



FACT SHEET

SECRETARY AUSTIN'S SEVENTH TRIP TO THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin's seventh trip to the Indo-Pacific comes at a time when the Department of Defense is doing more than ever with U.S. allies and partners to strengthen peace, stability, and deterrence at the heart of a free and open regional vision.

In Japan, Secretary Austin will underscore historic progress in strengthening and modernizing the U.S.-Japan Alliance. Then at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, the Secretary will meet with regional counterparts and deliver remarks highlighting a number of major achievements over the last year with like-minded partners to advance a shared vision for the Indo-Pacific region. Finally, Secretary Austin will visit India for the second time since becoming Secretary of Defense, where he will further deepen the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership as ties between the two countries enter a new and exciting chapter.

Since Secretary Austin's last visit to Singapore for the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2022, the United States has continued delivering groundbreaking achievements for peace, stability, and deterrence in a free and open Indo-Pacific, including by:

STRENGTHENING U.S. REGIONAL FORCE POSTURE

Secretary Austin's seventh visit to the region comes at a time when the Department is delivering historic achievements alongside allies and partners to make U.S. force posture in the Indo-Pacific more mobile, distributed, and resilient, including by:

- ▶ **Forward deploying a U.S. Marine Littoral Regiment – the Marine Corps' most advanced formation – to Japan by 2025**, significantly enhancing combat-credible deterrence.
- ▶ **Launching a series of new force postures initiatives with Australia**, including increased rotations of U.S. bombers and fighters at Australian bases, alongside expanded maritime and ground forces cooperation.
- ▶ **Expanding U.S. rotational access by designating four new Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites at strategic locations across the Philippines**, which will strengthen the interoperability of U.S. and Philippine armed forces and allow us to respond more seamlessly to shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ **Building upon decades of defense cooperation with Papua New Guinea (PNG)**, including through the conclusion of a new Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) that will deepen bilateral security cooperation, strengthen the close U.S.-PNG relationship, and increase regional stability and security. In addition, we have successfully concluded a shiprider agreement to improve PNG's capacity for maritime domain awareness.

SUPPORTING ALLY AND PARTNER CAPABILITY

In order to boost collective capabilities across the Indo-Pacific, the United States is standing with regional allies and partners as they contribute to peace, stability, and deterrence. The United States is doubling down on these efforts by:

- ▶ **Supporting Japan's decision to acquire new capabilities that strengthen regional deterrence, including counterstrike capabilities.** In January 2023, the Security Consultative Committee (“2+2”) welcomed Japan’s updated national security documents, particularly its decisions to acquire a counterstrike capability and to substantially increase its defense budget over the next five years.
- ▶ **Launching the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)** in May 2022 to drive co-development and co-production of major defense platforms.
- ▶ **Coordinating closely with the Philippines on defense modernization**, including through the expeditious conclusion of a Security Sector Assistance Roadmap, to identify investments in priority defense platforms and force packages over the next five to 10 years that will bolster combined deterrence and capacity to resist coercion.
- ▶ **Delivering results for the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)**, launched in 2022 to provide space-based maritime domain awareness to states across the region, supporting greater transparency by enhancing partners’ abilities to monitor and police their waters.
- ▶ **Investing over \$1.2 billion in security cooperation initiatives across the Indo-Pacific region**, including one of the largest investments in history in to bolster Indo-Pacific partners’ capability and capacity, maritime domain awareness, and resilience against coercion.

NETWORKING U.S. ALLIES AND PARTNERS

The United States is bringing together our closest Indo-Pacific allies and partners in ways that strengthen peace and security across the region, including through trilateral and multilateral security efforts with:

- ▶ **The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, advancing engagement with the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting “Plus” (ADMM+) through capacity-building programs and training courses, and launching an emerging leaders fellowship program in September 2023 that will provide support, mentorship, and professional development to young civilian and defense leaders in the Indo-Pacific through education and networking opportunities.
- ▶ **AUKUS**, supporting Australia’s historic acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines, and advancing cooperation on advanced capabilities like artificial intelligence, autonomous undersea warfare, cyber, electromagnetic warfare, hypersonics and counter-hypersonics, and quantum computing.
- ▶ **Australia, India, and Japan (“the Quad”)**, deepening interoperability and coordination through the annual Exercise MALABAR and bringing greater transparency to the region through leveraging cutting-edge commercial satellite technology to provide Indo-Pacific partners with near-real-time data and analysis of maritime activities in their territorial waters.
- ▶ **Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK)**, cooperating more deeply than ever through trilateral ballistic missile defense and anti-submarine warfare exercises, activities to strengthen our interoperability, and increased information-sharing on the nuclear and missile threats posed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

- ▶ **Australia and Japan**, expanding the scope and complexity of our trilateral exercises, advancing our science and technology cooperation, and exploring ways to bring Japan into U.S.-Australia force posture cooperation.

OPERATING TOGETHER LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Bilateral and multilateral exercises in the region have grown in scale, scope, and complexity, and the United States is proud to participate in combined operations that enhance interoperability, boost deterrence, and demonstrate our shared resolve against coercive behavior, including:

- ▶ **Exercise KEEN Sword with Japan**, which further integrated our capabilities with F-35 aircraft and High Mobility artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers, expanded information sharing and electronic warfare capabilities, and deepened multilateral coordination by incorporating assets from Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
- ▶ **Exercise BALIKATAN with the Philippines**, which recently featured more than 17,600 members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military, as well as Australian forces, and – for the first time ever – featured littoral live fire and cyber defense elements to support deeper interoperability between the United States and the Philippines.
- ▶ **Exercise GARUDA SHIELD with Indonesia and over a dozen participating nations**, once a bilateral training event that has now become one of the largest multilateral exercises in the Indo-Pacific, featuring thousands of forces.
- ▶ **Exercise COBRA GOLD co-sponsored with Thailand**, which not only saw a return to pre-pandemic levels of participation by dozens of countries – but also the largest U.S. contingent in a decade.
- ▶ **The upcoming Exercise TALISMAN SABER in Australia** will be the biggest bilaterally planned U.S.-Australia exercise to date, bringing together like-minded partners from across the region and around the world, including Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.



U.S. Department of Defense