



# UK's Indo-Pacific Tilt

## Why in News

Recently, the British Government said that the **UK Carrier Strike Group's** "globe-spanning maiden deployment will feature **visits to India, Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore**".

- Earlier, the [European Union had announced](#) that it will reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific with the aim of contributing to the stability, security, prosperity and sustainable development of the region.

## Key Points

### ▪ About the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG):

#### ◦ CSG:

- Carrier strike groups are **often formed for a specific mission rather than by platform**.
- The carrier is typically **part of a larger formation**, usually including destroyers, frigates and submarines, as well as logistical-support ships.
- The carrier **provides the primary offensive air power**, while the other vessels provide the wider defence and support role and can also participate offensively, such as with the launch of missile systems.

#### ◦ UK CSG:

- It will be **led by the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth**.
- It will be **a global deployment**, from the **North Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific**.
- The **"28-week deployment"** will **span 26,000 nautical miles**, and CSG will **undertake over 70 engagements in over 40 nations**.
- As **part of the UK's tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region**, the CSG will conduct **engagements with Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Japan and India**.

#### ◦ UK CSG Deployment in Indo-Pacific:

- It will **bolster already deep defence partnerships in the region**, where the UK is committed to a more enduring regional defence and security presence.
- Engagement in Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Japan and India will **provide the opportunity for strengthening the UK's security relationships, tightening political ties and supporting UK exports and International Trade agenda**.

### ▪ India-UK Ties:



◦ **Political Cooperation:**

- The bilateral relationship was **upgraded to a strategic partnership** in 2004.
- The UK has reaffirmed its **support for India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council.**

◦ **Scope in Economic Cooperation:**

- **India's skilled labour, technological assistance and the vibrant market** will open a lot of avenues for Britain which has recently parted ways with the European Union.
- Along with the world, **India is now steering towards 5G.** The UK will need India's help to marginalize China in the telecom market.
- The UK is **one of the largest investors in India**, among the [G20 countries](#).

◦ **Defence Exercises:**

- **Air Force** Exercise '[Indradhanush](#)'.
- **Navy** Exercise **Konkan**.
- Army Exercise: [Ajeya Warrior](#)

▪ **Indo-Pacific: The New Point of Convergence:**

- With the **UK expanding its footprint in the Indo-Pacific** and **India working toward gaining prominence as the net security provider in the region**, both countries' aspirations and future seem to be **intertwined**.
- An **area of focus** up ahead should be **to enhance military-to-military interactions**.
  - While there exist service-specific joint training exercises, their pace has not matched with India's exercises with the US.
- The **lack of foundational agreements** may be acting as a limiting factor as well. While an MoU on joint training is under development, a military logistics agreement is expected to be signed soon.
  - This will give India and the UK reciprocal access to each other's bases and formalize the procedures for receiving and paying for logistic support, such as servicing and refueling.
- The **UK, with its bases in Kenya, Brunei, Bahrain, Oman, Singapore, and the British Indian Ocean Territory**, is by no means new to the region. Having such an infrastructure already in place will not only aid its ambitions in the region but **also be valuable to its partners**.
- For **India, access to these bases will augment its reach further** into the Indian Ocean.
  - **Working with other like-minded countries**, such as Japan and Australia, there is great scope for close cooperation in areas of maritime domain awareness and intelligence sharing by leveraging the strength of each other's assets.
  - In this regard, **Japan's initiative** to enhance defence intelligence sharing with India, Australia, and the UK is a significant step.

## Way Forward

- Moving forward, the India-UK defence relationship **will no longer be limited to being one of a buyer-seller**. It will not stop at defence production either.
- Through close maritime cooperation and a joint approach toward maintaining regional security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, the two countries have the potential to forge a truly comprehensive strategic partnership in action.

**Source: IE**

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