK industry, for example, in the maritime environment, cyber, and marine and aero engines sectors, success will likely require greater government-to-government coordination and industrial partnering.

72. If the UK is to succeed in its ambition to strengthen the bilateral relationship, Shimon Fhima told us that the UK must build long-term, personal and institutionalised relationships with counterparts in India. He described the Roadmap as a positive demonstration of this. Moreover, Fhima emphasised that the UK must demonstrate its long-term commitment to the bilateral relationship through collaboration on core defence capabilities, such as combat air engine capability and maritime projects, as these will be “critical” to further strengthening these relationships.<sup>185</sup>

73. We were told during our visit to India that defence collaboration can be further reinforced through military exercises. India and the UK already undertake a range of bilateral and multilateral exercises involving naval, army and air forces. The most significant recently was Carrier Strike Group 21’s (CSG 21’s) global deployment in 2021,<sup>186</sup> which included maritime training with the Indian Navy. However, some commentators noted that the Indian Navy received less benefit from this training than from its combined training with US Navy carrier groups. *We recommend that the Government focus on achieving a higher level of military benefit for both the Indian and UK armed forces from combined training carried out when the Royal Navy’s carrier strike group returns to the Indian Ocean as CSG25 in two years’ time.*

74. **We welcome the recent actions taken to enhance UK–India defence cooperation through the 2030 UK-India Roadmap. This relationship is critical not only because of the breadth and depth of our existing and potential cooperation, but also due to India’s unique position as a peer to China (in economic terms), whilst also bordering China,**

183 Q36

184 Q36 Patalano, Q146 Fhima

185 Q146

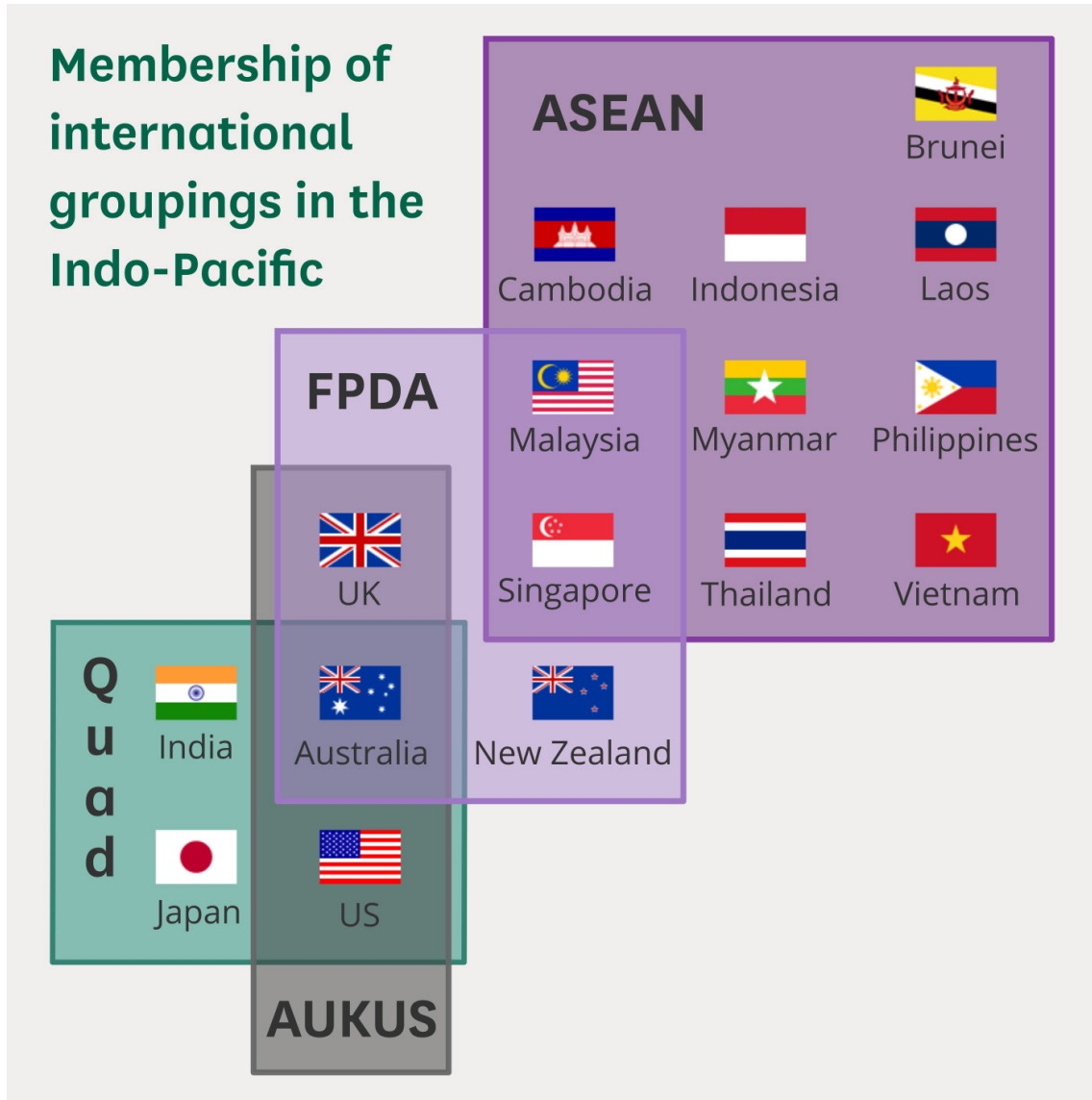
186 [United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group 21](#)

***and its non-aligned status. The UK must be a reliable partner to India and continue co-operation on defence initiatives and capability building. The Government should work to establish the UK as a top tier defence partner to India through greater government-to-government coordination, and by creating strategic industrial partnerships to provide greater opportunities for the UK defence industry. This should include supporting efforts by India to reduce its dependency on Russian military equipment.***



## 4 Regional Cooperation

Figure 7: Membership of international groupings in the Indo-Pacific.



### ASEAN

75. In addition to highlighting the role of bilateral partnerships in pursuing the UK’s ‘tilt’ to the Indo-Pacific, the 2021 Integrated Review also stated the importance of “sustaining and supporting” multilateral partnerships in the region.<sup>187</sup> Two of the multilateral fora cited were the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Islands Forum.

76. ASEAN was described to us as the “most mature and important regional organisation in the Indo-Pacific”,<sup>188</sup> having been established in 1967 and comprising ten member states.<sup>189</sup> Ben Bland and Dr Rob Yates highlighted that the organisation has: ensured long-

187 [Global Britain in a competitive age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/96421/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age.pdf) p66

188 Q64

189 [About ASEAN - ASEAN Main Portal](https://www.asean.org/) The ASEAN member states are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

term regional stability; promoted economic development; anchored a broader regional architecture; and amplified the voices of member states on the regional and global stage.<sup>190</sup> Although the political diversity of ASEAN’s member states has implications for its coherence and integration,<sup>191</sup> Dr Yates told us that it has an important role in facilitating dialogue and managing the regional order.<sup>192</sup> We understand that the requirement for unanimity for all ASEAN decisions, including those on defence and security, is under significant pressure in the context of the complex regional security environment.<sup>193</sup>

77. We heard that engagement with ASEAN is an opportunity for the UK to “deepen and broaden” its regional engagement, for example by engaging on maritime security, regional capacity and resilience-building, including supporting the economic growth and internal security of member states.<sup>194</sup> The UK’s ASEAN Dialogue Partner status was formalised in August 2022, joining the US and China in achieving this status.<sup>195</sup> The UK is also applying for Observer Status to the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus).<sup>196</sup> The UK published the UK-ASEAN Plan of Action in August 2022, setting out how it will build on the existing relationship: by promoting political, security and economic cooperation; and by strengthening the ASEAN institution in line with the organisation’s principles of promoting rules-based frameworks, respect for international law and good governance.<sup>197</sup>

78. There is, however, a spectrum of attitudes towards China within ASEAN. China’s geographical proximity to Southeast Asia and its appealing infrastructure offer may lead to ASEAN members being further drawn into China’s orbit<sup>198</sup>—and, indeed, we heard that all member states are growing economically closer to China.<sup>199</sup> At the same time, the majority of members simultaneously remain uncomfortable with China’s resurgence.<sup>200</sup> It is also challenging for ASEAN to address ongoing disputes in the South China Sea, which several of its member states have been acutely impacted by due to: the need to achieve consensus; ASEAN’s strong principles of sovereignty, independence and non-interference;<sup>201</sup> and the geopolitical reality that most of the region is non-aligned.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, the question has been raised as to whether ASEAN states will eventually reach the tipping point they have hoped to avoid and be compelled to make a strategic choice between siding with China or the US.<sup>203</sup> There is an irony to the growing influence that China has on ASEAN given that,<sup>204</sup> as we heard, the forum was originally established as an “anti-communist grouping”.<sup>205</sup>

79. Founded in 1971, the Pacific Islands Forum is a political and economic policy organisation. With some parallels to the environment faced by ASEAN states, Professor Medcalf highlighted to us that the Pacific Islands exist in the unique context of substantial

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190 Q64, Yates Q67

191 Q64, Bland Q66

192 Q65, Q67

193 Dr Anisa Heritage ([INP0016](#)) para 24

194 Q71

195 [ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership: plan of action 2022 to 2026](#)

196 [Plan of action to implement the ASEAN-United Kingdom Dialogue Partnership \(2022 to 2026\)](#)

197 [Plan of action to implement the ASEAN-United Kingdom Dialogue Partnership \(2022 to 2026\)](#)

198 Yates Q72

199 Bland Q72

200 Tsang Q37

201 Bland Q67

202 Bland Q77

203 Yates Q77

204 [ORF - China’s Relationship with ASEAN: An Explainer](#)

205 Bland Q77

social and climate challenges, whilst also being at the heart of a US-China contest for regional influence.<sup>206</sup> The UK's recent Small Islands Developing States strategy<sup>207</sup> identified the opportunity for the UK to make a constructive, alternative offer to the Pacific Islands, reemphasising commitments made to the Pacific Islands in the Integrated Review Refresh.<sup>208</sup>

**80. The UK must rekindle its statecraft skills and reaffirm its commitment as a reliable partner to countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific, in order to uphold the international rules-based order, given its proximity to China and the political diversity of the region. The Committee welcomes the 2022 UK-ASEAN Action Plan as an opportunity for the UK to institutionalise its regional engagement. *Although not primarily a defence cooperation mechanism, the UK should further its engagement with ASEAN on maritime security, building resilience in member states, and seek to deepen its bilateral relationships with these countries through capacity-building exercises. In parallel with this, the UK should continue to strengthen and build productive relationships with South-East Asian states and the Pacific Islands.***

## The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

81. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad)—made up of Australia, India, Japan and the US—is also an influential grouping in the Indo-Pacific with which the UK might enhance its relationship to deliver its goals in the region. Following a hiatus in activity, the Quad was reinvigorated in 2017 due to the progressive alignment of its members' foreign policy in response to growing regional destabilisation, and the group began to meet on a bimonthly basis. In March 2021, the US, Japan, Australia and India reaffirmed their commitment to the role of the Quad promoting a “free, open rules-based order” to advance regional security and prosperity, having been inactive for a decade.<sup>209</sup> This period of renewal has seen the four countries demonstrate and develop defence interoperability through its Malabar joint naval exercises.<sup>210</sup> In 2020, Australia joined the naval exercise for the first time, with the next iteration expected in Australia in August 2023.<sup>211</sup>

82. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) states that it is important to note that “the story of the Quad is one of gradual convergence, not rapid institutionalization”.<sup>212</sup> Dr Yates suggested that the Quad emerged to convene like-minded states to pursue an agenda centred on regional security and governance concerns, and this may have arisen as a result of frustrations concerning ASEAN operational processes.<sup>213</sup> Although there is overlap between the ASEAN and Quad agendas, Dr Yates told us that there are unanswered questions raised as to how the Quad relates to the wider work of ASEAN, such as that on public health, climate change and maritime cooperation.<sup>214</sup>

206 Q47

207 Q47, [UK Small Island Developing States Strategy 2022–2026](#)

208 [IR Refresh 2023](#) p25

209 The Quad countries first established a partnership in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The group then met briefly in 2007 before dissolving in 2008. Although the 2007 re-establishment was considered a reaction to China's growing regional influence, the 2008 split was the result of decisions by Australia, Japan and India to build closer relationships with China.

210 The UK and China's security and trade relationship: A strategic void (parliament.uk) page 39

211 [CSIS - Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ANI News-Navies of Quad countries to participate in Malabar 2023 exercise](#)[The Diplomat - Malabar and More: Quad Militaries Conduct Exercises](#)

212 [CSIS - Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue](#)

213 Q78

214 Q78

83. In addition to these issues, the Quad has also played an important role in reshaping the strategic debates for the future priorities of the region.<sup>215</sup> As a result, Professor Patalano described the Quad as an “absolutely critical opportunity” for the UK to work with allies on shared priorities,<sup>216</sup> while Dr Walter Ludwig, Senior Lecturer at King’s College London, thought the Quad might act as a positive force multiplier for the UK’s goals in the region, in light of the “significant synergy” between the UK’s Indo-Pacific priorities and those outlined in the Quad leader’s joint statement<sup>217</sup>—thereby enabling the UK to pursue its interests across several forums with overlapping membership. We also heard that the Quad is a useful forum to find greater alignment with India on security questions in particular, given that it is “a key potential balancer against China” and that the UK is already better aligned with the US, Australia and Japan.<sup>218</sup> The Foreign Affairs Committee also saw India’s participation in the Quad as a “golden opportunity” for the UK to strengthen defence ties with the four nations and advocated for the UK to seek to join the Quad.<sup>219</sup> Witnesses further highlighted policy areas beyond defence on which the UK might “coalesce a narrative” with Quad partners, leading to closer collaboration.<sup>220</sup> These included global health, resilience, and new technologies including post-5G infrastructure, connectivity and prosperity.<sup>221</sup>

84. Baroness Goldie told us that the UK is looking for opportunities for practical cooperation with the Quad on shared priorities.<sup>222</sup> There are a number of potential options for UK engagement with the Quad to achieve its goals, ranging from bilateral engagement with each of the constituent members, to informal engagement on specific policy issues via the Quad’s working group structure (an option pursued by South Korea),<sup>223</sup> formal Quad-plus engagement (for example, in 2020 New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam were invited to join the Quad meeting concerning the pandemic), or by seeking to join the Quad as a member.<sup>224</sup>

85. However, UK membership of the Quad may be neither desirable or possible. On the one hand, we heard that the Quad has been labelled by some as more a “talking shop” than an alliance.<sup>225</sup> This would suggest that the UK may want to be cautious in its approach to the alliance. There are also questions as to what additional value or access the UK might gain through formal membership. Ben Bland argued that the UK already reaches the four corners of the Quad through its bilateral relationships with the member countries, so the forum is not the best use of the UK’s limited resources.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, the Quad is still very much in a developmental stage and questions remain as to how the forum, its ambitions, and ability to deliver these, will manifest in the coming years.<sup>227</sup> These factors led Dr Yates to conclude that the Quad should not be a priority for the UK whilst the

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215 Q78

216 Q35

217 Dr. Walter C. Ludwig III (Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King’s College London) ([INP0012](#)) para 24

218 Q80

219 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#), August 2023, paragraph 96 and paragraph 207

220 Q35

221 Q35, Q42

222 Q147

223 Further information on the Quad working groups: [Quad Working Groups | PM&C \(pmc.gov.au\)](#)

224 [Expanding Engagement among South Korea and the Quad Countries in the Indo-Pacific](#)

225 Q31

226 Bland Q114, Q82

227 Bland Q79

former is still developing its agenda: instead, it would be wiser for the UK to develop its relationship with ASEAN and then potentially engage with the Quad through the Quad-plus dialogues in the future.<sup>228</sup>

86. Other witnesses highlighted a further obstacle to UK membership of the Quad, which is that some existing members—notably India—may be reluctant to see additional members joining the forum.<sup>229</sup> We heard that the forum still appears to be “very much in a mode of consolidation” rather than demonstrating an appetite to expand.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, given the disbanding and re-affirmation of the Quad, there are questions as to what extent the activity of the Quad is dependent on the political appetite of its member countries, and whether this would be impacted by a potential new US Administration in 2025.<sup>231</sup>

87. Another consideration highlighted to us by Professor Steve Tsang is that joining the Quad would make the Chinese Government “uncomfortable”<sup>232</sup>—a view echoed by Dr Yates, who suggested it risked positioning the UK as contributing to an “anti-China coalition”,<sup>233</sup> which should be considered in the context of the Government’s intention to engage with China to “create open, constructive and stable relations”.<sup>234</sup> Overall, Professor Medcalf highlighted that the UK must ensure that its involvement in AUKUS, ASEAN and the Quad are complementary in fostering relationships and in the deployment of finite resources. He also argued that any such engagement should be considered in the context of the UK’s relationship with the EU and its commitments to NATO.<sup>235</sup> For the reasons outlined above, we take a different view from the Foreign Affairs Committee on prospective UK membership of the Quad.

**88. It is imperative that the UK strengthens its partnerships with regional allies to maintain and deliver a shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. AUKUS, ASEAN and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) serve different, but valuable, purposes in achieving regional security and stability, in line with the UK’s vision for the region. The UK should not consider seeking membership of the Quad in the short term. The UK should approach its relationship with the Quad incrementally whilst monitoring how the forum and its priorities develop in the coming years. The UK should seek to strengthen its relationship with the Quad through functional engagement in specific working groups and by participating in the more formal Quad-plus engagement groups.**

## The Five Power Defence Arrangements

89. According to the Government, the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA)—established in 1971 and comprising Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK—also play a significant role “in promoting cooperative responses to an increasingly complex contemporary security environment”.<sup>236</sup> Although the FPDA is not a binding

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228 Q82

229 Mr James Rogers (Director of Research at Council on Geostrategy); Mr Patrick Patrick Triglavcanin (Research Assistant at Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#)) para 9

230 Nouwens Q114

231 [CSIS - Transcript of Press Briefing - “Previewing the Quad Leaders Summit” \(2021\)](#) p16

232 Q33

233 Yates Q82

234 [Our position on China: Foreign Secretary’s 2023 Mansion House speech](#)

235 Q53

236 [FPDA Defence Ministers’ joint statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

defence treaty, it “commits the five members to consult in case of an armed attack on Malaysia or Singapore”, whilst also enabling Australia to safeguard its regional military assets.<sup>237</sup>

90. Baroness Goldie and Nick Gurr both emphasised the importance of “pivotal multilateral fora” such as this to the UK.<sup>238</sup> Professor Patalano argued that the UK should “make it a priority to leverage” the FPDA further, particularly in relation to ensuring maritime security and stability.<sup>239</sup> During our visit to Australia, we heard from representatives of the FPDA countries who would welcome greater engagement through that forum. They also specifically noted the absence of the US from this forum as a positive, given some of the regional strategic challenges posed by being in a direct relationship with the US. The Foreign Affairs Committee also identified the FPDA as a potential “firm basis for a wider regional alliance in Southeast Asia”.<sup>240</sup> We agree.

**91. Long-standing membership of the Five Power Defence Arrangements offers opportunities for the UK to lead the defence conversation, alongside Australia, in engaging with smaller non-aligned nations in the Indo-Pacific, whilst noting the strategic sensitivities for some of those nations.**

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237 [The Five Power Defence Arrangements at 50: what next? \(iiss.org\)](https://www.iiss.org/en/2023/08/01/the-five-power-defence-arrangements-at-50-what-next/)

238 Q134

239 Q42

240 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#), August 2023, paragraph 102

## 5 What next for the Tilt?

92. Numerous witnesses to the inquiry welcomed the UK’s tilt to the Indo-Pacific and the continued pursuit of this policy. For instance, Professor Medcalf explained that:

The tilt, as articulated in the integrated review and expressed in a number of policy actions in the past year or more, is a recognition that the global centre of strategic gravity, and indeed economic gravity, is in this region. It will be in the Indo-Pacific for many years to come. This region is really a zone of maritime connectivity with the global system and, frankly, with the economies of Britain and others in the Atlantic.<sup>241</sup>

93. The Council on Geostrategy, a UK think tank, called on the UK to “go further” in its tilt and “ardently” engage with the Indo-Pacific economies,<sup>242</sup> Professor Medcalf welcomed the “wisely cautious” tilt. He further argued that there is a long way to go in delivering the UK’s current ambition in the region and that it must “keep matching aspiration with capability, do not over-promise, and proceed in good company”.<sup>243</sup> Veerle Nouwens echoed this by suggesting that whilst the UK has “set expectations for a credible delivery for the tilt” there is a question as to what the UK now does with its assets in the region, and how to leverage these.<sup>244</sup> In order to succeed, the UK should set clear and realistic expectations, but there is capacity for the UK to contribute naval assets and capability training.<sup>245</sup>

94. The UK is seeking to adopt a security approach in the Indo-Pacific that is “confident but not confrontational”,<sup>246</sup> but several witnesses questioned whether the UK is capable of achieving this and of making a valuable contribution in the region in the coming years.<sup>247</sup> As Ben Bland told us, “tilting is a motion, but tilting is not a strategy. We need to think about where we go next”.<sup>248</sup> The Foreign Affairs Committee also noted concerns about the notion of a “tilt” and the implication that the UK is tilting away from other regions and areas.<sup>249</sup>

95. When considering future strategy, as noted by Professor Patalano, the question of UK resources must be assessed from three angles: diplomacy; capabilities; and institutional capacity.<sup>250</sup> Witnesses emphasised the need to build expertise within the UK on China and Asia, including the study of the languages, culture and history of the region.<sup>251</sup> This in turn would enable the UK to conduct more effective diplomacy in the region and utilise

241 Q44

242 Mr James Rogers (Director of Research at Council on Geostrategy); Mr Patrick Patrick Triglavcanin (Research Assistant at Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#)) para 4

243 Q44

244 Q89, Q90

245 Q89, Q90

246 INP0015 [MOD], para 12

247 Nouwens Q90, Patalano Q38, Tsang Q39, Bland Q85

248 Q70

249 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#), August 2023, paragraph 24–25

250 Q38

251 Bland Q85, Tsang Q39

soft power whilst also strengthening the regional security architecture. As an element of this, Professor Patalano suggested that the Government establish an Indo-Pacific ‘HMG hub’ to play a coordinating role across British embassies in the region.<sup>252</sup>

96. Defence was only a small element of the so-called Indo-Pacific ‘Tilt’ outlined in the 2021 Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper. The result has been a modest increase in UK military presence in the region. This has manifested primarily through increased presence in the region of naval capabilities, and an increase in defence diplomacy and work on enhancing relationships with allies. The Government states that the tilt is now complete, and it will be made a permanent pillar of the UK’s foreign policy. We reject the notion that the ‘tilt’ has been “achieved” from a Defence perspective. With only a modest presence compared to allies, little to no fighting force in the region, and little by way of regular activity, Defence’s tilt to the Indo-Pacific is far from being achieved. Fundamentally UK Defence is already under-resourced for its role within NATO in the Euro-Atlantic, which is the core current and medium-term security challenge for the UK and Europe. If we aspire to play any significant role in the Indo-Pacific this would need a major commitment of cash, equipment and personnel. Without this, the UK may need to curb its ambitions in the region.

97. The UK Government’s future strategy for the Indo-Pacific is still unclear. *The Government should create a dedicated Indo-Pacific strategy, which sets out how military instruments can be used in support of the UK’s wider pursuit of its goals and interests in the region in peacetime and during conflict. Within this strategy, the Ministry of Defence should include a comprehensive defence and diplomatic response to the growing threat posed by China under the CCP. This strategy should also identify the specific aims of the Tilt and make clear how the Government intends to achieve these, whilst being realistic about what is achievable.*



# Conclusions and recommendations

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## UK Government approach to the Indo-Pacific

1. The Chinese Government's wider goal to achieve regional and global dominance—and the increasingly aggressive means by which it is pursuing this—highlight the long-term and strategic threat that China poses to the rules-based international order. It appears that China intends to confront Taiwan, whether by direct military action or 'grey zone' attacks, in the coming years. Any conflict in Taiwan will have formidable consequences across the globe and risks the international rules-based order. *The Government and the UK Armed Forces must ensure that they have plans for the UK's response—co-ordinated with allies and partners—to a range of actions by China against Taiwan. The Government should set out these plans to the Committee in a classified private briefing.* (Paragraph 19)
2. The Committee supports the Government's assessment that China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is "an epoch-defining and systemic challenge". China seeks to erode the current rules-based international order by exploiting weaknesses in the system. Rather than looking to act as the world's policeman in a mutually beneficial system, China's interest is in establishing dominance over its wider region to purely Chinese advantage. In military terms, China's publicly stated ambition to "fight and win" global wars by 2049 illustrates the threat it poses to international security. An important waypoint is China's goal of establishing a fully modernised military—and a peer adversary of the United States—by 2027. *The Government should carry out an assessment of China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to consider whether it should be labelled as a threat to national and international security.* (Paragraph 24)
3. The UK's regional military presence in the Indo-Pacific remains limited and the strategy to which it contributes is unclear. This contrasts to both the US—a global and Pacific power—and to France—a more comparable actor to the UK in terms of geography, scale, and military capability. Without a larger permanent presence it is unlikely that the UK would be able to make a substantial contribution to allied efforts in the event of conflict in the region. In order to deliver this, the Government must make a choice as to whether it will increase resources in the region, or rebalance current resources towards the Indo-Pacific. *The Ministry of Defence should pursue closer cooperation with the United States and France and continue to pursue basing with other regional allies. All of these efforts should be consolidated into a single, cross-government strategy for the Indo-Pacific which states how the UK's military instruments should be utilised in both peacetime and during conflict.* (Paragraph 44)

## UK Defence Relationships in the Indo-Pacific

4. We welcome the announcement of the SSN-AUKUS class submarine, including the increased port visits and the Rotational Force, in maintaining a coherent regional presence. The UK must, however, be realistic and cognisant of the significant hurdles for all AUKUS partners in constructing nuclear-powered submarines. A fundamental challenge is the continuing lack of clarity about how many submarines

will ultimately be built, the cost, and the availability of a skilled workforce. *We call on the Government to set out in its response to this Report the anticipated timescale for producing a detailed plan on: how much it expects SSN-AUKUS to cost, how it will address the skills shortage, and how many SSN-AUKUS class it will produce. It should also set out any existing plans so far as they exist.* (Paragraph 58)

5. AUKUS offers a tangible opportunity to respond to growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific. Through Pillar 1 AUKUS, the UK can tackle shared challenges together with our allies, with the goal of upholding the rules-based order. Moreover, Pillar 2 offers an immediate avenue for developing the UK's defence capabilities, and to access and share critical intelligence and technology. *In the short term, Pillar 2 should be expanded to secure and diversify supply chains for munitions and critical minerals. In the medium term, the Government should consider opportunities to involve other likeminded nations and allies in activities related to the advanced capabilities involved in Pillar Two, but only if this can be achieved without compromising the strong relationships developed between the three AUKUS partners.* (Paragraph 59)
6. We welcome the Government's practical efforts in strengthening ties with Japan. Japan is an invaluable ally in the region given its geo-strategic location. *As Japan enhances its own defence posture, the UK should build on these valuable commitments to continue strengthening UK–Japan defence cooperation and remain steadfast allies in the pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The UK should plan a programme of joint exercises with the Japanese armed forces, and continue collaboration on science and technology programmes as part of the Hiroshima Accord.* (Paragraph 63)
7. *We recommend that the Government focus on achieving a higher level of military benefit for both the Indian and UK armed forces from combined training carried out when the Royal Navy's carrier strike group returns to the Indian Ocean as CSG25 in two years' time.* (Paragraph 73)
8. We welcome the recent actions taken to enhance UK–India defence cooperation through the 2030 UK-India Roadmap. This relationship is critical not only because of the breadth and depth of our existing and potential cooperation, but also due to India's unique position as a peer to China (in economic terms), whilst also bordering China, and its non-aligned status. *The UK must be a reliable partner to India and continue co-operation on defence initiatives and capability building. The Government should work to establish the UK as a top tier defence partner to India through greater government-to-government coordination, and by creating strategic industrial partnerships to provide greater opportunities for the UK defence industry. This should include supporting efforts by India to reduce its dependency on Russian military equipment.* (Paragraph 74)

## Regional Cooperation

9. The UK must rekindle its statecraft skills and reaffirm its commitment as a reliable partner to countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific, in order to uphold the international rules-based order, given its proximity to China and the political diversity of the region. The Committee welcomes the 2022 UK-ASEAN Action Plan as an opportunity for the UK to institutionalise its regional engagement. *Although not primarily a defence cooperation mechanism, the UK should further its*

*engagement with ASEAN on maritime security, building resilience in member states, and seek to deepen its bilateral relationships with these countries through capacity-building exercises. In parallel with this, the UK should continue to strengthen and build productive relationships with South-East Asian states and the Pacific Islands. (Paragraph 80)*

10. It is imperative that the UK strengthens its partnerships with regional allies to maintain and deliver a shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. AUKUS, ASEAN and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) serve different, but valuable, purposes in achieving regional security and stability, in line with the UK's vision for the region. *The UK should not consider seeking membership of the Quad in the short term. The UK should approach its relationship with the Quad incrementally whilst monitoring how the forum and its priorities develop in the coming years. The UK should seek to strengthen its relationship with the Quad through functional engagement in specific working groups and by participating in the more formal Quad-plus engagement groups. (Paragraph 88)*
11. Long-standing membership of the Five Power Defence Arrangements offers opportunities for the UK to lead the defence conversation, alongside Australia, in engaging with smaller non-aligned nations in the Indo-Pacific, whilst noting the strategic sensitivities for some of those nations. (Paragraph 91)

### What next for the Tilt?

12. Defence was only a small element of the so-called Indo-Pacific 'Tilt' outlined in the 2021 Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper. The result has been a modest increase in UK military presence in the region. This has manifested primarily through increased presence in the region of naval capabilities, and an increase in defence diplomacy and work on enhancing relationships with allies. The Government states that the tilt is now complete, and it will be made a permanent pillar of the UK's foreign policy. We reject the notion that the 'tilt' has been "achieved" from a Defence perspective. With only a modest presence compared to allies, little to no fighting force in the region, and little by way of regular activity, Defence's tilt to the Indo-Pacific is far from being achieved. Fundamentally UK Defence is already under-resourced for its role within NATO in the Euro-Atlantic, which is the core current and medium-term security challenge for the UK and Europe. If we aspire to play any significant role in the Indo-Pacific this would need a major commitment of cash, equipment and personnel. Without this, the UK may need to curb its ambitions in the region. (Paragraph 96)
13. The UK Government's future strategy for the Indo-Pacific is still unclear. *The Government should create a dedicated Indo-Pacific strategy, which sets out how military instruments can be used in support of the UK's wider pursuit of its goals and interests in the region in peacetime and during conflict. Within this strategy, the Ministry of Defence should include a comprehensive defence and diplomatic response to the growing threat posed by China under the CCP. This strategy should also identify the specific aims of the Tilt and make clear how the Government intends to achieve these, whilst being realistic about what is achievable. (Paragraph 97)*

# Formal minutes

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**Tuesday 17 October 2023**

## **Members present**

Sarah Atherton

Robert Courts

Martin Docherty-Hughes

Richard Drax

Mark Francois

Kevan Jones

Emma Lewell-Buck

Gavin Robinson

John Spellar

Derek Twigg

John Spellar took the Chair, in accordance with the Resolution of the Committee of 19 September.

## **UK Defence and the Indo-Pacific**

Draft Report (*UK Defence and the Indo-Pacific*), proposed by John Spellar, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 97 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Eleventh Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That John Spellar make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

## **Adjournment**

Adjourned till Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 10.00am.

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Tuesday 7 June 2022

**Meia Nouwens**, Senior Fellow, Chinese Defence Policy and Military Modernisation, International Institute for Strategic Studies [Q1–22](#)

**Professor Steve Tsang**, Director, SOAS China Institute; **Professor Alessio Patalano**, Professor, Kings College London, Department of War Studies [Q23–43](#)

### Tuesday 6 September 2022

**Professor Rory Medcalf**, Head of National Security College, The Australian National University; **Dr Marcus Hellyer**, Senior Analyst, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) [Q44–63](#)

**Mr Ben Bland**, Director, Chatham House (Asia-Pacific Programme); **Dr Rob Yates**, Lecturer, University of Bristol [Q64–85](#)

### Tuesday 17 January 2023

**Veerle Nouwens**, Senior Research Fellow, Asia-Pacific, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI); **Brigadier (ret.) Ben Barry**, Senior Fellow, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) [Q86–115](#)

**Seth Jones**, Director, International Security Programme, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS); **John Hemmings**, Senior Director, Indo-Pacific Foreign and Security Policy, Pacific Forum [Q116–132](#)

### Tuesday 21 March 2023

**Baroness Annabel Goldie**, Minister of State; **Nick Gurr**, Director of International Security, Ministry of Defence; **Brig. Adrian Reilly**, Head of International Security, Ministry of Defence; **Shimon Fhima**, Director of Strategic Programmes, Ministry of Defence [Q133–155](#)

## Published written evidence

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The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

INP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 ADS Group Ltd ([INP0007](#))
- 2 Babcock International ([INP0013](#))
- 3 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) ([INP0011](#))
- 4 Edwards, Dr Scott (Research Associate, University of Bristol & SafeSeas); Malik, Dr Asmiati (Advisor / Lecturer, Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Indonesia / Universitas Bakrie Indonesia); and Yates, Dr Robert (Lecturer, University of Bristol) ([INP0010](#))
- 5 Heritage, Dr Anisa ([INP0016](#))
- 6 Kennedy, Professor Greg (Professor of Strategic Foreign Policy and Director of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies, King's College London) ([INP0005](#))
- 7 Ladwig III, Dr. Walter C. (Senior Lecturer in International Relations, King's College London) ([INP0012](#))
- 8 Leoni, Dr. Zeno (Lecturer in War Studies, King's College London) ([INP0001](#))
- 9 Li, Dr Jie Sheng (Freelance Research Analyst, Self) ([INP0002](#))
- 10 Lockheed Martin UK ([INP0008](#))
- 11 Ministry of Defence ([INP0017](#))
- 12 Ministry of Defence ([INP0015](#))
- 13 Reaction Engines ([INP0009](#))
- 14 Roberts, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew ([INP0006](#))
- 15 Rogers, Mr James (Director of Research, Council on Geostrategy); and Triglavcanin, Mr Patrick Patrick (Research Assistant, Council on Geostrategy) ([INP0014](#))
- 16 Thomas, Mr Brett ([INP0004](#))

# List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

## Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The Treatment of Contracted Staff for The MoD's Ancillary Services	HC 187
2nd	The Integrated Review, Defence in a Competitive Age and the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy	HC 180
3rd	Defence Space: through adversity to the stars?	HC 182
4th	Developments in UK Strategic Export Controls	HC 282
5th	Withdrawal from Afghanistan	HC 725
6th	Special Relationships? US, UK and NATO	HC 184
7th	Defence Diplomacy: A softer side of UK Defence	HC 792
8th	Defence and Climate Change	HC 179
9th	It is broke - and it's time to fix it: The UK's defence procurement system	HC 1099
10th	Aviation Procurement: Winging it?	HC 178
1st Special	Operation Isotrope: the use of the military to counter migrant crossings: Government response to the Committee's fourth report of Session 2021–22	HC 267
2nd Special	The Treatment of Contracted Staff for the MOD's Ancillary Services: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 702
3rd Special	The Integrated Review, Defence in a Competitive Age and the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 865
4th Special	Defence Space: through adversity to the stars? Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1031
5th Special	Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Government Reponse to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1316
6th Special	Special Relationships? US, UK and NATO: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1533
7th Special	Defence Diplomacy: A softer side of UK Defence: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report	HC 1778
8th Special	It is broke — and it's time to fix it: The UK's defence procurement system: Government response to the Committee's Ninth report	HC 1854

**Session 2021–22**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1st	Russia and Ukraine border tensions	HC 167
2nd	Women in the Armed Forces	HC 154
3rd	“We’re going to need a bigger Navy”	HC 168
4th	Operation Isotrope: the use of the military to counter migrant crossings	HC 1069
1st Special	Obsolescent and outgunned: the British Army’s armoured vehicle capability: Government Response to the Committee’s Fifth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 221
2nd Special	Manpower or mindset: Defence’s contribution to the UK’s pandemic response: Government Response to the Committee’s Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 552
3rd Special	Russia and Ukraine border tensions: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report	HC 725
4th Special	Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life: Government Response to the Committee’s Second Report	HC 904
5th Special	“We’re going to need a bigger Navy”: Government Response to the Committee’s Third Report	HC 1160

**Session 2019–21**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1st	In Search of Strategy—The 2020 Integrated Review	HC 165
2nd	The Security of 5G	HC 201
3rd	Pre-appointment hearing for the Service Complaints Ombudsman	HC 989
4th	Foreign Involvement in the Defence Supply Chain	HC 699
5th	Obsolescent and outgunned: the British Army’s armoured vehicle capability	HC 659
6th	Manpower or mindset: Defence’s contribution to the UK’s pandemic response	HC 357
1st Special	Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2018: Government Response to the Committee’s Eighteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 162
2nd Special	Drawing a Line: Protecting Veterans by a Statute of Limitations: Government Response to the Defence Committee’s Seventeenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 325
3rd Special	In Search of Strategy—The 2020 Integrated Review: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report	HC 910
4th Special	The Security of 5G: Government Response to the Committee’s Second Report	HC 1091



Number	Title	Reference
5th Special	Foreign Involvement in the Defence Supply Chain: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1380