

# US plans to boost India's defence modernisation

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The US Department of Defense (the Pentagon) plans to bolster India's defence modernisation, including by advancing the priorities outlined in the "road map for US – India Defence Industrial Cooperation," to co-produce fighter jet engines and Stryker armoured vehicles.

In its annual report for 2023 released on Wednesday, the Pentagon says it has worked alongside allies and partners to deliver ground-breaking achievements for peace, stability, and deterrence in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

There are plans for modernising the scope of military engagement with India by incorporating advanced fighter aircraft and strategic bombers in our exercises.

This would strengthen interoperability and highlight shared efforts to promote stability and security in the Indo-Pacific.

"In this decisive decade, 2023 will be remembered as a decisive year for implementing US defence strategy in Asia,"

said US Secretary of Defence, Lloyd J Austin III.

## Transforming US regional force posture

The US says it delivered historic achievements with allies and partners in 2023, to make US force posture in the Indo-Pacific region more mobile, distributed, resilient, and lethal.

The Pentagon says it stationed key US military units to Japan, including a US Marine Littoral Regiment — the Marine Corps' most advanced formation — and a US Army watercraft unit to enhance deterrence.

Washington also launched new force posture initiatives with Australia, including more expeditionary visits of US submarines resulting from AUKUS, increased rotations of US bombers and fighters, expanded maritime and ground forces cooperation, enhanced space and logistics cooperation, continuing upgrades of key bases, and movement toward the creation of Submarine Rotational Force-West in Australia by 2027.

The Pentagon expanded US

rotational access across the Philippines by designating four new Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites at strategic locations, which will strengthen the interoperability of US and Philippine armed forces and allow both countries to address shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. Concluding a Defence Cooperation Agreement with Papua New Guinea (PNG) that builds on decades of bilateral defense and security cooperation.

For the first time in over four decades, a US SSBN (nuclear missile submarine) visited South Korea (ROK). There was also the first landing since 1988 of a US nuclear-capable B-52 on the Peninsula.

## Making historic investments in capability

The US is deploying cutting-edge military capabilities right now, and supporting allies and partners as they invest in their own capabilities.

The report states this is done by: releasing the most strategy-driven defence budget ever, including \$170 billion for

advanced air, sea, and land power; \$145 billion for research, development, test, and evaluation; and \$9.1 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative — more than ever proposed before for these key lines of effort. It announced the Optimal Pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capabilities through AUKUS.

Supporting Japan's decision to acquire new capabilities that strengthen regional deterrence, including indigenous and acquired counterstrike capabilities like the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile. Washington also supports Tokyo's decision to double its defence budget over the next five years and develop its industrial expertise to promote regional peace and stability.

The report also supports launching the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) to promote partnerships between US and Indian researchers, entrepreneurs, and investors.

The US is joining together with Indo-Pacific allies and partners in ways that strengthen peace and security across the region, including by operating together like never before.

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